



The Victoria School

Model of the United Nations XIII



UNEP

United Nations Environmental Programme

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Committee level: Medium

Language: English

Requirements:

- Opening speech: 2 speeches, 1 per topic (1:00 min each)

Topics:

Topic A:

Protection of the environment in armed conflict as a mechanism to prevent environmental deterioration in African countries.

Topic B:

Transitioning underdeveloped countries into a green economy in sustainable and achievable means.

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Welcome to UNEP

Hello delegates! Welcome to UNEP from the TVSMUNXIII. My name is Gabriela Gamboa, and I will be the chair of this committee. I am looking forward to seeing the best performance from each one of you throughout the development of the debate. From an external perspective, this is my first time leading a committee and I am grateful I have to lead such an important committee, being aware and conscious of the responsibility we hold regarding our environment and the impact we can generate therein holds a crucial circumstance in our day to day lives. Hopefully, after researching deeper into the committee, you will find yourselves engaged and interested in the cause.

I look forward to meeting you all and don't hesitate to contact me if you need extra information or any sort of guidance.

Best regards,

Gabriela Gamboa - UNEP

Expectations

The committee and the topics will be handled with extreme formality. It is expected that each of you extensively knows the role your delegation plays in the topics to discuss. It is crucial for you to know your delegation's position in regard to the discussed topic; however, be aware of the other delegations' roles and positions. The idea of the debate is to find a resolution to the upcoming complications. Our expectations go beyond seeing your ability to argue and fight in the contrary. We expect to see your ability to adapt and solve real-life conflicts.

For **Topic A**: *The protection of the environment in the armed conflict.*

It is vital that you understand the given **case study** that **exemplifies the consequences of disregarding the environment in armed conflict**. This committee will have a unique approach to the first topic, since we will be examining a historical case study -**Vietnam Agent Orange**- to properly address the current problematic in Topic A, bearing in mind the

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mistakes of the past. You ought to understand and analyze how Vietnamese civilians and soldiers were affected by the use of Agent Orange. While also analyzing the effects evidenced in American Veterans, as well. Nevertheless, be aware that the case study is NOT what the debate is going to be based upon. The debate will be based on finding the adequate mechanisms and laws to prevent damage to and prioritize the environment during armed conflict focusing in African countries. (Taking into account the region and what is going on there).

Topic B: *Transitioning underdeveloped countries into a green economy through sustainable and achievable means.*

Understand and investigate **green economy**, the implications, benefits, and consequences it regards. Explore countries that have converted into a green economy and their **strategies** to do so. If your delegation hasn't done so yet, understand why. If it has, identify **benefits** and **disadvantages** it has brought. Take into account your delegation's background and reasoning for arguing for or against a green economy.

*See bibliography for suggested sources

About UNEP

“The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment” (UN Environment).

Since its creation in 1972, the main missions of UNEP concern the management of the environment from both a national and international perspective, the assessment of environmental conditions and trends and developing instruments to face environmental challenges (e.g. Life Cycle Assessment). After the Stockholm Conference of 1972, environmental threats have boosted international cooperation to face new challenges. Many

conferences and treaties have been signed to promote cooperation among states to solve transnational issues. Due to the increased interest about climate change and environmental degradation, the activities of the organization become an essential step towards sustainability, through direct expertise and partnerships between civil society, business and international organizations. Climate change, disaster & conflicts, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance, Chemicals and Waste, Resource Efficiency and the Green economy are the major areas of interest of the organization. The green economy is defined by UNEP and therefore, from a scientific perspective, the role of this organization is paramount to connect scientists and politics, because the knowledge and the experience of the body is likely to play a useful role in current and future environmental crisis.

Topic A: Protection of the environment in armed conflict

Context

Since the emergence of environmental issues on the international political agenda in the early 1970s, there has been increasing concern that environmental disruption is likely to increase the number of disputes originating from competition for scarce resources (Roønnfeldt, 1997; Gleditsch, 1998). Since the 1990's armed groups have relied on natural resources as a form of sustainability, although resources could finance Wars, in some cases they motivated and shaped conflicts.

The first milestone regarding environmental preservation during conflict was seen during the second Persian Gulf war in 1991, this rose awareness of the destruction caused by warfare. UNEP's labor is to promote an appropriate development of ethics and policies during war, knowing it will occur regardless of the strengthening of law that protects the environment from destruction by acts of war. In the 21st century, a report of the US Department of Defense, showed a wide interest to change future scenarios that worried about climate change. 11 retired US military argued that "Climate change can act as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world" and that it "Presents significant national security challenges for the United States" (CNA, 2007). This

shows America's perspective on climate change. On the other hand The German Environment Ministry stated that "Evidence is mounting that the adverse effects of climate change can, particularly by interaction with a number of socio-economic factors, contribute to an increasing potential for conflict"(2002). This shows the point of view of Europe.

Case study

The Vietnam War started in 1945 and ended in 1975. It is now entitled a proxy war, fought during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union to prevent the necessity of the nations to fight each other directly. North Vietnam fought side by side with the Soviet Union and China, and South Vietnam with the United States, New Zealand and South Korea. It must be noted that the United States only started to be actively involved in the battle after 1963. Between 1965 and 1968 North Vietnam was bombed under Operation Rolling Thunder, in order to force the enemy to negotiate. Bombs destroyed over two million acres of land. North Vietnam forces began to strike back, and the Soviet Union delivered anti-aircraft missiles to North Vietnam. The ground war of US troops against the Viet Cong began. The United States would not retreat from Vietnam until 1973, and during those years extremely environmentally damaging weapons and war tactics were applied.

A massive herbicidal programme was carried out, in order to break the forest cover sheltering Viet Cong guerrillas, and deprive Vietnamese peasants of food. The spraying destroyed 14% of Vietnam's forests, diminished agricultural yield, and made seeds unfit for replanting. If agricultural yield was not damaged by herbicides, it was often lost because military on the ground set fire to haystacks, and soaked land with aviation fuel when burned. A total of 15,000 square kilometres of land were eventually destroyed. Livestock was often shot, to deprive peasant of their entire food supply. A total of 13,000 livestock were killed during the war.

The application of 72 million litres of chemical spray resulted in the death of many animals, and caused health effects with humans. One chemical that was applied between 1962 and 1971, called Agent Orange, was particularly harmful. Its main constituent is dioxin, which was present in soil, water and vegetation during and after the war. Dioxin is carcinogenic, meaning that it has the potential to cause cancer and teratogenic, and thus, can affect the fetus during pregnancy, resulting in spontaneous abortions, chloracne, skin and lung cancers,

lower intelligence and emotional problems among children. Children fathered by men exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War often have congenital abnormalities. An estimated half a million children were born with dioxin-related abnormalities. Agent Orange continues to threaten the health of the Vietnamese today.

More than 80 million litres of Agent Orange are estimated to have been sprayed by US forces over South Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. From the 1960s, doctors in Vietnam began to see a sharp rise in birth defects, cancers and other illnesses linked to exposure to the chemical. The US compensates its veterans exposed to the defoliant, but does not compensate Vietnamese nationals.

Between 1961 and 1971, US and Republic of Vietnam forces sprayed more than 20.2 million gallons of military herbicides to defoliate forests and mangroves in what was then South Vietnam to deny cover to enemy troops and make bombing targets more visible.

Effects in health: VA (Veterans Affairs) has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.

- AL Amyloidosis:
A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs.
- Chronic B-cell Leukemias:
A type of cancer which affects white blood cells.
- Chloracne (or similar acneiform disease):
A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2:
A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin.

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- Hodgkin's Disease:
A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia.
- Ischemic Heart Disease:
A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, which leads to chest pain.
- Multiple Myeloma:
A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow.
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue.
- Parkinson's Disease
A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement.
- Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset
A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Prostate Cancer
Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men.
- Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)
Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus.
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues.

***Taking into account the analysis provided with the use of Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. Analyze the effect of African countries conflict and the implications these have on**

the environment. Include sustentation to argument and prove possible resolutions to this ongoing problematics. (Use laws and resolutions already existent. Take into account your delegation's position).

Focus

The focus of the debate is based upon African conflict and the effect they generate upon the environment. The historical study case has been explained, it is expected for delegates to research

Questions and Concepts

- Vietnam War
 - Agent Orange
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Consequences of the use of Agent Orange
 - African Conflict
 - Environment
 - Environment in African Countries
 - What is the position of your delegation towards the debate?
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QARMAS

- Taking into account that war crimes bring different illnesses such as AIDS-HIV, PTSD, Depression or different mental health issues on the spectrum, would we be able to assure that by performing an environmental reinstatement the rate of these diseases will decrease?

***PTSD is encountered by a 39.9%, Depression by a 52%, Anxiety by a 60% and different others, but these are some of the most common illnesses caused by war crimes in Africa**

- En que medida es la guerra uno estímulo que para la inestabilidad mental de quienes la vivien?
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Suggested sources

- <http://web.mit.edu/africantech/www/articles/EnvChall.htm>
- <https://www.climate-diplomacy.org/news/climate-change-poses-security-risks-according-decades-intelligence-reports>.
- https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-015-8947-5_9.
- <https://www.paxforpeace.nl/stay-informed/news/protect-the-environment-during-armed-conflict>.
- <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198784630.001.0001/oso-9780198784630-chapter-5>.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jemGxRn0Ea8>.
- http://www.standardtimespress.org/artman/publish/article_4148.shtml.
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Topic B: Transitioning underdeveloped countries into a Green Economy in sustainable and achievable means

Context

- Humans are exploiting the Earth's natural resources at a rate which cannot sustain global economic growth in the long-term. In the last decade environmental economists, most multilateral institutions, and many national governments have announced their support for a transition to a more efficient market-friendly manner of conducting global economic affairs, a green economy. The International Chamber of Commerce defines the green economy as "an economy in which economic growth and environmental responsibility work together in a mutually reinforcing fashion while supporting progress on social development."¹ This paper offers an overview of what makes a "green economy," proposes policies which can help achieve that model and analyzes the potential effects of a green transition on communities vulnerable to this economic change. (Gordon-Harper 2017)

5 Main Principles:

***These principles will help you understand the main idea of the debate. It will help you develop new ideas to create solutions for the problem that will be treated. So, please read them carefully and use them while debating.**

- **Wellbeing principle:** It enables people to create and enjoy prosperity since its people centered, it focuses on wealth that will support not only financial necessities but also social, physical and natural capital. Additionally, it prioritizes investment and access to sustainability in natural systems; infrastructure, knowledge and education required for prosperity, it improves livelihoods and jobs and it endorses a collective action for public good even though it is based on individual choices.
- **Justice principle:** It promotes equity within and between generations, it is inclusive and non-discriminatory sharing decision- making benefits and costs fairly avoiding elite captures and supporting women empowerment. Promoting equitable distribution of opportunity and outcome, reducing disparities while also giving enough space for wildlife and wilderness. Long- term perspectives on the economy that create wealth

and resilience serving interest to future citizens working to achieve so, not disregarding today's poverty and injustice. This system also bases upon solidarity and social justice, supporting all types of rights, it empowers people and seeks for a fast and fair transition without compromising one's economy also not leaving behind vulnerable groups enabling them to be involved in the transition.

- **Planetary boundaries:** It safeguards, restores and invests in nature recognizing nature's diverse values, functional values, provision of goods and cultural and ecological values. It acknowledges the *limited substitutability* of natural capital with other capitals, employing the *precautionary principle* to avoid loss of critical natural capital and breaching ecological limits. It *invests* in protecting, growing and restoring biodiversity, soil, water, air, and natural systems. It is *innovative* in managing natural systems, informed by their properties such as circularity, and aligning with local community livelihoods based on biodiversity and natural systems.
- **Efficiency and sufficiency principle:** Geared to support sustainable consumption as well as sustainable production. It enhances low-carbon, resource-conserving, diverse and circular activity as well as embracing new models of economic development that address the challenge of creating prosperity within planetary boundaries. It also recognises there must be a significant global shift to limit consumption of natural resources to physically sustainable level if we are to remain within planetary boundaries, acknowledging a 'social floor' of basic goods and services consumption that is essential to meet people's wellbeing and dignity, as well as unacceptable 'peaks' of consumption. It aligns prices, subsidies and incentives with true costs to society, through mechanisms where the 'polluter pays' and/or where benefits accrue to those who deliver inclusive green outcomes.
- **Good governance principle:** The green economy is guided by integrated, accountable and resilient institutions. Evidence-based, interdisciplinary institutions deploying both sound science and economics along with local knowledge for adaptive strategy, supported by institutions that are integrated, collaborative and coherent – horizontally across sectors and vertically across governance levels – and with adequate capacity to meet their respective roles in effective, efficient and accountable ways. It requires public participation, prior informed consent, transparency, social dialogue, democratic accountability, and freedom from vested interests in all institutions – public, private and civil society – so that enlightened leadership is complemented by societal demand, it promotes devolved decision-making for local economies and management of natural systems while maintaining strong common, centralized standards, procedures, and compliance systems. Consequently building a

financial system with the purpose of delivering wellbeing and sustainability, set up in ways that safely serve the interests of society.

Focus

- The focus of the debate would mostly be on how to find a sustainable economy that bases itself on helping the planet to reduce the global issues that affect the environment, such as global warming, air pollution, water disposal in between others. Each delegate is asked to come out with solutions to those countries who are not able to perform the transition of a completely polluting country to a green economy by idealizing economic strategies that will help to reduce environmental risks.
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Questions and Concepts

***These are concepts the delegate will need to fulfill understand the topic and they will help the delegate to create solutions and strategies.**

- Economy
 - Renewable Energy
 - Sustainable Transport
 - Water Management
 - Waste Management
 - Land Management
 - International Chamber of Commerce
 - Developing countries
 - Finance
 - What is the position of your delegation towards the debate?
 - Is your country developed or undeveloped?
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QARMAS

- Environmental risks have been a matter of discussion since the early 50's, Is there any possibility that the green economy will supply the damage taken for over 70 years?
- Taking into account that the majority of these countries are countries with enormous economical debts, How would the process of green economy help the crisis, and by first how would arise from being a country in debt to a fully or even partly green country?

Suggested Sources

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