



*2013 St. Bonaventure University
Model United Nations Conference*

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

March 22 to March 23, 2013

Hello, my name is Kathryn Moore, and I will be your chair for the St. Bonaventure University Model United Nations Conference in the Commission of Sustainable Development. I'm currently a sophomore International Studies major with a concentration in the Middle East and have a minor in Political Science. I'm really excited for this year's committee and hope that you are too! Regarding my chairing policies, make sure you have an understanding of both the rules of procedure and your country's viewpoints, and most importantly, have FUN. I will be looking forward to seeing you this March. Good luck with your research.

Topic #1: Biodiversity in Relation to Climate Change

Biodiversity has a vital impact on our society. However, due to climate change, biodiversity has increasingly been in jeopardy. As a result, humans face an increasing threat of the loss of security due to the change in our food systems regulated by water supplies, medicine and other resources that are dependent on certain plants or fauna. In May of 2010 the United Nations summarized it as such:

Climate change is already having an impact on biodiversity, and is projected to become a progressively more significant threat in the coming decades. Loss of Arctic sea ice threatens biodiversity across an entire biome and beyond. The related pressure of ocean acidification, resulting from higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, is also already being observed.

Ecosystems are already showing negative impacts under current levels of climate change ... which is modest compared to future projected changes.... In addition to warming temperatures, more frequent extreme weather events and changing patterns of rainfall and drought can be expected to have significant impacts on biodiversity.

— Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2010), [Global Biodiversity Outlook 3](#), May, 2010, p.56

One example of an organically occurring substance that has been endangered due to climate change is coral. As of now, coral reefs, also known as the "rainforests of the seas," cover approximately 280,000 km² and support thousands of species. These reefs provide enormous benefits to the environment such as protecting the shores from the strong impact of waves, provide benefits to humans in the forms of both food and medicine, and provide economic benefits to local communities who profit from tourism. According to the World Meteorological Organization, coral reefs have yielded more than thirty billion dollars annually in global goods and services. Coral reefs contain some of the richest biodiversity on the planet. As an international organization, it is imperative that we help to preserve these structures in efforts to cultivate a greater environment.

Biodiversity does not only pertain to the coral reefs, but also various other life forms in any given ecosystem. In the Arctic, for example, several species climate change has affected the habitats of creatures like polar bears, as 25% of sea ice increasingly reduces in thickness and in time that has caused many of these animals to drown. Polar bears have not been the only animals at risk, as fish, birds, invertebrates, and even other marine mammals have had their lives changed as they know them. Other dangers of biodiversity due to climate change also include the endangerment of lizards around the world as it is predicted that by 2080 about 20% of these

creatures will be non-existent. These lizards are decreasing in population because with heat rising in their biospheres, they are not able to survive in such thermal limits, which makes it almost impossible for them to find food and they are unable to control their body temperatures under such extreme temperatures. If something is not done to protect these species the world food chain will be impacted, and with the fall of ecosystems there will be an increase in environmental disasters. Therefore, there is a great need for communities around the world to cooperate in order to prevent these violent changes that can be mitigated with each generation.

Questions:

1. What is your country's stance on climate change?
2. Has your country been affected by climate change?
3. Does your country benefit from coral reefs? If so how?
4. Has your nation enacted any laws to protect the environment?

Helpful links:

https://lh6.googleusercontent.com/https://lh6.googleusercontent.com/BwWufp9GrMbpUjW4nbCyCA2mLpud3yNs5z0V8hn-ywClTvrivTrJU1Tq7qOaJdNejPB_zfK9KA7bIRi0CA5xmTqsJq1RBydI6jwt681jaYVsvDTeNJ7 (Map of Coral reefs)

http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/wcp/agm/publications/documents/Climate_Carbon_CoralReefs.pdf

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/07/us-biodiversity-dias-idUSTRE8261QT20120307>

www.reuters.com/.../us-food-security-idUSTRE69P3MK20101026

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/10/29/us-biodiversity-idUSTRE69POL820101029>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/biodiversity-and-the-human-implications/5505.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-19800253>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-12530439>

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/172/climate-change-affects-biodiversity>

Topic #2: Deforestation

Deforestation refers to the massive clearing of forests. At this present time, forests account for approximately thirty percent of the earth. However, every year chunks of forests that are the size of Panama are lost. There are many reasons forests are being cut down at an increasingly rapid rate. Although the main reason is money or providing the needs for families. Agriculture places the most stress on these forests. In order to provide more room for farming, farmers cut down forests to allow for more room for either crops or their grazing livestock. Many small farmers will clear a few acres by cutting and burning the trees. This process is called “slash and burn agriculture” Paper production also takes away a countless number of trees each year. This is through illegal cutting by loggers and the construction of access roads that are remote in the forests. The increased amount of urban development has also contributed to deforestation. Deforestation has many negative consequences on the environment. The most severe impact is the loss of habitat of many different species that rely on the land to live. Approximately seventy percent of all land animals and plants call forests home, and many do not survive the

deforestation that is destroying their homes. Deforestation also exacerbates climate change; the soils in forests are moist. However, without the trees providing protection from the sun it dries out quickly. Trees also support the water cycle by returning the water vapor back into the atmosphere. Without trees these roles would not be filled and many forests would become deserts. Without trees there will be a spike in temperatures that will be harmful to the plants and animals that reside there. This is because the trees block the sun's rays during the day and at night they hold the heat. Trees also block a large amount of greenhouse gases that fuel global warming. The easiest way to counter all of this destruction would be to stop cutting down the trees. However, this task is difficult due to the financial aspect that is intertwined with deforestation.

Questions:

1. Is your country affected by deforestation?
2. What has your nation done to cause/prevent deforestation?
3. Does your country have many forests?
4. Is your country experiencing urbanization?

Links:

<http://www.wistv.com/story/20256250/amazon-deforestation-destroyed-uk-sized-territory>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/deforestation>

<http://www.mongabay.com/brazil.html>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/24/ozatp-climate-forests-idAFJJOE7AN04G20111124>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/23/idUS29564169320110523>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-17851237>

Topic #3: Poverty

After the Rio Conference in 1992 the world has witnessed an increase in the number of people living under the absolute poverty level. The absolute poverty level is living on less than 1.25\$ per day. The increased amount of poverty is seen in developing nations where there are less resources. The continuing increase of world poverty will endanger the entire social fabric and undermine the economic development of the environment and threaten the political stability in many of these nations being affected. In 1997, the General Assembly enacted a program called the Further Implementation of Agenda 27. They came to a decision that poverty should be eradicated and the theme should be with sustainable development. This would be one of the main goals of the international community and the entire body of the United Nations. This was also addressed in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development.

1. Improving access to sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurial opportunities and productive resources;
2. providing universal access to basic social services;
3. progressively developing social protection systems to support those who cannot support themselves;
4. empowering people living in poverty and their organizations;
5. addressing the disproportionate impact of poverty on women;

6. working with interested donors and recipients to allocate increased shares of ODA to poverty eradication; and
7. Intensifying international cooperation for poverty eradication.

Questions:

1. Is your nation considered to be a developed or underdeveloped nation?
2. What percentage of your nation is considered to live in absolute poverty?
3. Has your nation done anything to combat poverty in their own country?
4. How has your nation contributed to the global economic crisis?

Links:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10609407>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20163840>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13086979>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20255904>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-18235735>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/01/us-holdtanzania-economy-idUSBRE8A00JF20121101>

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation-overview/>