



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

2020

DIRECTORS WELCOME LETTER:



Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2020. This conference has been the home of fruitful debate, practical resolutions, dedicated moderators, spectacular delegates, and diligent advisory and executive boards for the past twelve years and is continuing to do so for its thirteenth year. With 1000 delegates registered from more than 45 national and international educational institutions, this conference will be the biggest one yet!

This year's theme 'Embracing Diversity, Shaping the Future' has been designed to capture the essence of issues that surround our globalized society. Even though we have come this far in time, there has been little to no improvement in accepting diversity as portrayed by the latest atrocities in several countries around the world. However, the future can be successfully be shaped for us, the youth, only by embracing diversity in every sector of life and we hope to draw attention to this.

This background guide has been formulated by our hard-working chairs and the research team to provide delegates with the starting point of their preparation for this three-day conference. The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue by highlighting important events, terms, history, and global implications. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous action that has been taken and latest development in terms of the last actions taken with regards to the issue. At the end of each issue, delegates will find sections of Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address and Suggestions for Further Research that aim to streamline the process of delegate's research. However, in order to grab a better understanding of the topic and be able to position yourself better to participate during the conference, it is advised to go beyond the background guide since this guide does not encapsulate enough information to be sufficient for every country and is only a brief introduction to the issues at hand. It is highly encouraged for delegates to view the 'Delegate Handbook' on the AUSMUN website and the 'How to Research' video on YouTube created by AUSMUN.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the contributors to this background guide. It is the collaborative work of the Moderators, AUSMUN Research Team, and the AUSMUN Media Team. On behalf of them all, I truly hope that this guide will be of great help to you.

All the very best for the conference and if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at research@ausmun.com.

Sincerely,
Manaswi Madichetty
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2020

MODERATORS WELCOME LETTER:



Ayesha Siddiqi

Samarth Rai



Saif Soliman

Hariharan Ramesh



Distinguished Delegates,

It is with utmost pleasure that we invite you to AUSMUN 2020's United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) committee. We are greatly excited to see the fruitful debates and creative resolutions that we are sure you will bring to our committee. As our topics are of great importance especially to our generation, we anticipate seeing a lot of passion in this committee.

UNEP was established in 1972 as an outcome of the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm. The UNEP is focused on creating better global conditions with regard to the environment. There are six main areas of concentration of the environmental program, which includes climate change, disaster management, ecosystem management, environmental governance, and resource efficiency. The UNEP is also the leader in encouraging the achievement of sustainable goals that have been set by the committee for the year 2030.

During the course of our conference, we will be focusing on the aspects of climate change, disaster management, and resource efficiency. Some notable achievements of the committee are the Montreal Protocol, UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), and the provision of financial aid to implement Solar Power in Developing Countries.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at unepausmun2020@gmail.com regarding any concerns. Good luck and see you at the conference!

Warm Regards,
The UNEP chairs.



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Topic I

Finding the Balance between Economic Growth & Resource Efficiency

1. Summary & History

The whole world consumes resources yet sometimes we seem to forget that they are limited and must be rationed. Resource allocation has emerged as a serious problem in recent years as globalization and rapid increase in market competitiveness has redefined the economic structure for many countries. Minimizing the level of wastage and producing the maximum productive potential are the core values that could help in reducing risks like market failure in the long run. Cities consume over 75% of natural resources. Presently over half of the world's population resides in cities with up to 80% consumption projected for 2050. Significantly, the majority of this growth will take place in cities of the developing world. The conditions for urban inhabitants in terms of employment, environment, health, education, and overall quality of life are dependent on how cities manage the natural resources available ("Resource Efficiency and Green Economy," 2017). Many of the decisions and actions needed to move our society towards sustainable development rest largely with cities.

In recent years, many countries that have depleted their existing resources are importing resources from other countries to maintain their level of production and profits to attain steady economic growth. The efficient use of resources has solely been the reason behind the success of many countries such as Austria, Finland, and Germany ("Resource Efficiency and Green Economy", 2017). These countries have adopted various strategies to reduce wastage and employ their resources efficiently. The poorest countries are affected most by this issue as resources become increasingly scarce and expensive.

It is important to remember that humans aren't the only species on this planet and there are many more beings on this earth that need to use those natural resources. Therefore, resources must be divided equitably and used sparingly. Currently, humans destructively exploit environmental resources. The exploitation of natural resources on an industrial scale began in the 19th century. It further increased in the 20th century and today's world; about 80% of energy consumption is from the extraction of fossil fuels (Planas, 2019).

Resource efficiency and economic growth are a source of conflict between many governments and macroeconomic objectives. Many factors have turned out to be detrimental to humanity but beneficial to the economy, such as immigration, urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. Many countries continue to believe in the fact that economies have grown to such an extent that resource allocation has emerged to be almost impossible to carry out efficiently. UNEP works with public and private partners, and with a special focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries and emerging economies ("Small and Medium Enterprises Finance," 2019). UNEP works across a range of key areas that contribute to more responsible and sustainable industrial practices. These include tourism, eco-innovation, eco-labeling, consumer information, and corporate sustainability reporting.

2. Discourse on the Issue

Resource efficiency is a vital and unique way countries can further progress without permanently harming the environment while moving towards a green economy and contributing to global sustainability. Countries must make sure they take into account the various ways resources are being wasted and where it is possible to minimize or remove resource consumption. Providing increased opportunities for consumer choices and sustainable lifestyles should also be considered.

Building a greener and more sustainable economy means changing how we consume and produce. Businesses will benefit from cleaner and safer production while also having increased resource efficiency, transparency, and corporate responsibility. Environmentally considerate solutions provide multiple opportunities for businesses to avoid higher input costs from excessive and inefficient production systems, attract and retain the best employee talent, and gain a competitive advantage while increasing efficiency and reducing waste of resources. All this will in turn help to reduce the devastating impacts on the environment. The IRP report also mentions that other than adopting resource efficiency policies, a combination of factors including extended product life cycle, intelligent product design, reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, and standardization should also be considered ("With Resource Use," 2017).

Member nations need to impose stricter control over their populations and must take accountability for their actions as the environment has been neglected and looked at as an infinite resource for too long. These nations need to keep track of the rights they give to multinational corporations and the licenses they are providing. Intentions of corporations must be well-known and safety measures at high-risk factories must be inspected by well-educated and informed governmental bodies regularly. This should be done to prevent incidents like the Bhopal gas tragedy or the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which were both caused due to negligence.

3. Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

The UNEP has initiated the Green Economy Initiative (GEI), which aids governments in improving their economy by helping them invest and "[spend] towards a range of green sectors, such as clean technologies, industry, renewable energies, water services, transport, waste management, green buildings, and sustainable agriculture and forests" ("Resource Efficiency and Green Economy", 2017). GEI's three-pronged approach comprises of policy analysis, advisory services, and partnerships. GEI aims to foster a collective vision jointly with other UN agencies, public organizations, and businesses to break the links between economic growth and environmental degradation.

Over previous decades, the European Union has set up an expansive scope of environmental legislation as air, water, and soil contamination has been diminished. The 7th Environment Action Programme will guide the European environment policy up until 2020. Its long term vision aims to contain the human population within the planet's ecological limits by 2050. Key objectives include enhancing the Union's natural capital to turn it into a resource-efficient economy. It plans on achieving these goals by taking the following actions by improving legislation, knowledge, investment, and integration of environmental requirements ("Environment Action Programme to 2020," 2019).

The International Resource Panel (IRP) was established by the UNEP in 2007 to focus on improving resource usage globally ("The International Resource Panel," n.d.). The IRP report states that resource use may increase by more than double from 2015 to 2050. The report also states that with the help of resource efficiency policies and initiatives, resource usage can be cut by 26%, and greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by an additional 15-20% by 2050 ("With Resource Use," 2017). Resource efficiency must be undertaken to help achieve sustainability goals set by the agen-

da for 2030 as the global material resource usage is estimated to increase by 2050 ("The Sustainable Development Agenda," 2019; "With Resource Use," 2017).

4. *Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address*

- How can countries and businesses be incentivized to implement resource-efficient strategies?
- What are the main concerns that curb nations from implementing strategies, and how can we deal with them?
- What strategies can be implemented to ensure all macroeconomic objectives are met?
- Which groups are most affected by the growing concern of the detrimental factors and what measures can be introduced to help better their position?
- What kind of support is needed to implement a balance between economic growth and resource efficiency (in terms of financial aid, international cooperation, policy construction or the passing of legislation, etc.)?
- What actions can developing countries take in their current situation to improve? What incentives do they have to take action?
- How can countries stress the seriousness of the issue and relay it to their population?

5. *Suggestions for Further Research*

- What causes countries to take the easy route and put the environment on a backseat?
- Why should developing countries care about the environment and not just leave it all to the rest of the developed nations?
- How does resource usage differ between developed and developing countries?
- What policies are allowing businesses to carry out processes that are causing environmental degradation?
- How should the manufacturing and packaging process of commercial products be modified within the supply chain to more efficiently and sparingly make use of resources?

Topic II

Impacts of Climate Change on Forced Displacement of Refugees and Migrants

1. Summary & History

Climate change is an ongoing threat to the sustainability of our planet. It is a very serious issue that is highly debated today. Global warming is a big part of the climate change conundrum and is what causes the earth's average temperature to rise. 16-year-old Greta Thunberg from Sweden has recently spoken at the United Nations Climate Crisis Summit in Madrid in 2019. Greta delivered an emotional speech in which she condemned world leaders of not taking the issue of climate change seriously by accusing them of stealing her dreams and the dreams of the coming generations with their empty promises. Her message to them is, "we will be watching you" (United Nations, 2019). This shows how far the issue has come but is being neglected to the point that Greta as a young girl has felt the need to speak up and take matters into her own hands.

Conditions have been getting worse for decades due to the lack of consideration given to the matter. Many people are forced to leave their homes and the cities that they grew up in due to being victimized by climate change. The change in climate can be in the form of sea-level rise, extreme weather conditions, desertification, or salinization of agricultural land. Per the International Organization for Migration (IOM), climate change is one of the main drivers of migration (IOM, 2008).

To clarify, climate refugees and climate migrants are two different terms. The word migrant gives the connotation of voluntarily moving to seek a better life. On the other hand, the word refugee attracts more attention to itself as it refers to those displaced by force ("World Leaders Adopt," 2018). Several people have been threatened by floods, famines, and other natural disasters. In other cases, people have been trying to flee their home countries due to unsafe conditions, such as gang violence, but their attempts have been thwarted by the effects of climate change. Several countries including Afghanistan and Somalia experienced a drought that left 764,000 people displaced in 2018. Cyclone Idai in Mozambique left more than 73,000 people homeless in March of 2019 (Let's Talk About Climate Migrants," 2019). Farmers have lost their land, which is their source of income and their lifestyle in addition to losing their homes due to flooding. Therefore, necessary measures must be taken to make our planet more sustainable to reduce the number of climate change victims.

Climate change has been a reason for the displacement of people for a very long time. This dates back to the time of the ancient Egyptians as they migrated from deserted areas to riverine areas. Furthermore, it dates back to the 4th century CE the Hun and the Germans were forced to migrate from the Volga and the Rhine Rivers to the Gaul.

Recently, in August 2005 the Katrina Hurricane which struck the United States displaced over a million people (IOM, 2008). This hurricane was the result of extreme climate change.

2. Discourse on the Issue

Climate change is an important issue since it is one of the drivers of forced migration. The main reasons for climate change are human activities as industrialization increases global warming. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 17.2 million people ("Migration and

the Climate Crisis," 2019) will be displaced because of climate change disasters that affected their lifestyle resulting in them leaving the homes they grew up in.

The threat caused by climate change is estimated to result in the following: by 2099 it is expected that the world will be hotter by 1.8-4 degrees Celsius, the proportion of land of constant drought will increase from around 8% to a staggering 10% by 2050, and rainfall will change its pattern. Such changes affect the habitability of the land as they affect the usefulness of its natural resources ("Climate Change," 2019; "The Effects of Climate," 2019). Although the emission of greenhouse gases is essential for life, these gases are now present in detrimental excess ("Mitigation," n.d.). However, there is an unfair advantage as some places are more affected than others, for example, regions in Africa suffer extreme droughts while places in South Asia suffer from frequent floods.

Developing countries are already susceptible to several issues that are related to poverty, health, and violence. People fleeing the city of Boko Haram in Nigeria from gang violence found it difficult to escape and they were at great risk of being displaced due to climate change's effect on reducing Lake Chad, which made it difficult for boats to cross. Therefore, the climate change issue is ignored by developed member states as it does not harm them whilst they are the ones that are the major cause of climate change.

3. Past IO Actions and The Latest Developments

A third of refugees by the end of 2018 were from the least developed countries of the world, which are more susceptible to climate change and natural disasters (Thompson, 2019). Although climate change affects developing countries the most, the rest of the world is also affected. The state of California in the USA has been a victim of a large number of wildfires in 2018. The Californian wildfires left several people displaced due to the destruction of their homes. Additionally, the Amazon forest had also been on fire in the year 2019. These fires have been connected to the amount of deforestation that leads to higher amounts of carbon dioxide being present in the air ("As Wildfires," 2019), which contributes to the greenhouse effect.

UNEP highly supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was signed by all UN member states in 2015 ("The Sustainable Development Agenda," 2019). The Agenda involves goals that tackle deforestation and resource efficiency in addition to the consideration of refugees displaced due to climate change as well as other natural disasters ("Transforming our world," 2015). Therefore, it can be seen that the agenda covers a considerable amount of issues. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also hosted a conference in February of 2018 that prolonged for 3 days to discuss halting deforestation and increasing forest area ("Halting Deforestation," 2018). The United Nations Forum on Forests established a strategic plan for forests in 2017, which builds upon the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ("United Nations Strategic Plan," 2017). The goals of the strategic plan include increasing forest area by 3% by the year 2030. In addition to the UN's efforts, organizations such as Team Trees have also been aiming to plant 20 million trees by the start of 2020 (Leskin, 2019).

4. Questions The Discussions and The Resolutions Should Address

- What measures/mechanisms are to be adopted by the UN bodies and/or policymakers to ensure the reduction of the climate change effect?
- What is the responsibility of nations, both developed and developing, in the process of emission reduction?
- What are the measures and ways to ensure the people currently displaced are sheltered and receive all their rights?

- How to ensure that countries least affected don't contribute the most towards climate change?

5. *Suggestions For Further Research*

- Public awareness of climate change and how your nation tackles the issue.
- The role of your country in the reduction of the climate change issue.
- The country's stance on the issue, is it the victim or is it a major cause.
- The reasons behind such extreme climate change.
- The importance of the adoption of a solution for climate change.
- A basic idea on the greenhouse effect.
- Different instances that have occurred in your country and neighboring countries.
- Knowing how the funds and policies regarding climate change are different from developed and developing countries.
- What policies are allowing businesses to carry out processes that are causing climate change and contributing to the greenhouse effect?

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