

# JMMUN 2001

the university of michigan model united nations



**united nations  
environmental  
programme**

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# united nations environmental programme

Welcome, delegates, to UMMUN 2001, and welcome to the United Nations Environment Programme! My name is Mark McCCasey, and I will be your director this year. After a brief hiatus to direct the Special Political Committee, this is my third year with UNEP. Prior to this, I attended UMMUN as a high school delegate, so I've been around awhile. Just think, someday you may be typing one of these letters yourself. But I digress...

This year I am joined by a very capable and experienced staff: Ly Yam, Assistant Director, and Evan Citron and Liza Liversedge, Rapporteurs. They will all be available to serve your every need (relating to UNEP) and will be chairing committee in my absence, so be nice to them.

Our topics this year are highly interrelated, and as such I thought it would be helpful to provide you with a bit of common background first. In 1987, the UN World Commission on Environment and Development released a report titled *Our Common Future*, which concluded that the world was threatened by serious global environmental problems. Scientific evidence demonstrated rapid destruction of air, water, species of flora and fauna, deserts, forests, and other ecosystems as well as overuse of natural resources. Moreover, the report emphasized that these problems were caused in large part by human development patterns. The term "sustainable development" was coined as the tool needed to confront the related problems of environmental degradation and necessary economic development. Five years after the release of *Our Common Future*, the United Nations laid out its strategy for the implementation of sustainable development. Known as Agenda 21, it was a comprehensive 800 page blueprint for global action into the 21st century, calling for 2,500 specific actions.

This year, UNEP will focus on three of the areas addressed by Agenda 21: air, water, and waste. All three are related to the problem of sustainable development. Past discussions have already made great headway towards a comprehensive solution to these issues, however, we are still plagued by their reality. Our committee has been charged with developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to address these environmental issues.

From experience, I know that developing a policy can be one of the most frustrating aspects of being a delegate. Often, with issues as complex and global as the environment, it appears there isn't one correct solution or answer. Well, unfortunately that's exactly the case. If it weren't, we wouldn't be debating the issue to begin with! So, my recommendation to you is to come to committee with a decent knowledge of the history of the topics, and a solid idea of what direction your nation would like to pursue in attempting to resolve these issues. It will take a good deal of time and effort on your part, but I promise in the end you will find the debate fun and rewarding!

See you in committee!

Mark McCCasey, Director

## AIR POLLUTION IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Air pollution is a major concern today in nearly all developing as well as developed nations. Transport and industrial emissions generate concentrations of chemicals in the atmosphere that seriously affect human health. Air pollution kills animals, trees, plants, and humans; it degrades building materials such as stonework and rubber, and reduces beautiful views to smog filled hazards. Air pollution generates special cause for international concern because it knows no boundaries. Local activities not only lead to regional problems, but also to national and international consequences lasting from hours to decades – consequences such as global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain and transboundary smoke transport.

### HISTORY

Within developing nations, air quality deterioration is largely the result of growing industrialization and increasing vehicular pollution. It is aggravated by trends typical of emerging regions: growing cities, increasing traffic, rapid economic expansion, all of which are closely associated with higher energy consumption.

The close relationship between development and air pollution has placed these emerging nations in a difficult position. They are internally compelled to industrialize and modernize their economy, while simultaneously they are berated by the developed community for the increasing stress this process places on the environment. Often, these environmental demands are seen as somewhat hypocritical, considering that the current developed nations ignored the environment the better half of the last century. However, everyone is in agreement that it is necessary to halt the disturbing trend which is currently associated with growth.

The first international discussions on air pollution began in the 1960's and 70's. This was largely a response to the huge expansion which had occurred in the northern hemisphere. As a result, the majority of agreements produced in the following decades dealt with the issue of air pollution from a developed nation's point of view: the 1983 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. These documents failed to focus on the special case of air pollution in the developing sector.

At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Agenda 21 dealt with questions of carbon emission and greenhouse gases in Chapter 4 with regards to changing consumption patterns. The document properly placed the problem of unsustainable atmospheric pollution within the larger context of changes required in the way humans extract and consume non-renewable, carbon-based energy resources. And while general recommendations were made concerning the promotion of sustainable development, no focus was given to the particular issues faced by developing nations.

### CURRENT STATUS

Motor vehicles continue to be the most significant contributor to air pollution in most developing countries. The contribution is growing rapidly, with fleet sizes doubling every seven years. Bangladesh is an extreme example: vehicle numbers increased almost tenfold over the years 1992–97.

Highly polluting diesel vehicles and two-stroke motorcycles are common in many less developed countries. Many vehicles are diesel in Sri Lanka, compared with 7% in Australia. Two-stroke motorcycles comprise approximately half of all vehicles in Malaysia. In India, two-stroke and diesel auto-rickshaws are common – they are both rare in developed countries.

However, emissions from vehicles are relatively less important in cities in African and South Asian countries. Here there is a greater dependence on coal or biomass fuels for cooking and other domestic purposes. Indoor air pollution is the important issue, followed by smoke from indiscriminate burning.

The focus until now has been limited to providing narrow technological solutions, which can themselves create other problems. Movements are few and far between for strong fiscal mechanisms to make such fundamental changes as reducing energy demand and energy intense transportation. Similarly, no significant move has been made to invest more in promoting renewable energy systems. According to the World Energy Council, total investments needed for R&D on, and in support of, initial deployment of renewable energy systems will be US\$ 15-20 billion, while the annual government expenditure remains only US\$ 0.7 billion.

Efforts to control air pollution have also been held back by a lack of education and awareness programs. This has been especially detrimental to the cause of protecting people from the affects of air pollution. According to the Tata Institute, air pollution in India caused an estimated 2.5 million premature deaths in 1997 alone.

## COMMITTEE MISSION

Given the competition for scarce resources to be allocated among different environmental issues, it is not easy for many developing countries to give transboundary atmospheric pollution issues sufficient priority. The goal of this committee is to provide guidelines and procedures which will help to ease developing nations into a cycle which encourages the preservation of resources, reduction in emissions, and cutbacks in consumption. At the same time, special considerations must be made to allow for increasing economic and industrial expansion within these member states.

## QUESTIONS

1. Has your nation set emissions standards for itself in the past? How successful was it in maintaining these standards?
2. What past air pollution related documents has your nation signed and ratified?
3. Is your nation developing or developed? What about your neighboring nations? How will this affect your stance on this issue?
4. What major industries support your nation's GDP? Industrial pollution is concentrated in industries like petroleum refineries, textiles, pulp and paper, industrial chemicals, iron and steel and non metallic mineral products. Foundries, chemical manufacturing and brick making are also significant polluters.
5. Is tourism a significant industry in your nation? How will this affect your resolve to keep the air clean? Additionally, consider if your nation is attempting to attract foreign investment or commercial development. Air pollution will be a factor in their decisions.
6. What are some of the solutions which have been proposed in the past? (See Agenda 21, listed sources for much of this). What aspects of these proposals have failed. What are the current barriers to their success? Part of the solution to this problem lies in recognizing those barriers and how they can be dealt with.

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## WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

"After a generation or more of excessive water use and reckless discharge of municipal and industrial wastes, the situation of the world's major cities is appalling and getting worse".

- *The Dublin Statement, Conference on Water and the Environment, 1992*

### INTRODUCTION

Water resources are essential for satisfying basic human needs, health and food production, and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for economic and social development in general. Moreover, freshwater is also crucial for developing countries to satisfy the basic needs of their population in the areas of agricultural irrigation, industrial development, hydroelectric generation, and so forth. It is a matter of urgent concern that more than one fifth of all people still do not have access to safe drinking water and more than one half of humanity lacks adequate sanitation. Unless action is taken now, water will become a major limiting factor in socio-economic development. Concrete plans must be formed which incorporate the needs of humanity with that of the environment.

### HISTORY

It was recognized early on that the sustainability of fresh water was a major concern. In 1975, the World Health Organization (WHO) released the finding that 80% of the rural population lacked access to adequate fresh water resources and sanitation. The UN, watching these numbers grow with alarming rapidity, proclaimed the coming decade of the 80's as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. During this period, Member States would assume a commitment to bring about substantial improvement in the standards and levels of drinking water supply and sanitation. During this time, the UN monitored the progress of its members, finding that substantial changes were being made in the provision of services, and that a heightened awareness of the severity of the problem had been created. In spite of these efforts, however, little if any progress was made in actually reducing the number of people lacking access to safe water supply and suitable sanitation facilities.

Faced with the continually reiterated need to provide, on a sustainable basis, access to safe water in sufficient quantities, a final proposal to the problem was presented under chapter 18 of Agenda 21. Further recommendations to support the implementation of chapter 18 were taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its second (1994) and sixth (1998) sessions and by the United Nations General Assembly at its nineteenth Special Session to review the implementation of Agenda 21 (1997).

Despite the decades of progress that have been made thus far, the fact remains that the world's population is growing more rapidly than our current infrastructure can handle. The most recent reports show the numbers of persons with inadequate water resources in the billions and constantly growing.

### CURRENT STATUS

There is growing concern at the increasing stress on water supplies caused by unsustainable use patterns, affecting both water quality and quantity, and the widespread lack of access to safe water supply and suitable sanitation in many developing countries. Because the commitments of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade have not been fully met, there is still a need to ensure the optimal use and protection of all freshwater resources, so that the needs, including the availability of safe drinking water and sanitation, of everyone on this planet can be met. This calls for the highest priority to be given to the serious freshwater problems facing many regions, especially in the developing world.

Some cities in the developing world are already facing critical environmental degradation. This is the result of overload on water sources, improper waste disposal, contamination of rivers and streams, the reckless extraction of water from depleted aquifers, and a long list of service management deficiencies. In China, at least 50 cities face

acute shortages as the water table drops by one to two meters a year. Having over-drawn traditional surface and underground sources, cities such as Amman, Delhi, Santiago and Mexico City are pumping water from increasing distances and up increasing heights. In both Jakarta and Bangkok, excessive pumping of groundwater has led to intrusion of seawater into the aquifers and to land subsidence.

Because of the rapid urbanization and increasing industrialization in developing countries, the neglect of solid waste and sewage is the cause of major health problems. The comprehensive assessment of the freshwater resources of the world, submitted to the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, in June 1997, through the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, reported that in developing countries as much as 90 per cent of waste water is discharged without treatment. The report states that the impairment of water quality near major urban centers is recognized as a major problem, and that in parts of the world, water quality has been so degraded that it is unfit even for industrial purposes.

The report additionally found that water use had been growing at more than twice the rate of the population increase during the 1990s, and already a number of regions were chronically water short. Currently, about one-third of the world's population lives in countries that are experiencing moderate to high water stress partly resulting from increasing demands from a growing population and human activities. By 2025, that number is expected to rise to two-thirds.

## **COMMITTEE MISSION**

Our committee must develop an innovative approach to curbing the water shortage crisis now and for the future. As UNEP, we have a unique environmental perspective on the issue, and that should play into any solution that the committee proposes. It will be equally important to examine past proposals and to analyze why they have failed. It will also be necessary to reaffirm each member state's position on this issue and set new targets for meeting implementation. Additionally consider the following in your recommendations: financing, technology, international vs. local scope, and monitoring progress.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the major components of the proposals in Agenda 21 (chapter 18)?
2. Why have those proposals failed in their implementation?
3. What goals has my nation proposed to meet in the past? Has it been able to meet them? Why or why not?
4. Where does the environment factor into the issue of water supply and sanitation? How can meeting the needs of the environment be integrated into meeting the needs of humanity?
5. Is my nation currently grappling with a water supply issue? With what level of urgency does this problem need to be addressed?

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## HAZARDOUS WASTE TRANSPORTATION

### INTRODUCTION

The face of the globe is literally changing everyday. Humans effect much of the change occurring on the environment. Humans are not the largest species on the planet, but yet we produce the majority of the waste and trash on the planet. The most harmful waste humans' produce is classified as hazardous waste. With the exploding population of the earth and the ever-expanding need of power due to new technology, more and more hazardous waste is generated everyday. This leads to the notion of how to dispose of the waste. Some companies transport hazardous across international borders both legally and illegally. How should the global community address this problem? The Basel Convention of 1989 attempted to address this issue, and things have progressed slowly ever since.

### HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The Basel Convention was created and written up 1989 and signed by a number of nations including the United States and most of the Western European Nations. On May 5, 1992 when 20+ countries ratified the Basel Convention it became effective. As of today approximately 130 have now ratified the Basel Convention and many of its amendments (but not the United States, which has not ratified it).

### BASIC DESCRIPTION OF THE BASEL CONVENTION :

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted in 1989 and entered into force on 5 May 1992.

The Convention is the response of the international community to the problems caused by the annual world-wide production of hundreds of millions of tons of wastes. These wastes are hazardous to people or the environment because they are toxic, poisonous, explosive, corrosive, flammable, eco-toxic, or infectious.

This global environmental treaty strictly regulates the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and provides obligations to its Parties to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. The main principles of the Basel Convention are:

- Transboundary movements of hazardous wastes should be reduced to a minimum consistent with their environmentally sound management.
- Hazardous wastes should be treated and disposed of as close as possible to their source of generation.
- Hazardous waste generation should be reduced and minimized at source.

In order to achieve these principles, the Convention aims to control the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, monitor and prevent illegal traffic, provide assistance for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, promote cooperation between Parties in this field, and develop Technical Guidelines for the management of hazardous wastes. (About)

### CURRENT STATUS

Many nations already have existing transboundary treaties. An example is the one between the United States and Canada. Hazardous waste can be transported freely between the two borders provide they the company follows the country's policies/laws pertaining to the transportation of waste. Smaller and poorer countries are more susceptible to illegal dumping on their sovereign land. They lack the resources to patrol their border and stop illegal dumpers. Poor countries also lack the technology to dispose of their hazardous waste properly. In such nations, procedures and capabilities for dealing with a hazardous waste accidents are virtually nonexistent.

The prevention of illegal traffic in hazardous wastes will benefit the environment and public health in all countries,

particularly developing countries. It will also help to make the Basel Convention and other regional international instruments, such as the Bamako Convention and the fourth Lom Convention, more effective by promoting compliance with the controls established in those agreements. Article IX of the Basel Convention specifically addresses the issue of illegal shipments of hazardous wastes. Illegal traffic of hazardous wastes may cause serious threats to human health and the environment and impose a special and abnormal burden on the countries that receive such shipments.

Effective prevention requires action through effective monitoring and the enforcement and imposition of appropriate penalties. (Agenda 21 20.39,40)

During the next decade, the Basel Convention will be the framework of future treaties. The focus of treaties will emphasize the full implementation and enforcement of treaty commitments. The other area of focus will be the minimization of hazardous waste generation. Recognizing that the long-term solution to the stockpiling of hazardous wastes lies in controlling the generation of those wastes, Ministers meeting in December of 1999 set out guidelines for the Convention's activities during the next decade, including:

- active promotion and use of cleaner technologies and production methods;
- further reduction of the movement of hazardous and other wastes;
- the prevention and monitoring of illegal traffic;
- improvement of institutional and technical capabilities – through technology when appropriate – especially for developing countries with economies in transition;
- further development of regional and sub regional centers for training and technology transfer (Basel Convention FAQ)

### **COMMITTEE MISSION**

To reinforce national capacities to detect and halt illegal attempts to introduce hazardous wastes into the territory of any State in contravention of national legislation and relevant international legal instruments.

To assist all countries, particularly developing countries, in obtaining all appropriate information concerning illegal traffic in hazardous wastes.

To cooperate, within the framework of the Basel Convention, in assisting countries that suffer the consequences of illegal traffic. (Agenda 21 20.41)

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is your nation's policy concerning the transportation of hazardous waste?
2. Does your nation produce hazardous waste? How much, and in what form?
3. Do neighboring nations produce hazardous waste? Has this been a problem in the past?
4. What treaties or conventions has your nation been a part of in regards to waste regulation?
5. Does your nation have the resources to clean up a hazardous waste accident?

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Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste home page. <http://www.basel.int/>

Decisions Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention. <http://www.greenpeace.org/~intlaw/baseldec.html>

Hazardous Waste Clean-Up Information (CLU-IN). <http://www.clu-in.org/>

The Norms of the Basel Convention. <http://www.arbld.unimelb.edu.au/envjust/papers/allpapers/brikell/home.htm>

## INTERNET-BASED RESOURCES

These are some internet-based resources you may find helpful in conducting your research. They will be useful in gaining a broad overview of the issues at hand. Should you need to contact me with any questions, my e-mail address is [mmccase@engin.umich.edu](mailto:mmccase@engin.umich.edu).

Good luck with your research!

Agenda 21 Contents: <http://www.cnie.org/agenda21/>

Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development: <http://www.iol.ie/~isp/agenda21/>

Model UN Research: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/Jonsson/mun.html>

Sustainable Development Timeline: <http://iisd1.iisd.ca/rio+5/timeline/sdtimeline.htm>

United Nations Documents and Publications: <http://www-sul.Stanford.edu/depts/jonsson/int/un.html>

United Nations Environmental Issues Catalog: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/environ/>

United Nations Sustainable Development Issues: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/issueslist.htm>

## A LETTER FROM THE CRISIS STAFF

Delegates,

A spectre is haunting UMMUN— the spectre of peace and tranquility. All the powers of the just have entered into an unholy alliance to exorcise this spectre: left wing and right wing, greenpeace and MNC, French Farmers and Canadian figure skaters .

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as hate monger by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of terrorist, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries? Certainly no association has been so maligned in the face of the spread of peace as the crisis committee. Certainly there is no group that has done more for the cause of strife and tension.

In a world filled with abounding peace and unprecedented freedom, the crisis staff is the organization battling day by day in every area, every nook, every cranny to turn the tide.

Peace and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. It has greatly increased the life-expectancy of those who live in "advanced" countries, but it has destabilized society, has made life unfulfilling, has subjected human beings to indignities, has led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and has inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of peace will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human beings to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in "advanced" countries.

For this reason, the crisis staff stands firm. We shall force each member of the international community to think and rethink their positions. There is no position that is stable, and there is no line that is not susceptible to negotiation. Where to stand fast and where to give in? When to bend and when to stand tall? Ah, now *that* is the crux of the matter.

As delegates to the University of Michigan Model United Nations, you will be expected to act on behalf of your assigned country. Coming into the conference, you have prepared vast amounts of research to help you prepare. What we shall do is test not only your knowledge, but your ability to apply what you know to a related or unrelated topic. How would Iraq act if its oil fields suddenly dried up? Will a coup in South America set off similar actions in other Southern nations? What would China do if the US intervened in its holdings near the Panama canal? The United Nations is, from time to time, forced to wander from the set path and enter the wilderness of the unknown. Sometimes to act, sometimes to watch; sometimes to advise, sometimes to castigate. These are the types of choices you will be faced with making.

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women of UMMUN merely players. They have their resolutions and their alliances, and each of the representatives in their time plays many parts, their actions paving the road toward a destination as yet unknown.

On behalf of the Crisis Committee, I wish you luck and look forward to seeing you all at the conference.

Joshua E. Rosenblatt, Crisis Staff Director

## POSITION PAPER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The position paper is the way in which the delegates demonstrate their understanding of the topics being discussed by their respective committee and how the nations they represent react to those topics. The paper also serves to inform the committee chairperson of both how sincerely the delegate will represent their nation during the conference and how to pace discussion and direction of debate. For these reasons, it is very important to the success of the conference for the position paper to be written in an informed manner and submitted to the committee chairperson on time.

### CONTENT:

In a traditional Model United Nations committee, the content of the position paper is the result of an individual's research regarding their country and the topics at hand. The position paper should include *original* research done by the student (no plagiarism from the background papers is allowed), the country's position and bloc policy with regards to their respective topic. Since the readers of the position papers – the directors and assistant directors – are fully knowledgeable of the topics they chose, *a general historical background of the topic is not required and discouraged*. Position papers are *required* in order to be considered for awards, and will be a deciding factor in determining the award recipients.

### PHYSICAL GUIDELINES:

Please adhere to the following guidelines when writing your position paper(s):

1. Each paper should be **one (1)** page, single-spaced (or two (2) pages double spaced)
2. Please use a standard font on 8 1/2" x 11" plain paper with 1 inch margins on all sides. Multiple pages should be stapled in the upper left corner in the margin area.
3. A plain cover sheet should contain the following in large print:
  - a. delegate's name & representative country
  - b. committee
  - c. high school name
  - d. date written.

**Please submit a separate position paper for each topic.**

**Position Paper Due Date:** January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 to the UMMUN office:

University of Michigan Model United Nations  
c/o Michigan Student Assembly  
3909 Michigan Union  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

If you have any questions or problems please contact the director of your committee (contact information can be found in the front of this document), or the UMMUN secretariat at [ummun-sec@umich.edu](mailto:ummun-sec@umich.edu).

Good luck with your research, and we look forward to seeing you in January!