



*Committee Guide for the  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
The commercial exploitation of rainforests*

# Stockholm International School

## Model United Nations

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**A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I invite and welcome you to Stockholm International School Model United Nations 2020. This year I have the privilege of leading SISMUN as our Secretary General and it is with honour that I present this year's conference.

It is a great honor to be this year's Secretary-General, and welcome you to the Stockholm International School Model United Nations 2020.

This year's conference's theme is "Threats to Global Security" due to the fact that there are numerous challenges that our world is currently facing today. Global security entails many aspects that not only relate to the physical and emotional security of people, but also includes the security of our environment and institutions.

I am excited to see such a wide range of debates and hope that you will experience and gain a lot of memories, and experience from debating.

Yours faithfully,

Thabang Radebe  
Secretary-General, SISMUN 2020

## **A LETTER FROM THE HEAD CHAIR OF UNEP**

Dear Delegates,

As a representative of the United Nations Environmental Programme, it is your job to implement environmentally sound policies and practices into today's world. This is a huge task that is becoming more and more essential in modern society.

There is now immense evidence that illustrates that the planet's equilibrium may be tipping due to human activities, the decisions of your committee can counteract this situation?

. Tropical rainforests are an important source of life, home to the greatest biodiversity on the planet with many endemic species which are unique genetically and only found in those environments. Tropical rainforest are also climate regulators yet some of the most there are stakeholders whose interest lies in the commercial exploitation of these biomes. s I hope you and your fellow delegates find reasonable solutions to protect it.

It is a great honor to be chairing for you this year. I hope that you will achieve your goals in this committee and that all of you have a great time delegating.

Yours faithfully,

Alice Tabajara

Head Chair of the United Nations Environment Programme Committee, SISMUN 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

The commercial exploitation of rainforests is not a new concept. It has been ongoing in, primarily low income countries, for decades, however we saw it reaches its peak in the ongoing Amazon rainforest fires of 2019. Between January-November 2019, 906,000 hectares of the Amazon had been burned. The amount of fires peaked during the dry season (June to August) of 2019, which had increased by 77% compared to the dry season of 2018. The Amazon rainforest function not only as a unique biome consisting of many different habitats, but also as a global air filtration system. While, the Amazon only actually produces 9% of oxygen, the trees that are decades old have a considerable storage carbon, when these trees are burned they release their carbon in the form of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere contributing to climate change that they once combatted. To maintain the air filtration, and prevent further carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, member states need to take all necessary measures to protect rainforests globally.

## **COMMITTEE DYNAMICS**

As a delegate of SISMUN 2020, you will be responsible for representing a particular country in one of our committees. You are playing the role of that country's representative in a UN committee. You will do this by researching the country's views on the topic at hand and coming up with solutions complying to the view of the country. If you have not done any research you will have little to contribute within committee sessions. Therefore, it is recommended to take it upon yourself to prepare yourself for the conference in order to make it more enjoyable for yourself and others in your committee. When in committee, it is important that you respect and listen to your fellow delegates and Chairs.

## **HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE**

The United Nations Environmental Programme serves as a coordinated body for the UN to enable and achieve

its environmental activities. The UNEP is responsible for developing solutions to environmental issues within the UN. The UNEP also has influence, via UN-led organisations, on unique or specific international environmental problems.

It was founded in June of 1972 as a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. This conference was called to discuss how to protect marine life and resources from the pollution caused by industry in the 1960's and 70's. Moreover, how to prevent environmental and biological change and natural disasters. This conference resulted in the development of an environmental management body that proceeded to be named; United Nations Environment Programme.

The UNEP's primary task is to assist countries in producing attainable and sound environmental policies and practices.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Commercial exploitation is the development and use of a resource. In the case of rainforests, this includes the illegal deforestation to produce a higher profit or expand a business square footage while paying the minimum for the land and having little to no regard of the ecosystem and biodiversity that it is affected by reducing the

A key example of the commercial exploitation of rainforests is the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. When Brazilian President Bolsonaro was campaigning for his election he stated that the extensive amount of protected land in Brazil was hindering economic growth and promised to open the grounds up to economic exploitation. Bolsonaro stayed true to his word and the Brazilian portion of the Amazon had decreased by 1330 square miles in the first half of 2019.

The consequences of illegal deforestation, for economic gain, have also greatly diminished in severity since Bolsonaro took office. Within the first half of 2019, the enforcement efforts of Brazil's primary environmental agency against deforestation had dropped by 20%.

The main commercial areas that are partaking in the commercial exploitation of rainforests are; logging, agriculture, and cattle ranching.

### **HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM**

Within Brazil, the Amazon rainforest is under serious threat, being one of the main allies in the fight against global warming, its importance is obvious. As of the 20th August, 2019, there have been 74 000 individual sightings of forest fires since January 2019, the largest number since 2010 according to the National Institute for Space Research.

The fires have been reported to be caused mainly by the cattle farmers and loggers intentionally starting fires. This problem is not a new one, In 2009, three of the biggest Brazilian meat packing companies (JBS, Minerva and Marfrig) signed an agreement with Greenpeace not to buy cattle from farms that are in newly deforested lands as a solution for this problem. This is because 80% of all the fires were linked back to the cattle industry according to Yale's school of forestry and environmental studies. However, this victory for the environmentalists was short lived. JBS over the course of 7 years was found to have bought over 36739 herds of cattle from farms taking advantage of the deforested land according to a 2016 audit by federal prosecutors of Pará State and the other two corporations had bought cattle through indirect purchases which follow a complex supply chain which is harder to monitor. As a result, Greenpeace dropped the agreement as no real change was materialised from the seven year deal.

The possible reasons for the agreement failing include growing demand for beef and the reduced production capacity that was brought about by the deal. Livestock farming as a whole is a \$6 billion dollar industry providing 360,000 jobs throughout Brazil. 360,000 people depend on the industry's success and this deal brought conflict between how the corporations were supposed to balance their economic growth with environmental sustainability. The corporations needed to put protocols in place and create processes so they could track the supply chain of the cattle. With fewer farms to purchase from and an increased surveillance on where the cattle is bought from while international demand was rising, the companies found loopholes in which they could get around the monitoring of supply chains by buying indirectly from farms. This meant that cattle that could be bought off of a farm that was within the agreement could have been brought from another unauthorized farm within the boundaries of the deal. In addition to this, the current President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, catalyzed the push for economic development at the expense of the conservation of the Amazon rainforest. Quoting the vice-president Hamilton Mourão "If there was one thing Bolsonaro was crystal clear about, it was that he was 100 percent willing to compromise the Amazon for economic upside."

### **RELEVANT UN ACTIONS**

In August of 2019, Inger Anderson, the UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, made a statement portraying his goal to place a focus on the protection of the world's rainforests and that of environmental defenders. Anderson also urged member states to actively partake in protecting rainforest and for Brazil to take all necessary measures to extinguish the fires and to improve protection of the Amazon.

While many member states of the UN called for foreign intervention into the protection of the Amazon,

Brazilian President Bolsonaro rejected this motion. He stated that Brazil can use the parts of the Amazon that fall within Brazilian borders as the Brazilian government deemed fit.

### QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

These are areas of the topic that are encouraged to be addressed in any working paper or resolution that the dais approves to be discussed. While you do not have to research and write about all of these questions in extreme depth, you should address them in your writing and keep them in mind throughout the research process.

1. What are the current obstacles in implementing and maintaining agreements between corporations and environmental organizations?
2. What disincentives must be put in place to discourage commercially driven corruption?
3. What solutions have been used in the past to stop commercial exploitation of environmental systems, and how successful were they?

### CURRENT SITUATION

In the year of 2019, 906 000 hectares of the Amazon rainforest have been burned down by forest fires. The Amazon spans eight countries, covers roughly 40 percent of South America, and is often referred to as “the planet’s lungs,” as it produces 20 percent of the Earth’s oxygen. The devastation threatening wildlife, natural resources and our oxygen supply will be felt around the world. The fires produce huge amounts of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter polluting the air. Furthermore, the economic dependency on the rainforest of other countries and markets is also far reaching. 25% of all US pharmaceuticals are derived from rainforest plants, as many species have not been identified or properly understood with their loss we could also lose potential medication of the future.

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## MUN TERMINOLOGY

**Delegate:** A person representing a particular country during committee sessions.

**Best Delegate:** An award for delegates that participated particularly well.

**Chair:** A person or persons leading committee sessions.

**Dais:** A selection of above average talented individuals that lead committee sessions.

**Clause:** A single solution of the greater solution (resolution) to the topic.

**Resolution:** A collection of clauses that create a solution for the topic.

**Signatory:** A delegate that supports another delegate's clause and wants it discussed.

**Placard:** A rectangular piece of paper with a country's name.

**Opening Speech:** An opportunity for delegates to present their country's ideas.

**Quorum:** The number of votes needed to pass a clause or resolution - 2/3 votes for.

**Decorum:** The Latin word for "grace". If a chair says "decorum", they want the delegates to be quiet.

**Amendment:** a change or addition designed to improve the clause passed

## PROCEDURAL TERMINOLOGY

The following components of SIS MUN are in the order of which they will play out.

1. Roll Call - Time to take attendance
  - a. At the beginning of each session your chairs will conduct a roll call. During roll call each delegate's name will be called and you are expected to reply with either "Present" or "Present and voting".
2. Opening Speeches - Time to share views and ideas
  - a. The delegation leader of each country

- b. will hold a maximum of one minute long speech introduce your country's position on the topic at hand.
3. Moderated Caucus I (Formal Debate) - Time to speak under official time
  - a. During a moderated caucus delegates that wish to speak on a topic may do so by raising their placards when the chair asks for speakers.
  - b. Delegates that are called on can speak for up to 60 seconds. There will be two questions of 30 seconds and two answers of 30 seconds per speaker.
  - c. There will be two moderated caucuses during the conference.
  - d. In Moderated Caucus (I) the points brought up during the opening speeches or other points regarding solutions to the topic will be discussed.
4. Unmoderated Caucus (Informal Debate) - Time to speak freely
  - a. During unmoderated caucus delegates will talk to other delegates and write clauses (solutions) for the topic.
  - b. Each clause requires one signatory (supporter) to be acknowledged.
  - c. When a clause is finished the delegates will send the clause to the Dais to be edited and for later projection onto the board. Only clauses sent during unmoderated caucus will be discussed during the final moderated caucus.
5. Moderated Caucus II (Formal Debate)
  - a. In Moderated Caucus (II) clauses will be presented, discussed and voted upon.
  - b. When clauses are presented, delegates can choose to speak for or against a clause.



- c. When the committee moves into voting procedure, delegates vote on the clause being discussed.
- d. During voting procedure delegates can do one of the following actions:
  - i. Vote for: The delegation agrees with the clause or resolution.
  - ii. Vote against: The delegation disagrees with the clause or resolution.
  - iii. Abstain from voting: The delegation neither agrees nor disagrees with the clause or resolution.

#### 6. Voting Procedure - Time to vote on the proposed resolutions

- a. When the committee moves into voting procedure, delegates vote on the resolution as a whole after having voted for each individual clause.
- b. During voting procedure delegates can do one of the following actions:
  - i. Vote for: The delegation agrees with the clause or resolution.
  - ii. Vote against: The delegation disagrees with the clause or resolution.
  - iii. Abstain from voting: The delegation neither agrees nor disagrees with the clause or resolution.

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