

**United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

Combating Brain Drain on the impact of the Growth and Development of LEDCs

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**Forum:** ECOSOC

**Issue:** Combating Brain Drain on the impact of the Growth and Development of LEDCs

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#  Figure 1: Image sourced from (Johnson)

**Introduction:**

Brain drain is defined as the movement of educated and skilled people from one country to another, usually from less economically developed countries (LEDCs) to more economically developed countries (MEDCs) (Cambridge Dictionary). These people often leave their home countries in search of better job opportunities, higher salaries or even greater political stability. This can benefit the individuals and the countries they move to but leave serious problems for the countries they leave behind.

When doctors, teachers, engineers and other professionals leave their home countries, it often slows down economic development and weakens public services (Misau et al.). This is especially challenging for LEDCs which may already struggle with limited resources. At the same time, MEDCs often gain from the movement of these skilled workers, which leads to greater inequality between countries.

This report will explore the causes and effects of brain drain, the important role of international cooperation and possible solutions to help reduce its negative effects. It will also look at ways countries can turn brain drain into “brain gain” or encourage skilled workers to return home.

**Definition of key terms:**

## 1) Brain Drain

The emigration of highly trained or qualified people from a country, especially LEDCs, to more developed countries for better opportunities.

## 2) Brain Gain

The positive side of migration when countries gain skilled professionals from elsewhere.

## 3) Capacity Building

Strengthening the skills, institutions, and resources that countries need to survive, adapt, and thrive.

## 4) Diaspora

A community of people from one country living abroad, often maintaining ties and sometimes sending money or skills back home.

## 5) Economic Development

The progress of an economy is measured by improvements in education, health, income, and employment.

## 6) Global Inequality

Uneven distribution of wealth, opportunities, and resources between different countries or populations.

**7) Human Capital**

The collective skills, knowledge, and experience of a country’s workforce.

## 8) LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries)

Nations with low levels of income, industrialization, education, and healthcare systems.

## 9) MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries)

Wealthier nations with more advanced infrastructure, higher standards of living, and more job opportunities.

## 10) Migration

The movement of people from one place to another, often from rural to urban areas or from one country to another.

## 11) Policy Intervention

Government or international actions aimed at addressing issues—like creating incentives for skilled workers to stay or return.

## 12) Pull Factors

Positive conditions in another country that attract migrants (e.g. better pay, stability, career growth).

## 13) Push Factors

Negative conditions in the home country that encourage people to leave (e.g. low wages, conflict, lack of jobs).

## 14) Remittances

Money sent by migrants back to their families in their home countries—can support LEDC economies.

## 15) Return Migration

When skilled professionals who moved abroad eventually return to contribute to their home country.

**General Overview:**

## Origin of brain drain

The concept of brain drain was first seen in the mid 20th century, particularly after World War II, when a significant number of scientists, academics and medical professionals migrated from Europe to the United States and other developed countries (UMY Repository ). With time, this trend expanded to include skilled workers from former colonies and developing nations seeking better opportunities in richer countries. Originally this was seen as a temporary issue linked to specific events such as political instability or war, brain drain has since evolved into a broader and more persistent global phenomenon (Oosterik).

## Evolution of this issue

As globalisation increased and the barriers to international movement decreased, skilled migration became much more usual. The demand for educated and experienced professionals in MEDCs has continued to grow, leading to targeted recruitment efforts aimed at skilled workers in LEDCs. In some cases entire sectors, such as healthcare or engineering, have been heavily impacted by the loss of talent. For example, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have experienced significant emigration of medical professionals, placing pressure on already strained healthcare systems(Christian Lueme Lokotola et al.).

Additionally, the rising trend in studying in foreign countries has played a huge role in encouraging young professionals to remain abroad after completing their studies. As a result, many LEDCs face a lot of difficulties in developing and keeping the human capital necessary for long term growth and stability.

## Current global relevance

Today, brain drain is still a critical global issue with complex consequences. In LEDCs, the decrease in skilled workers can weaken essential public services and slow down much needed innovation. Additionally, the cost of schooling professionals who then leave the country represents a loss of national investment (Office of the Chief Economist).

On the other hand, MEDCs continue to benefit from the arrival of foreign trained professionals, many who are gladly taken aboard in sectors which are experiencing worker shortages. This has created an imbalance in the global distribution of human capital, which contributes to wider issues such as global inequality and uneven development (Office of the Chief Economist).

# Key Events Timeline

**1960s-** The beginning of large-scale brain drain from developing countries, especially in South Asia and Africa.

**2004-** The launch of the World Health Organization’s Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel (the drafting process begins).

**2010-** WHO officially adopts the Global Code of Practice on International Recruitment of Health

Personnel, urging ethical recruitment and support for health systems in source countries

**2015-** UN adopts the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Goal 10.7 emphasizes safe and responsible migration.

**2020-** COVID-19 pandemic highlights severe healthcare worker shortages in LEDCs due to brain drain.

1. India receives a record $111 billion in remittances, showing the economic impact of its global diaspora.

1. Canada admits over 437,000 permanent residents, many of them skilled workers from LEDCs.

**June 6-7 2025-** ISHMUN Conference- delegates gather to debate solutions to brain drain in

ECOSOC.

**Principal Stakeholders**

# Canada

Canada is one of the top destinations for skilled immigrants due to its points-based immigration system that favours education and work experience (Quito). In 2022, Canada admitted over 437,000 new permanent residents, many of them skilled workers from countries like India , Nigeria and the Philippines. Canada actively employs healthcare professionals and tech workers to address labor shortages, which has led to concerns in the source countries about brain drain(Team).

# India

India is one of the largest sources of skilled migrants in the world. As of 2023, over 17 million Indians live abroad, with many working in sectors like technology, healthcare and engineering. The United States has more than 4.8 million people of Indian origin living there. Brain drain from India began in the 1960s and has continued due to limited domestic opportunities and strong demand for talent abroad. While India benefits from remittances (over $111 billion in 2022, the highest globally), concerns

still remain about the loss of expertise and its impact on Indian development (Ministry of External Affairs).

# United States

The U.S. is the top destination for global talent, having more than 45 million immigrants as of 2023. Over a quarter of these immigrants are highly skilled. The nation has benefitted largely from brain drain, particularly from countries like India, China and nigeria. U.S. policies like the H-1B visa program actively attract professionals in STEM fields, fueling debates about brain gain for the US and brain drain for origin countries (Batalova).

# Nigeria

Nigeria faces critical shortages in healthcare due to brain drain. As of 2022, over 11,000 Nigerian trained doctors were practicing in the UK alone (PUNCH). The country received approximately 20.9 billion USD in remittances in 2022, ranking among Africa's top recipients. However the leaving of professionals has raised concerns about the sustainability of national development, especially in public health and education (Statista).

# Potential Avenues for Resolution

Delegates are highly encouraged to consider a age of realistic yet innovative solutions to the issue presented. These resolutions should reflect their delegations' view as well as respect national sovereignty, align with international law, and reflect the developmental goals of the United Nations and ECOSOC.

## 1) Incentivising skilled persons to remain in their country of origin

Governments and international partners could explore ways to improve working conditions, career advancement opportunities and wages for skilled workers in LEDCs. This could include funding education, research and healthcare infrastructure to reduce the need to emigrate

## 2) Promoting “Brain Circulation” over “Brain Drain”

Instead of permanent migration, delegates could consider policies that encourage temporary movement, where professionals gain further experience abroad, and return to their homes with enhanced skills. This could involve bilateral exchange programs, remote work options or circular migration agreements.

## 3) Ethical Recruitment Process

By encouraging the destination countries to follow ethical recruitment standards, especially in healthcare and education, could help reduce the negative effects of brain drain. Delegates could discuss reinforcing or revising global codes like the WHO Code of Practice.

# Suggested Resources

[**https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-global-code-of-practice-on-the-international-recrui tment-of-health-personnel**](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-global-code-of-practice-on-the-international-recruitment-of-health-personnel)**- Overview of the WHO Code of practice, very relevant for the committee issue.**

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