

United Nations Environment Programme

Chairs:

Alison Ke: *alison.ke@icsd.k12.ny.us*

My name is Alison Ke, and I am a senior at Ithaca High School. This is my third year in Model UN and my first time chairing. In my freetime, I enjoy volunteering at the local science museum, dancing, and playing violin.

Katherine Scardino: *scardino.kj@gmail.com*

Hello delegates! I am a 12th grade Theatre Technology major at School of the Arts and this is my first year chairing and third year participating in Model UN. I enjoy working the theatre and spend my summers as a beach lifeguard.

If you have any questions you can email any of us and we will get back to right away. We are both excited to be spending our first year as Chairs at UNEP and hope you guys are too. Good luck researching and see you all soon!

Persistence of Organic Pollutants

Persistent Organic Pollutants, or POPs, are organic compounds that do not decay naturally. This results in an accumulation of harmful compounds that can have significant impacts on the environment.

POPS are commonly produced by direct action, chemicals are manufactured for agricultural and pest control. Common POPs like [PCBs](#) and [DDT](#) can remain in an ecosystem for extended periods of time. POPs accumulate in the body fat of animals and increase in concentration as they move from animal to the next. In this way they impact entire food chains and whole ecosystems. By the time the top link of a food chain has ingested an animal or plant contaminated with POPs like DDT, the compound has reached lethal levels. POPs continue to devastate ecosystems.

POPs become an international issue when they travel over national borders. Nations that have strict POP regulations may still be affected when the POPs travel by air or water into their borders. This accumulation of harmful chemicals in wildlife puts populations at risk, especially those whose diet relies on wildlife like fish and harvested plants. Indigenous peoples are at an even higher risk when their culture relies on hunting and gathering as part of social practice

The [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) (entered in 2004) has restricted a lot of POP production, but continues to be ignored by many nations. A more concise agenda may help to reduce this international hazard.

Questions:

*How can the UN help agricultural workers learn about safe and unsafe methods of pest control?
How can the UN regulate international trading of POPS? How can the UN prevent POP
contamination from crossing state lines without infringing on national sovereignty?*

Sources:

<https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/persistent-organic-pollutants-global-issue-global-response>

http://sites.duke.edu/malaria/files/2012/07/Wania_MacKay19961.pdf

<http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/content/pollution-diabetes-and-indigenous-people>

Financing Greening Efforts in Developing Nations

The Paris Agreement, established in December 2015, was the world's first global and official climate change agreement that created a framework for dealing with the reducing the adverse effects of global warming and the finances required to do so.

In order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, developing nations to go green and reduce the impacts of climate change. However, the expense of growing green is much too difficult for many developing nations to achieve and estimated costs of greening developing nations have risen four to five times higher than original estimates.

Although the long term benefits of going green are both economically and environmentally positive, the initial cost of improving a nation's climate impact is out of the question for many developing nations. In many cases, updating greening efforts in developing nations will require both UN backing and funding.

Questions:

*What should the United Nations do to assist in the effort in going green in developing nations?
What can be done about the initial costs of greening in order to make it a viable option for
developing nations?*

Sources:

UNEP: Climate Change Finance

<http://www.unep.org/climatechange/finance/InformationMaterials/News/PressRelease/tabid/29543/Default.aspx?DocumentId=27074&ArticleId=36171>

United Nations University: Climate Change and Development Policy: Competing Aims?
<http://unu.edu/publications/articles/climate-change-and-development-policy.html>

European Commission: Paris Agreement
http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris/index_en.htm

Illegal Fishing in Indonesia

Indonesia is a nation which consists of roughly 17,000 islands in an area that spans larger than a million square miles. Due to this large exposure to the coast, fishing is one of Indonesia's main economic resources. Over fishing in Indonesia became an increasingly noticeable effect as unregulated and illegal fishing vessels from neighboring nations began to work in Indonesian waters. This unregulated fishing resulted in a dangerous depletion of the fish population, a result that harms not only the Indonesian economy but also the ocean's delicate ecosystem.

In response to this rise in illegal trade Indonesia set up a temporary prohibition of all fishing vessels of foreign origin. However, illegal fishing continued on a smaller scale despite the ban. To send a clear message to foreign fishing vessels, the Indonesian government has been capturing all fishing vessels in Indonesian territories not controlled by Indonesian business. Once captured and crew cleared the ships are lined up facing the Indonesian shore line. As a warning to any other foreign vessels, these captured ships are then blown up in the water. Videos of these explosions are distributed across social media.

These explosions have disastrous effects on the environment. The initial blast of an explosion kills any fish in the area. In addition to that loss, the diesel from the boats engines and the material used to create the blasts pollutes the water. These explosions are detrimental to the fish health and population size, as well as other life in the water or on shore that requires a pollutant-free ocean.

Questions:

How can UNEP help to change international fishing regulations to prevent fish depletion and explosions? What sanctions can the UN place, if any, on blasts and marine regulation in Indonesia? Do these explosions come from a lack of knowledge of their harm to the environment, or in spite of it? What steps can the UN take to protect the waters of Indonesia?

Sources:

<http://web.unep.org/ourplanet/may-2016/articles/catching-crime>

<http://qz.com/346846/indonesia-is-sinking-illegal-fishing-boats-in-dramatic-fashion-and-may-be-killing-fish-in-the-process/>

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/indonesia-takes-explosive-approach-to-illegal-fishing-1460704409>

Greening Peacekeeping Operations

United Nations peacekeeping operations are instrumental in aiding conflict ridden countries in achieving and maintaining long lasting peace. UN peacekeeping operations are costly not only financially, but also environmentally. Deploying large peacekeeping operations has a very great impact on the environment.

In 2009, the United Nations peacekeeping adopted an environmental policy for UN Field Missions that required every mission to establish specific environmental policy plan that would act as a baseline during the mission in order to reduce the environmental impact.

However, it is still problematic that UN peacekeeping operations are responsible for over half of the UN's greenhouse gas emissions. Another problem UN field missions have faced is that often times, the places where UN peacekeeping missions are being deployed are places with very little infrastructure and natural resources. Many bases of these operations struggle under the strain of added forces using their natural resources and peacekeeping operations produce a lot of liquid and solid wastes which require proper disposal.

Questions:

How can we assist countries that struggle with issues over natural resources due to UN peacekeeping operations? What policies can be implemented to resolve the current problem of improper waste disposal? What steps can be taken to reduce the carbon footprint of the UN peacekeeping force?

Sources:

UNEP: Greening Peacekeeping Operations

<http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Introduction/ECP/GreeningPeacekeepingOperations/tabid/105990/Default.aspx>

Blue Helmets Prepare to go Green

<http://www.greeningtheblue.org/case-study/blue-helmets-prepare-go-green>

United Nations Peacekeeping: Environment and Sustainability

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/environment/>