agrarian: characteristic of famers or their way of life.

colonialism: the process via which countries have historically taken control of land in other parts of the world; colonialism often involves taking majority control of a local government, bringing settlers from the colonizing country, and creating economic programs to extract and export resources to the colonial power.

demographic transition: population change over time, in the three-part pattern: high birth and death rates, to high birth and low death rates, to low birth and low death rates.

Demographic Transition Model (DTM): a theory that explains how a country's total population growth rate shifts through stages as that country develops economically. It predicts that the population will eventually stabilize as the country trends toward lower birth and death rates.

developing country: a country at a relatively early stage in the process of economic development classified using a range of economic and social criteria such as per capita income and life expectancy.

extreme poverty: the state of living with an income below the international poverty line, defined by the World Bank as less than $1.90 USD per day.

family planning: the practice of attaining a desired number of children and determining the spacing of pregnancies, achieved by providing access to contraceptives, reproductive health services as well as education.

Gini coefficient: also called a Gini index, a measurement of the degree of inequality in family income distributions in a country. A value of 0 represents perfect equality, and a value of 100 represents perfect inequality.

globalization: the global integration of trade, investment, information technology and cultures among people, companies and governments of different countries.

gross domestic product (GDP): an economic indicator which measures the total market value of all goods and services produced by a nation's economy over a given period of time (usually a year).

gross national income (GNI): an economic indicator that measures the approximate total income of all persons in the country by taking the GDP and adding all income from other countries, such as through interest, and subtracting all payments to other countries.

human capital: the economic value of a worker's skill set, which accounts for education, training, experience, skills and abilities among other resources.

income inequality: the difference in disposable income between people or social groups.

Industrial Revolution: a period in the 18th and 19th centuries during which human society transitioned from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacturing. This process began in Britain and from there spread to other parts of the world. The Industrial Revolution marks a major historical turning point, influencing many aspects of daily life for people around the world and contributing to unprecedented and sustained human population growth.

least developed countries: nations that have primarily agricultural economies and lower standards of living relative to most other countries, and face serious structural challenges to their sustainable development.

less developed countries: nations that generally have a less industrialized, more agricultural economy with lower standards of living relative to more developed countries.

life expectancy: the average number of years someone is expected to live based on current health trends.

more developed countries: nations that generally have a more industrialized economy that is strong and diverse, and higher standards of living relative to less developed countries.

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP): a theory that uses the exchange rates of countries to measure how many goods and services an amount of currency can provide in different nations. It is often used to compare the quality of life in various areas.

quality of life: a measurement of the well-being of an individual or group that includes physical elements such as health, shelter, and safety as well as psychological aspects such as stress, joy, and worry.

slums: informal settlements in urban areas that are densely populated and may be characterized by poor housing and a lack of reliable services such as sanitation, electricity, clean water and law enforcement.

Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs): mandatory conditions, such as reducing spending, that countries receiving loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) must follow to keep their funding.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): 8 goals which "form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions." The goals are: 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, and 8) develop a global partnership for development.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 17 interconnected goals that provide individualized guidelines and targets to help every nation develop sustainably, protecting the planet and ensuring all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs are meant to build on the Millennium Development Goals (2000 - 2015) and also focus attention on addressing new problems such as climate change, economic inequality, and sustainable consumption among other priorities.