

Southern Regional Model United Nations XXI
The Global Paradigm: Enhancing Peace through Security Initiatives
November 18-20, 2010
Atlanta, GA
Email: unep@srmun.org



Dear Delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the Southern Regional United Nations Conference (SRMUN) XXI and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). My name is Jacques Pape, and I will serve as your Director. It is an honor for me to serve on the UNEP committee of SRMUN with Cetoria Tomberlin this year. While this is Cetoria's first year as a staff member, she brings a wealth of Model United Nations knowledge to the table. I have enjoyed participating in the national, regional, and international Model United Nations (MUN) programs for the past four years. I have had the opportunity to serve in a staff position on the local and national level for the past two years, with SRMUN XIX amongst the first. What I most enjoy about MUN is the ability to interact with other like-minded individuals who don't hesitate to share their ideas with others for the betterment of humankind.

The United Nations Environment Programme was established after the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden. The UNEP mandate is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. As the UNEP diligently works to ensure a peaceful cohabitation between man and nature, we have chosen the following topics to discuss at this year's conference due to the importance they play in achieving long-lasting environmental accords that will help guarantee the well-being of our planet and generations yet to come:

- I. Evaluating Environmental Crisis Response throughout the UN System
- II. Strengthening and Promoting Best Practices for the Reduction of the Worldwide Carbon Footprint
- III. Assessing Efforts to Promote Future Global Biodiversity

Each delegation is required to submit a position paper which covers each of the three topics. Position papers should be not longer than 2 pages in length and single spaced. The objective of the position paper is to convince and persuade the members of your committee that the approach outline in your paper is the best course of action. The position papers are therefore critical in providing insight into not only the policies and positions of each country, but should also provide insight into the direction each county will undertake in providing solutions to the challenges of this body.

Delegates are encouraged to use the position papers as an opportunity to state what your country plans to accomplish in this committee. Strong, well developed position papers are an excellent foundation for conference preparation. It is important to ensure all sides of each issue are adequately addressed and presented in a clear and concise manner that is easy for your audience to understand. More detailed information about how to write position papers can be found at the SRMUN website (www.srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted by Friday, October 22nd at 11:59pm EST via the on-line position paper submission system that will be available at <http://www.srmun.org>.**

I look forward to the opportunity to serve as the director for the United Nations Environment Programme during the 2010 Southeast Regional Model United Nations. I wish you all the best of luck and look forward to working with each of you. Please feel free to contact Charles, Cetoria or me if you have any questions.

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History of the United Nations Environment Programme

The United Nations lead organization on environmental affairs, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), is tasked “to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”¹ Unlike most other UN bodies, UNEP is headquartered neither in New York City nor in Geneva. It shares the United Nations Office Complex (UNON) in Nairobi, Kenya, with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. The Programme is administered by an executive director and a deputy.

The United Nations Environment Programme oversees a significant number of departments, special programs, and initiatives in many Member States around the world.² In cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in the late 1980s UNEP launched two important initiatives. The first was the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which made its first assessment report in August 1990.³ The work of the panel led to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), shepherded through the negotiation process by UNEP, and signed at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.⁴ The second was the promotion of a World Climate Conference that convened in November 1990, setting the stage for several climate agreements during the decade. The conference called worldwide attention to the problem of global warming and the need to limit carbon dioxide emissions.⁵

The policy-making body of UNEP, commonly referred to as UNEP is the Governing Council, made up of 58 Member States, that meet biennially and in special sessions in alternate years, and reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁶ The executive director, who is nominated by the UN Secretary-General and chosen by the GA, reports to the Governing Council. Additionally, he alerts the Council to UN planning proposals dealing with the environment, implements the council’s decision, and advises other UN bodies on environmental affairs.⁷

Created by General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII), December 15, 1972, in response to the recommendation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), UNEP began its work with limited expectations from the world community.⁸ While the major industrial powers encouraged the creation of a UN structure to coordinate environmental activities, they feared paying for a massive new bureaucracy. Less developed countries were concerned that a new specialized agency would create international pressure to limit their development programs.⁹ The result was a “programme,” not an “agency,” with its structure and duties carefully laid out in the authorizing resolution. A Voluntary Fund was also established to pay for most of the program’s expenses.¹⁰ Due to dependence on contributions and the decision to locate its operations in Nairobi, which was meant to assuage the less developed world’s unease, limited the likelihood that UNEP would be a major actor in world affairs.¹¹

The GA elects members to UNEP’s Governing Council on a regional basis for four-year terms. Sixteen seats are allocated to African states, 13 to Asia, six to Eastern Europe, 10 to Latin American state, and 13 to Western European and Other states. In turn, the Council elects a Bureau with a president, three vice presidents, and a Rapporteur. Since a majority of seats are held by developing states, also referred to as the global economic South, or the world’s less

¹ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 14 March 2010. <http://www.rrcap.unep.org/leadership/about/unep.cfm>

² United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010
<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=296>.

³ Imber, Mark. *Environment, Security and U.N. Reform*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994.

⁴ Victor, David G., Kal Raustiala and Eugene Skolnifoff. *The Implementation and Effectiveness of International Environmental Commitments: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.

⁵ Moore, John Allphin and Jerry Pubantz. *Encyclopedia of the United Nations*. Facts on File, Inc, 2002.

⁶ Young, Oran. *International Governance: Protecting the Environment in a Stateless Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

⁷ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.unep.org/PDF/UNEPOrganizationProfile.pdf>.

⁸ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.unep.org/PDF/UNEPOrganizationProfile.pdf>.

⁹ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010.
<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentID=97>.

¹⁰ Victor, David G., Kal Raustiala and Eugene Skolnifoff. *The Implementation and Effectiveness of International Environmental Commitments: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.

¹¹ Moore, John Allphin and Jerry Pubantz. *Encyclopedia of the United Nations*. Facts on File, Inc, 2002.

developed countries, less concern has been shown towards the fact that UNEP will unduly serve rich Member States environmental interests. Increasingly, developing states have encouraged UNEP programs in their regions. At its 19th session in January and February 1997, the Governing Council approved the Nairobi Declaration, which launched a new era of activism for UNEP. Responding to the momentum established by the 1992 UNCED, the Nairobi Declaration committed a “revitalized” UNEP to fulfilling its obligations under Agenda 21, passed by the Earth Summit. The council declared UNEP the “principal United Nations body in the field of environment.” It set a global agenda, which included developing international environmental law aimed at sustainable development, monitoring state compliance with environmental agreements and principles, serving as a link between the scientific community and policy makers, and strengthening its role as the Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, was convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This conference brought together an unprecedented number of representatives from governments, civil society, and the private sector.¹² The purpose of the Earth Summit was to examine progress made since Stockholm, and to “elaborate strategies and measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation in the context of strengthened national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries”.¹³ Two major conventions, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, were created at this Summit along with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.¹⁴

UNEP works with governments and the private sector and civil society to protect natural resources worldwide. As well as supporting assessments and developing institutional and legal capacity, UNEP promotes dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders, the exchange of best practices and success stories, the transfer of knowledge and technology, and the establishment of demonstration projects.¹⁵ In 2000 United Nations Environment Programme Financial Initiative was created. It is a global partnership between UNEP and the financial sector aimed at researching and understanding the impacts of environmental and social considerations of financial performance. Currently, over 180 institutions, including banks, insurers and fund managers, work within UNEP FI.¹⁶

The current members of the United Nations Environment Programme include:

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, BAHAMAS, BANGLADESH, BELGIUM, BENIN, BRAZIL, CANADA, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CHINA, COLOMBIA, CONGO, COSTA RICA, CROATIA, CUBA, CZECH REPUBLIC, FIJI, FINLAND, FRANCE, GABON, GERMANY, GUINEA, HUNGARY, INDIA, INDONESIA, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, ISRAEL, ITALY, JAPAN, KAZAKHSTAN, KENYA, LESOTHO, MALAYSIA, MALI, MAURITANIA, MAURITIUS, MEXICO, MONACO, MOZAMBIQUE, NETHERLANDS, NIGER, PAKISTAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, ROMANIA, RUSSIAN FEDERAL, SAUDI ARABIA, SERBIA, SOMALIA, SPAIN, SWITZERLAND, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, TUNISIA, TUVALU, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, URUGUAY, ZAMBIA.¹⁷

¹² . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html>.

¹³ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 http://www.unep.org/PDF/ABOUT_UNEP_ENGLISH.pdf.

¹⁴ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html>.

¹⁵ . United Nations Environment Programme Organization Profile. http://www.unep.org/PDF/ABOUT_UNEP_ENGLISH.pdf.

¹⁶ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html>.

¹⁷ . United Nations Environment Programme. 2000. 15 March 2010 <http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/Membership.asp>.

I. Evaluating Environmental Crisis Response throughout the UN System

Introduction

The United Nations has paid close attention to the environment within the past decade, especially as more states become aware of the potential devastation that might be caused if these issues are not dealt with properly. The United Nations Secretary-General has identified five focus areas, referring to the five major geographical regions of the world, and four cross-cutting areas, which are the UNEP's specific thematic objectives to address the UN's environmental response, around which the United Nations will coordinate its climate change activities.¹⁸ The Secretary-General has proposed that UN organizations with significant programs and mandates in each of these nine areas play a convening role. UNEP has been assigned a co-convening role for capacity building (with the United Nations Development Programme), Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (with the Food and Agriculture Organization and UNDP), public awareness (with UNCG), and "climate neutral" UN (an initiative to help reduce, or offset any greenhouse gases).¹⁹ These four "cross-cutting" areas will help UNEP to further focus its own climate change work and strengthen the UN's environmental response.²⁰

As the UNEP gains a central role in evaluating the environmental crisis and finding an adequate UN response, many UN organizations will have to combine their efforts and coordinate all environmental issues through the UNEP. Many case studies can be looked at, but none are more potent and demanding as the 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti. It presents an unparalleled opportunity for the UNEP to spearhead all of the United Nations' environmental crisis response.²¹ Other UN bodies and organizations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Under UNEP and World Meteorological Organization), UNDP, the World Bank, World Food Programme, and the United Nations General Assembly plan to coordinate present and future urgent environmental crisis responses using the UNEP as a mediator for faster response and action.²²

Although the environmental agenda as a global issue can be politically divisive at times, it must be viewed as a genuinely global issue as it has often served as the catalyst behind some of the major conflicts of the late twentieth century – as is the case with present-day Sudan.²³ Many international actors such as NGO's, IGO's, the UN, and its various bodies should come together and build upon a reliable system that will effectively deal with the issue of environmental crisis response.

United Nations Environmental Structure

Since the start of the new millennium, the world has witnessed over 35 major environment-related conflicts and some 2,500 disasters.²⁴ Over two billion people have been affected, and millions have lost their lives.²⁵ Not only do these tragic events destroy infrastructure, cause population displacement, and fundamentally undermine human security, they also compound poverty and tear apart the fabric of sustainable development.²⁶

In addition, at least 18 violent conflicts have been fueled by the exploitation of natural resources since 1990. As the global population continues to rise, and demand for resources continues to grow, there is significant potential for conflicts over natural resources to intensify in the coming decades. The consequences of climate change for water

¹⁸ UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information. UNEP 2008 Annual Report. Annual Environmental Report. Nairobi: UNEP, 2009.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. 7 November 2009 <http://www.unep.org/publications/>

²¹ UNEP. "Haiti Earthquake - UNEP/OCHA Disaster Management Teams on Standby." 14 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=608&ArticleID=6442&l=en>

²² UNEP. "Organization Profile." 2005. United Nations Environment Programme. 20 May 2010

<http://unep.org/PDF/UNEPOrganizationProfile.pdf>

²³ Imber, Mark F. "Environmental Security: A Task for the UN System." *Review of International Studies* (1991): 201-212.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. 7 November 2009. <http://www.unep.org/publications/>

availability, food security, prevalence of disease, coastal boundaries, and population distribution may further aggravate existing tensions and generate new conflicts.²⁷

Throughout the UN system, different crises require different responses. As environmental awareness and response evolves as a relatively new branch of the United Nations, it has become increasingly important for international actors to meet and discuss various ways to improve the UN response system.²⁸ The UNEP plays a pivotal role with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), beginning with their first meeting back in 2000, following the leadership provided by the ad hoc international Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies.²⁹

As mentioned by former UNEP Executive Director Klaus Toepfer, "Practically all emergencies have an important environmental component, which is often neglected."³⁰ To that extent, "We must reinforce the centrality of environmental concerns in emergency prevention, response and mitigation." From there, the two aforementioned agencies have pledged to reinforce their mutual capacity to address various disasters. A joint UNEP/OCHA environment unit was established to get assistance to disaster-stricken countries as quickly as possible.³¹

From Kosovo to Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sudan or China, UNEP has responded to crisis situations in more than 25 countries since 1999, delivering much needed environmental expertise to national governments and partners in the UN family. Nonetheless, these responses are not always conducted in a timely manner, often resulting in unnecessary expenses or casualties. For this, when disaster strikes, UNEP responds in a 4 step manner providing Member States with:

- Post-crisis environmental assessments
- Post-crisis environmental recovery
- Environmental cooperation for peacebuilding
- Disaster risk reduction³²

To deal with all post-crisis scenarios, UNEP coordinates all relief efforts through its Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch.³³ The programme is delivered through several key actors and partners, including the aforementioned Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, and the APELL (Awareness and Preparedness from Emergencies on a Local Level) Programme.

Coordinating an adequate environmental response

As the international community has shifted its focus from post-crisis intervention to crisis prevention, the UNEP's environmental response branch has expanded its operational range, adding disaster risk reduction and environmental cooperation for peace building to its core services of post-crisis environmental assessment and recovery. This environmental response branch is based in Geneva, Switzerland, with project offices in Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria.³⁴ The Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, a partnership whose members include UNEP, UNDP, OSCE, UNECE and REC, builds on the combined strengths and field presence of the lead organizations to perform three key functions: assessment of environment and security risks, capacity-building and institutional development to strengthen regional cooperation, and the integration of environmental and security concerns and priorities into international and national policy-making. ENVSEC projects

²⁷ Imber, Mark F. "Environmental Security: A Task for the UN System." *Review of International Studies* (1991): 201-212.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. *Environmental Risk Identification - Hurricane Dean and possible effects on Jamaica*. Geneva: UNEP/OCHA, 2004.

³⁰ UNEP. Statement by Klaus Toepfer - Executive Director of UNEP. April 2010. 7 June 2010

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=392&ArticleID=4497&l=en>

³¹ "Organization Profile." 2005. United Nations Environment Programme. 20 May 2010

<http://unep.org/PDF/UNEPOrganizationProfile.pdf>

³² UNEP. "UNEP And Partners to Combat Climate Change." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 22 May 2010

http://www.unep.org/pdf/081127_POZNANBKL_web.pdf

³³ UNEP. Actors. 2010. 18 May 2010 <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/Actors/tabid/231/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

³⁴ Ibid.

are implemented in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The ENVSEC Secretariat is hosted by UNEP in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit mobilizes and coordinates the international emergency response to acute environmental risks caused by conflicts, natural disasters, and industrial accidents.³⁵ The Unit is housed with the Office of the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs, in Geneva, Switzerland, and works in close cooperation with the Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch.³⁶ The APELL (Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies on a Local Level) Programme works with communities in natural and hazard-prone areas, helping them prepare for and mitigate the environmental risks of industrial accidents.³⁷ The programme is housed with UNEP in Paris, France.³⁸

Disasters are not random and do not occur by accident. They are the convergence of hazards and vulnerable conditions. Disasters not only reveal underlying social, economic, political and environmental problems, but unfortunately contribute to worsening them, hindering economic and social progress.³⁹ Also, healthy ecosystem services that protect lives from natural hazards, support livelihoods and other crucial aspects of human well-being, as well as effective environmental management and environmental information, offer opportunities to reduce risk, decrease poverty and achieve sustainable development.⁴⁰

UNEP works to prevent and combat future environmental threats based on early risk assessments. The Division of Early Warning and Assessment facilitates access to relevant environmental data for decision-making through monitoring, analyses and reports on the state of the global and regional environment and trends, producing such publications as the Global Environment Outlook.⁴¹ The primary focus is on longer-term warning of emerging environmental problems and threats (known as slow-onset disasters), but also to provide scientific and technical support concerning natural disasters through such applications as the Project on Risk Evaluation, Vulnerability, Information and Early Warning (PreView). PreView is a project initiated by UNEP in 1999, which is now being supported by four institutions: UNEP, UNISDR, UNDP and the World Bank.⁴²

In its post-crisis assessment and recovery work, UNEP's programme focuses on countries that have been identified as vulnerable to natural hazards, as well as on human-made disaster events with an environmental component.⁴³ In addition, UNEP seeks to reduce and/or avert future vulnerabilities by integrating environment and disaster risk reduction into recovery efforts. As an effective means to disseminate policies into practice, UNEP coordinates the Partnership on Environment for Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), a global level forum and a Platform of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which seeks to advance an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, ecosystem management and livelihoods. Some of the partners include: IUCN, WWF, SEI, GFMC, and ADP.⁴⁴

Implementation stages

Through its Joint Environment Unit with the Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs, UNEP mobilizes and coordinates the international emergency response and identification of acute environmental risks caused by conflicts, disasters and industrial accidents. Upon request from national governments, UNEP is also available to conduct detailed post-crisis environmental assessments based on fieldwork, laboratory analysis and state-of-the-art

³⁵ Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit. Environmental Risk Identification - Hurricane Dean and possible effects on Jamaica. Geneva: UNEP/OCHA, 2004.

³⁶ OCHA. About OCHA. May 2010. 15 June 2010 <http://ochaonline.un.org/tabid/5838/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

³⁷ UNEP. The APELL Programme. June 2010. 16 June 2010 <http://www.unep.fr/scp/sp/programme/>

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ UNEP. Environmental Governance. 2010. 23 May 2010 <http://unep.org/environmentalgovernance/>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ UNEP. Disaster and Conflicts. 2010. 21 May 2010 <http://unep.org/conflictsanddisasters/>

⁴² UNEP. "UNEP Climate Change Strategy." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 19 May 2010 http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP_CC_STRATEGY_web.pdf

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ ISDR. Mission and objectives. May 2010. 15 June 2010 http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-mission-objectives-eng.htm

technology.⁴⁵ These assessments identify major environmental risks to health, livelihoods and security and provide recommendations for national authorities, UN Country Teams and civil society organizations on addressing identified needs, investing in risk reduction and building back better.

Each assessment is conducted on an equally neutral, impartial, and scientific basis and adopts a tailor-made approach to the situation's particular geographical, political and security conditions. Depending on the findings of the assessment, UNEP can initiate and implement capacity-building and recovery programmes, clean-up and rehabilitation projects, or environmental cooperation for peace building.⁴⁶

Since 1999, UNEP has conducted post-crisis environmental assessments in the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Haiti, Lebanon, Sudan, Ukraine, and Rwanda, as well as the countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. In 2009, environmental assessments were conducted in such countries as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria.⁴⁷

Post-crisis environmental recovery programmes, which can last for several years, aim to strengthen the capacity of national and local environmental authorities (for example through law and policy development), rehabilitate ecosystems, mitigate risks and ensure that resources are used in a sustainable manner within recovery and development processes.⁴⁸

Where it is necessary and requested, UNEP can establish project offices in country, as is currently the case in Afghanistan and Sudan. UNEP is also implementing environmental recovery programmes in China, Myanmar, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Cote D'Ivoire implemented from UNEP Offices in Kabul and Khartoum.

To help address the environmental dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding effectively, UNEP has developed a unique relationship with the UN Peacebuilding Commission and broadened its expertise and capacity by establishing an Expert Advisory Group on Environment, Conflict and Peacebuilding. The Group, composed of senior experts from academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and think tanks with demonstrated leadership in environment and conflict issues, provides independent expertise, develops tools and policy inputs, and identifies best practices for using natural resources and the environment in ways that contribute to peacebuilding and prevent relapse into conflict.

A joint product of UNEP and the Expert Advisory Group, the policy paper *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: the Role of Natural Resources and the Environment* summarizes the latest knowledge and field experience on the linkages between environment, conflict and peacebuilding, and recommends how those linkages can be addressed in a more coherent and systematic way by the UN, Member States and other stakeholders.

On the ground, UNEP has pioneered innovative approaches in Sudan, between Iran and Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, and between the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel. In 2009, the UNEP will principally focus on countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, including the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. In the South Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, UNEP works together with ENVSEC partners to support countries in their efforts to manage environment and security risks through regional cooperation. The multi-stakeholder assessments and information exchange projects conducted by UNEP aim to identify common interests, improve mutual understanding, and build foundations for agreements on transboundary environmental management. In 2009, the ENVSEC partners are implementing over 50 projects in the four beneficiary regions, with a total budget of over USD 30 million.

⁴⁵ UNEP. Environmental Governance. 2010. 23 May 2010 <<http://unep.org/environmentalgovernance/>>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ UNEP. Post-Crisis Environmental Recovery. May 2010. 10 June 2010
<http://www.unep.org/conflictsanddisasters/Introduction/PostCrisisEnvironmentalRecovery/tabid/415/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Case Study – Haiti



UNEP – Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince, headquarters of few MINUSTAH operatives

As of late July 2010, UNEP has been heavily involved in post-environmental relief work across the globe. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch is the main branch of the UNEP in charge of coordinating technical environmental assistance.⁴⁹ Following major environmental disasters, such as the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, UNEP coordinates relief efforts with the assistance of the United Nations Office for the Coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA is the “arm of the UN secretariat that is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure coherent response to emergencies, (...) and ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort.”⁵⁰

Environmental disasters happen on a frequent, yet random basis (depending on the intensity of the disaster), so it is imperative that the UNEP coordinates effectively with other UN bodies. Following the devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake that struck China's western Sichuan province on 12 May 2008, UNEP sent experts to China to provide technical assistance and with the assistance of its local branch based in Beijing, “it has continued to provide advice to the Chinese government on environmental management, green reconstruction, asbestos laboratories, contaminated site assessment, and national guidelines in disaster reduction and emergency response.”⁵¹

In the aftermath of the January 12th earthquake that struck the Caribbean island nation of Haiti, many UNEP operatives that were previously involved in local environmental initiatives shifted their focus to immediate disaster relief efforts.⁵² As mentioned by a senior UNEP program manager working on various environmental projects in Haiti: “I am writing this from the main UN compound in Port au Prince. The quake was a direct hit on the city. Destroyed buildings are everywhere, walls collapsed, roads blocked. (...) UN has also suffered casualties as a six storey UN building collapsed. The priority moving forward is preparing to assist the population,” he added.⁵³

With an extensive background in post-earthquake relief, his unit, with the help of a Hazard Identification Tool (HIT), was able to assess the actual impacts and potential needs for further assistance amongst the Haitian population.⁵⁴ As a veteran of UNEP's Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch, he planned to stay to assist in

⁴⁹ UNEP. “Haiti Earthquake - UNEP/OCHA Disaster Management Teams on Standby.” 14 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=608&ArticleID=6442&l=en>

⁵⁰ OCHA. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 27 June 2010. 25 July 2010

<http://ochaonline.un.org/tabid/5838/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁵¹ UNEP. “Haiti Earthquake - UNEP/OCHA Disaster Management Teams on Standby.” 14 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=608&ArticleID=6442&l=en>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ UNEP. “UNEP to lead environmental recovery efforts in Haiti.” 20 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010 http://www.rona.unep.org/documents/news/UNEP_to_lead_environmental_recovery_efforts_in_Haiti.pdf

⁵⁴ Ibid.

emergency engineering and building and infrastructure assessment.⁵⁵ In Geneva, the UNEP Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joint Environment Unit was monitoring the situation closely and following the situation assessment report, sent in members of OCHA to further coordinate relief efforts between the Haitian government and participating member states.⁵⁶

As a nation prone to many environmental disasters, Haiti is no stranger to poor environmental disaster response and lack of coordination. With an estimated death toll of nearly 250,000 thousand individuals, this disaster by far trumps all others that Haiti may have faced in the past.⁵⁷ With statements immediately coming from presidents of many member states, the UN Secretary General, the UN Under-Secretary General, and the UNEP Executive Director, Haiti is now at the center of many international relief efforts as it presents an opportunity to fix a previously ineffective environmental response infrastructure.⁵⁸

Immediately following the earthquake, UNEP and its office in Geneva set up the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environmental Emergencies Unit, which according to their website, "will utilize a Hazard Identification Tool (HIT) to allow Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams on the ground to recognize potential secondary risks to human safety as well as the environment."⁵⁹ Listing the facilities and objects most likely to pose a risk in the aftermath of the earthquake, and their probable impacts, the HIT list is expected to facilitate any disaster relief efforts with the proven record of working in environmental disaster areas such as Pakistan, Peru, and the Philippines.⁶⁰ Moving forward, a lot more is being said than done, so the UNEP and other affiliated UN bodies have a lot more on their plates than originally anticipated. For this, special attention must be placed on the high-risk, high-damage countries such as Haiti, so as to prevent such disasters from happening in the near future. As noted by Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes, "OCHA will lead on overall coordination, while UNEP will ensure the integration of environmental issues into the respective cluster response plans."⁶¹

Conclusion – Committee Directive

Within the past decade, the United Nations through its subsidiary bodies have paid closer attention to the role played by the environment in crisis situations. With an aim of evaluating the environmental crisis response throughout the United Nations system, the UNEP is now faced with a challenging task of not only examining past environmental crises and how the UN system dealt with them, but also looking at future environmental catastrophes and finding efficient ways to deal with them. For this, delegates will be expected to have a good understanding of the UNEP's mandate, and how can it be used effectively to find an adequate environmental response for the UN system.

Case studies such as the one above should not only be used as a research aid, but also as a practical guideline to how the current UN system undertakes environmental crises, and whether or not it is effective. Also, throughout the research process, delegates are encouraged to consider the following questions: Should the UN have an overarching environmental response that deals with every type of situation, or should agencies such as the UNEP tailor their focus on specific disasters such as tsunamis or earthquakes? Should the UN's environmental branches be regionally based so that they have a better idea of the needs of the region when dealing with post-disaster crises – regardless of the type of disaster?

⁵⁵ UNEP. "Staff Member Caught up in Tragedy Sends Eye Witness Account from Port au Prince." 13 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 19 May 2010 http://www.rona.unep.org/documents/news/UNEP_Press_Release_-_Haiti_Earthquake_-_UNEP_OCHA_Disaster_Management_Teams_on_Standby.pdf

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "UNEP to lead environmental recovery efforts in Haiti." 20 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010 http://www.rona.unep.org/documents/news/UNEP_to_lead_environmental_recovery_efforts_in_Haiti.pdf

⁵⁹ UNEP. "Haiti Earthquake - UNEP/OCHA Disaster Management Teams on Standby." 14 January 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 21 May 2010 <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=608&ArticleID=6442&l=en>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

II. Assessing Efforts to Promote Future Global Biodiversity

Introduction

"Biodiversity" is often defined as the variety of all forms of life, from genes to species, through to the broad scale of ecosystems. The Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as: "the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems."⁶² The actual phrase "Biodiversity" was coined as a contraction of "biological diversity".⁶³ Since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992, global concern for environmental and developmental issues has increased, which has led to an extensive range of internationally agreed environmental and development goals.⁶⁴ However, despite the growing international concern, the concept of global biodiversity has been a different selling point.

In 1994, Jon Margolis commented to the *Chicago Tribune* that a Global Biodiversity Assessment did not exist.⁶⁵ "There is no such document," said a member of the staff of the UN Environmental Program.⁶⁶ "We have a biodiversity treaty and a secretariat," she continued.⁶⁷ "The Global Biodiversity Assessment is a process, just beginning, in which scientists from all over the world will monitor the world's biological diversity."⁶⁸

Currently, there are six primary causes of biodiversity loss set forth in "The Global Biodiversity Strategy" which was developed in 1992 by the World Resources Institute (WRI), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UNEP." They are as follows: 1.) High rate of human population growth and natural resource consumption; 2.) Steadily narrowing spectrum of traded products from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; 3.) Economic systems and policies that fail to value the environment and its resources; 4.) Inequity in ownership and access to natural resources, including benefits from use and conservation of biodiversity; 5.) Inadequate knowledge and inefficient use of information; 6.) Legal and institutional systems that promote unsustainable exploitation.⁶⁹

In April 2010, a comprehensive and inclusive environmental assessment process started in Nairobi, Kenya at UNEP headquarters. At this meeting "over two hundred government representatives, institutions, and experts discussed and adopted the objectives, scope and process for the next Global Environment Outlook-5 (GEO-5 Report), to be released in 2012."⁷⁰

Value of Biodiversity

By assigning a value, qualitative or numerical, for biodiversity, it is easier to support future efforts for the global promotion of biodiversity. However, placing a reasonable numerical value on biodiversity is considered impossible by some.⁷¹ As noted Stanford researcher, Daniel Faith states: "these quantified values typically will not be in conventional units (e.g. dollars), but nevertheless can be balanced with other values of society".⁷² Typically, the value of global biodiversity is classified in two ways: directly and indirectly. Direct economic value can be ascertained by thoroughly examining various areas. Agriculture is one of these areas. Crop production increases in areas that maintain richer soil compositions. Thus, Member States that have greater biodiversity will perform better

⁶² "Biodiversity" The Encyclopedia of Earth. National Council for Science and the Environment.

<http://www.eoearth.org/article/biodiversity>

⁶³ Faith, Daniel. "Biodiversity." Metaphysics Research Lab, CSCI, Stanford University. Dec 2007.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/biodiversity/>

⁶⁴ "Groundbreaking Environmental Assessment Kicks Off in Nairobi, Kenya." United Nations Environmental Programme. 2010. <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=617&ArticleID=6518&l=en&t=long>

⁶⁵ Coffman, Michael and Henry Lamb. "Global Biodiversity Assessment: Section 10: Measures for Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Its Components Peer Review Draft, September 2, 1994." Environmental Conservation Organization. 1996. <http://www.freedom.org/reports/gba10.htm>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

economically. Another agricultural benefit of biodiversity is that it provides food security especially in developing countries where rural communities are more customary.

The direct economic value of biological diversity can be seen easily in rural communities. Biodiversity is viewed as extremely economically valuable in many rural populations because it acts as a kind of insurance and coping mechanism to increase flexibility or reduce risk in the face of increasing uncertainty, shocks, and surprises.⁷³ The availability of this biological “safety net” has increased the security and resilience of some local communities to external economic and ecological perturbations, shocks, or surprises. In a world where unpredictable commodity prices are more the norm than the exception, economic entitlements of the poor are increasingly becoming hazardous.⁷⁴ The availability of an ecosystem-based food security net during times when economic entitlements are insufficient to purchase adequate nourishment in the market provides an important insurance program.⁷⁵

Indirect value can be established by assessing how we benefit from biodiversity without directly consuming resources. This can be observed in many ways such as how biodiversity actively maintains the chemical quality of natural water, which in turn provides a buffer against storms and droughts.⁷⁶ Areas that contain a richness of biodiversity also enjoy a healthy breakdown of organic wastes and recycling of minerals. This is extremely important in areas with poor sanitation.⁷⁷ Biodiverse regions also help to prevent the loss of minerals and nutrients and also absorb, to a certain degree, pollution.⁷⁸

Habitat Destruction and Fragmentation

One of the greatest hindrances biodiversity currently faces is habitat destruction or fragmentation. Habitat destruction refers to the complete obliteration of a habitat while habitat fragmentation refers to sectioning off areas of the habitat until only pieces of it remain viable.⁷⁹ Habitat destruction or fragmentation can be caused in various ways. The first, and most common, is the development of a specific area for human habitation. This is done typically through the cutting and/or burning of previously diverse land in order to level the ground in preparation for construction. However, this is not done maliciously. Because populations have increased drastically in the last century, the Earth has become a much smaller place and the struggle for land areas is only increasing.⁸⁰

And so, areas that would once rich with biological diversity such as the Madagascan jungle and the Amazon rainforest have dwindled. It is estimated that only 10% of the Madagascan jungle remains while only 5% of the Amazon rainforest.⁸¹ Areas such as these are referred to by biologists as “hot spots” due to their rich biodiversity.⁸² They often contain many species that can only survive in that particular environment. Efforts have been made to both perverse and converse what is left of especially biodiverse regions. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is an international non-governmental organization that strives to preserve “hot spots” and other areas of biological interest.⁸³ WWF is present in over 100 countries and “work to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth and the health of ecological systems”.⁸⁴ They attempt to accomplish this by: “1) protecting natural areas and wild populations of plants and animals, including endangered species; 2) promoting sustainable approaches to the use of renewable natural resources; and 3) promoting more efficient use of resources and energy and the maximum reduction of pollution.”⁸⁵ While WWF has a foundation in science, it works to involve action at every level from local to global, and ensures the delivery of innovative solutions that meet the needs of both people and nature.⁸⁶

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Biodiversity & Well-being.” GreenFacts. May 2009. <http://www.greenfacts.org/en/biodiversity/index.htm>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Wilson, Edward. *The Diversity of Life*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 1999.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Protection the Planet.” Population Connection.

http://www.populationconnection.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues_protectingtheplanet

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Who We Are- Environmental Conservation.” World Wildlife Fund 2010. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/who/index.html>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Case study: The Amazon Rainforest

The Amazon Rainforest is the world's largest and most biologically diverse rainforest. However, due to significant fragmentation, both its size and amount of biodiversity are decreasing at alarming rates. Since the early 1970s it is estimated that 650,000 square kilometers, or roughly 18 percent of the original forest area has been destroyed.⁸⁷ Causes for the fragmentation of the Amazon vary from road construction to agricultural clearing for cattle pastures, and also logging.⁸⁸ If the fragmentation continues at its current rate the Amazon could eventually become a savanna, which would put the area's current plant and animal population at much higher risk for extinction. Scientists believe the Amazon rainforest houses at least one third of the planet's terrestrial species.⁸⁹

As large areas of forest are cut into smaller blocks, edge effects alter the flora and fauna of forests. Fragmented patches of forest are subject to drying winds that increase the frequency of tree falls. Tree falls tears gaps in the canopy, destroying its function of moderating the humidity, temperature, and heat conditions of the forest floor. Many rare species that dwell in the deep primary forest are unable to cope with the new conditions.⁹⁰

Dr. William Laurence, a scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama noted when it comes to biodiversity loss, time is of the essence: "These changes occur remarkably fast, and when you completely alter something as basic as the trees, the other species that live in the rainforest will surely be affected too".⁹¹

In response to the alarming rates of forest fragmentation, the Brazilian government has made attempts to decrease the amount of habitat loss by reigning in the practice of forest clearing. The government has "set aside more than 100 million hectares of the Amazon basin from development" and continues to "crack down on illegal activities".⁹² Brazilian banks, such as Bradesco, have their full support to the Amazon Planting Programme, which has oversee the replanting of over 21 million trees. Efforts such as these have lead to a visible reduction of forest loss. In 2006 forest loss was forty percent less than the previous year.⁹³

International organizations have also taken on the challenge of "saving" the Amazon rainforest. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is currently employing a seven-year plan that encourages local communities and government partnership to "identify mutual solutions that can bridge the needs of economic development and conservation".⁹⁴ WWF's vision is to conserve the Amazon through "local and national action in priority landscapes and aquatic systems; region-wide efforts in planning, leadership and coordination; and global influence of market forces".⁹⁵

The immensity of the Amazon's challenge, like the scale of its landscape, requires a long-term conservation vision backed by strong scientific expertise. WWF has been at the forefront in protecting the Amazon for more than 40 years. Our approach is succeeding because we engage local communities and partner with governments to identify mutual solutions that can bridge the needs of economic development and conservation.

Pollution

Another threat to biodiversity is pollution. Humans are the greatest contributor to this problem.⁹⁶ For the most recent 10,000 years man has been the greatest factor affecting biodiversity, with adverse impacts occurring at an accelerating pace since approximately the Industrial Revolution.⁹⁷ The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

⁸⁷ Butler, Rhett. "Fragmentation killing species in the Amazon rainforest." Mongobay.com. 2006.
<http://print.news.mongabay.com/2006/1127-stri.html?print>

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Brady, Simon. "Sustainable Amazonas Foundation: Adding Value Without Destruction." *Euromoney*. 2008.

⁹⁴ "Amazon: World's Largest Tropical Rainforest and Rive Basin" World Wildlife Fund. 2010
<http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/wherewework/amazon/index.html>

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

illustrates that action taken by humans often lead to “irreversible losses in terms of diversity of life on Earth and these losses have been more rapid in the past 50 years than ever before in human history”.⁹⁸ Environmentalists consider pollution a substantial side effect of our developing world. Litter, a term often used to describe everyday household items normally disposed of on the ground instead of in a trash can, can also be used to describe major environmental contaminations such as oil spills, greenhouse emissions, and the dumping of trash into the ocean.

Policies have been developed to combat this issue such as the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted in Kyoto, Japan in 1997. This document “sets binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European community for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These amount to an average of five per cent against 1990 levels over the five-year period 2008-2012.”⁹⁹ The overall purpose of the Kyoto Protocol is to “assist countries in adapting to the adverse effects of climate change”.¹⁰⁰ It does this by facilitating “the development of techniques that can help increase resilience to the impacts of climate change”.¹⁰¹

While the Kyoto Protocol has a large amount of international support, some Member States have decided against signing onto the document. One of the main reasons for hesitation is that unlike other environmental documents, which encourage environmentally friendly policies, the Kyoto Protocol requires them.¹⁰² Cross-border pollution is a serious environmental problem that often frustrates Member State solutions. As pollution from one Member States contaminates the air and water of another, it creates a dilemma for both and leaves local communities with few real options.¹⁰³

Case Study: Beijing, China

Beijing, China received the honor of hosting the 2008 Olympics. A few years prior to this, in 2005 Beijing also held another honor: the air pollution capital of the world.¹⁰⁴ Satellite data has revealed “the city is one of the worst environmental victims of China's spectacular economic growth, which has brought with it air pollution levels that are blamed for more than 400,000 premature deaths a year”.¹⁰⁵ According to the European Space Agency, Beijing and its neighboring northeast Chinese provinces have “the planet's worst levels of nitrogen dioxide, which can cause fatal damage to the lungs”.¹⁰⁶

The satellite data collected revealed “pollutants in the sky over China have increased by about 50% during the past 10 years”.¹⁰⁷ A recently published study overseen by the Chinese Academy on Environmental Planning “blamed air pollution for 411,000 premature deaths - mostly from lung and heart-related diseases in 2003”.¹⁰⁸ The study also stated that “a third of China's urban residents were exposed to harmful levels of pollution and more than 100 million people live in cities, such as Beijing, where the air is considered “very dangerous””.¹⁰⁹

As if this news was not tragic enough, Chinese officials warn that worse is still to come. The deputy director of the environmental protection agency, Zhang Lijun, said “that pollution levels could more than quadruple within 15 years unless the country can slow the rise in energy consumption and automobile use”.¹¹⁰

As a major international city, Beijing faces many of the same air pollution problems of most urban areas including emissions from industrial factories and automobiles.¹¹¹ With the 2008 Olympic games fast approaching, Beijing began making seriously changes aimed at reducing the emissions of its busy city. Some of those included limited

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Kyoto Protocol.” United Nations Convention on Climate Change. 2010. http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Watts, Jonathan. “Satellite data reveals Beijing as air pollution capital of world.” The Guardian. 31 Oct. 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Hongliand, Wang. “Beijing strives to improve air quality as Games draw near.” 23 Jun. 2008 Xinhua News Agency.

the amount of driving individual cars could do and thus encouraging further utilization of public transportation.¹¹² Beijing also relocated the city's major steel makers and prohibiting neighboring provinces from burning straw.¹¹³

These efforts did not go unnoticed. Statistics showed air quality in Beijing improved for nine consecutive years since its Olympic bid in 1998.¹¹⁴ Major air pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, have decreased by 10 to 60 percent.¹¹⁵ Ivo Allegrini, head of the Institute for Atmospheric Pollution of the Research National Council in Italy, "China has made achievements in the past five years what it took the Europe 20 to 25 years to achieve in terms of the air quality improvement".¹¹⁶

Climate Change

Climate change is defined by the United Nations Convention on Climate Change as "change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods".¹¹⁷

Climate change is projected to aggravate the loss of biodiversity and greatly increase the risk and rates of extinction for many species, especially those already at risk due to factors such as low population numbers, restricted or patchy habitats, and limited adaptability skills.¹¹⁸ In the past century, climate change has already had a noticeable impact on biodiversity.¹¹⁹ Observed recent changes in climate, especially warmer regional temperatures, have already had significant impacts on ecosystems, including causing changes in species distributions, population sizes, the timing of reproduction or migration events, and an increase in the frequency of pest and disease outbreaks.¹²⁰ Many coral reefs have undergone major bleaching episodes when local sea surface temperatures have increased unexpectedly.¹²¹ Precipitation patterns have changed as well. The global average sea level rose 0.1–0.2 meters.¹²² By the end of the century, climate change and its impacts may become the dominant factor of global biodiversity loss.¹²³

Conclusion

The future of biodiversity remains uncertain. In recent years, the issue has received more attention and funding than ever before, but because few long-term studies of current incentives exist, judging the future path is difficult.

The current loss of biodiversity and the related changes in the environment are now faster than ever before in human history and there is no sign of this process slowing down. Many animal and plant populations have declined in numbers, geographical spread, or both. While species extinction is a natural part of Earth's history, human activity has increased the extinction rate by at least 100 times compared to the natural rate.¹²⁴ Most predictions for the future of biodiversity in the coming century indicate that loss of species will continue unless drastic measures are taken to curtail habitat loss and climate change.¹²⁵ Presently, the reduction rates of biodiversity are not promising. Virtually all of Earth's ecosystems have been dramatically transformed through human actions and ecosystems continue to be converted for agricultural and other uses.¹²⁶

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "Facing & Surveying the Problem." United Nations Convention on Climate Change. 2010.

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2914.php

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

However, with the growing global awareness surrounding biodiversity there is hope the international community can and will combine efforts to make the future a more biodiverse one. Even with the current obstacles facing biodiversity, both local and international communities are making efforts to prevent the further loss of biodiversity. Conferences such as the one held in April 2010 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya to assess the current state of the Earth's environment are a wonderful step in the right direction. The first step to solving a problem is to understand the depth of its devastation.

Committee Directive

The promotion of biodiversity is critical to both the economic and environmental future success of all Member States. As the knowledge of the advantages of biodiversity proliferates, there is an increased chance public awareness will arise and issues such as interest, funding, and attention will be met. However, it is important to realize with the knowledge already available concerning the benefits of biodiversity to begin encouraging its preservation now.

The theme of SRMUN 2010 is "The Global Paradigm: Enhancing Peace through Security Initiatives" and within this committee there are endless possibilities for the implementation of this premise. With the world facing what has been referred to as some as the sixth major extinction, it is now time for this committee and the United Nations as a whole to take action.¹²⁷

Questions to consider within this committee are: What efforts can be made to further promote the preservation and conservation of environmental "hot spots"? What can both the local and global community do to ensure the future of biodiversity? Is complete preservation a possibility, and, if so, how is this accomplished? What efforts can be made to restore biodiversity? What are ways in which resources can be allocated as to not further disrupt natural environments? What factors will become greater obstacles for biodiversity in the future?

III. Strengthening and Promoting Best Practices for the Reduction of the Worldwide Carbon Footprint

Introduction

With global warming becoming an urgent international issue, educating and promoting the best "green" practices has proven to be an enormous challenge. Climate change has ceased to be a scientific curiosity, and is no longer just one of many environmental and regulatory concerns. As the United Nations Secretary General has stated, it is the major, overriding environmental issue of our time, and the single greatest challenge facing environmental regulators.¹²⁸ It is a growing crisis with economic, health and safety, food production, and security dimensions, among others.¹²⁹ The decisions people make each day as to how they use various sources of energy affect the environment in ways that are often unseen. The more carbon-dioxide that is emitted, the more detrimental it is for both the environment and the general well-being of Earth.

The potential for runaway greenhouse warming is real and ever more present. The most dangerous climate changes may still be avoided if a transformation of the hydrocarbon-based energy systems occurs and if rational and adequately financed adaptation programs to forestall disasters and humanitarian migrations at unprecedented scales are initiated. The tools are available, but they must be applied immediately and aggressively.¹³⁰ This is why the reduction of the current carbon footprints to sustainable levels is imperative to the well-being of future generations. UNEP is dedicated to promoting strong ecosystem management through the use of international cooperation and diplomacy. Ecosystem management is an approach to natural resource management that focuses on sustaining ecosystems to meet both ecological and human needs in the future. Ecosystem management is adaptive to changing

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ General, UN Secretary. Secretary General - Office of the Spokesperson. 23 January 2004. 29 June 2010
<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=747>

¹²⁹ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. 7 November 2009 <http://www.unep.org/publications/>

¹³⁰ Ibid.

needs and new information. It promotes shared vision of a desired future by integrating social, environmental and economic perspectives to managing geographically defined natural ecological systems.¹³¹

While many states refuse to accept their role in the global sustainable environment arena, international cooperation, diplomacy, and consensus building should be the starting bloc of any global initiative to reduce the worldwide carbon footprint. For this, UNEP should serve as the mediator for all discussions and promote global sustainable environmental literacy campaigns.

While many sectors of the international community have attempted to find a solution to reducing their own carbon footprint, no major international initiative has successfully been able to bring every member of the United Nations to an agreement. Nations like China, India, and the United States, whose combined global carbon footprint exceeds those of every other nations need to come to a consensus, and in order to do so, a strong, well-thought worldwide action must be brought forward by the worlds leading environmental agency. This action plan must include every aspect that impacts environmental resolutions including social (humanitarian impact), economic (financial feasibility of the project), and political (taking into account states' biases vis-à-vis one another).

Defining Sustainable Measures to Reduce the Worldwide Carbon Footprint

Commonly defined as a “measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide,” the worldwide carbon footprint is increasingly becoming the center for international debates.¹³² Regardless of the outcomes, it has become clear that humans have a larger impact on the environment, and finding international sustainable practices to manage this “footprint” has become increasingly difficult. Whether the problem is approached via an international level as opposed to a regional one, many policy challenges remain.¹³³

Ongoing international efforts spearheaded by the UNEP with its other United Nations partners such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) all revolve around the concept of carbon offsets.¹³⁴ This conceptual tool which is the center of many international debates involves the mitigation of carbon emissions through the development of alternative projects such as solar or wind energy, or reforestation.¹³⁵

An IPCC Evaluation of the Worldwide Carbon Footprint Reduction

The building sector is responsible for more than one third of total energy use, and, in most countries, it is the largest greenhouse gas emissions source.¹³⁶ Energy is mainly consumed during the use stage of buildings for heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, appliances, etc.¹³⁷ A smaller percentage, normally 10-20%, of the energy consumed is for materials manufacturing, construction and demolition.¹³⁸

According to the fourth assessment report (AR-4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), building-related GHG emissions were estimated at 8.6 billion metric tons CO₂ eq/yr in 2004, and could almost double by 2030 to reach 15.6 billion metric tons CO₂ eq/yr under the high-growth scenario.¹³⁹ IPCC's fourth assessment report further concluded that the building sector not only has the largest potential for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also that this potential is relatively independent of the cost per ton of CO₂

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Reference.com. 2010. 26 June 2010 <http://www.reference.com/browse/carbon+footprint>

¹³³ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. 7 November 2009 <http://www.unep.org/publications/>

¹³⁴ UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. 7 November 2009 <http://www.unep.org/publications/>

¹³⁵ Ibid.

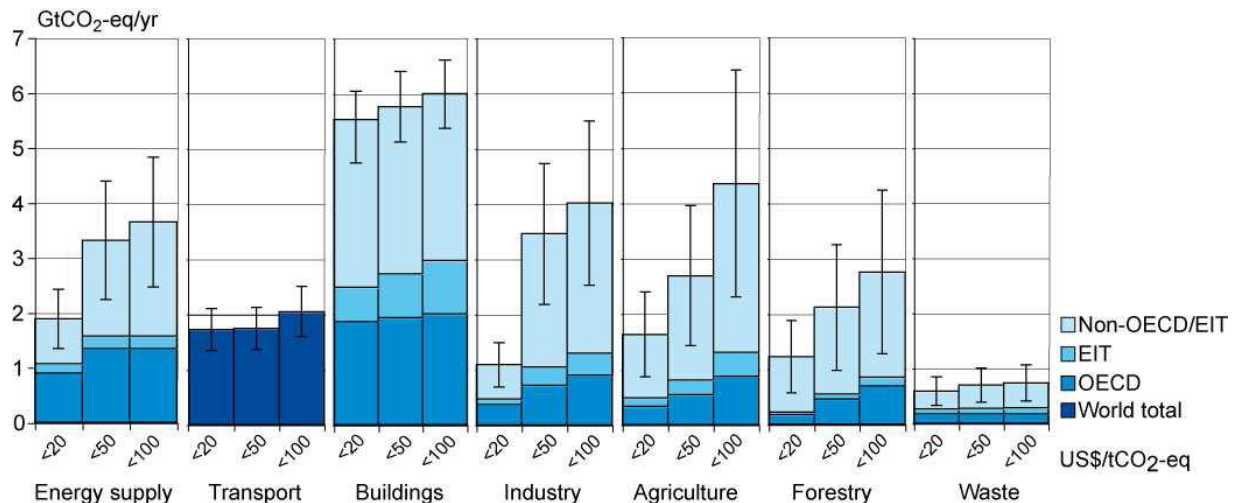
¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ UNEP. Environmental Governance. 2010. 23 May 2010 <<http://unep.org/environmentalgovernance/>>.

¹³⁹ United Nations Environment Programme. "Submission of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Sustainable Building Initiative (SBCI) to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA)." Annual Report. 2009.

eq/yr achieved.¹⁴⁰ With proven and commercially available technologies, the energy consumption in both new and old buildings can be cut by an estimated 30-50 percent without significantly increasing investment costs. Energy savings can be achieved through a range of measures including smart design, improved insulation, low-energy appliances, high efficiency ventilation and heating/cooling systems, and conservation behavior of building users.¹⁴¹



IPCC AR-4: Estimated economic mitigation potential by sector and region using technologies and practices expected to be available in 2030. The potentials do not include non-technical options such as lifestyle changes.¹⁴²

The above diagram from IPCC AR-4 indicates that the significant potential for energy efficiency improvements and greenhouse gas emission reduction from buildings is common among developed and developing countries, as well as in economies in transition.¹⁴³

In spite of the large potential to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from buildings this potential remains largely untapped. The underlying causes for the poor realization of the emission reduction potential include primarily the fragmentation of the building sector. Buildings normally have a long life cycle with only limited interaction between stakeholders involved in different phases of the buildings lifetime.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, different aspects of the buildings, each of which contributes to the energy performance of the building, such as architecture, engineering, building management, building function, and occupant behavior are often poorly or not at all coordinated. There is therefore no natural incentive for stakeholders to cooperate to maximize the overall long-term energy efficiency of the building.¹⁴⁵

Additional causes for the poor realization of the emission reduction potential include the split economic interests amongst parties and states.¹⁴⁶ The parties typically making decisions about the building design (designers and investors) are seldom the ones who would benefit from energy efficiency improvement and its reduced associated costs (owners and users). The lack of information and understanding (at all levels) of the importance of the building sector in relation to climate change also hampers any realization of emission reductions. The lack of know-how about how to reduce energy use in buildings and about what indicators to use for comparing the relative performance of a building significantly damages any states potential to meet possible carbon offset requirements.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁰ Imber, Mark F. "Environmental Security: A Task for the UN System." Review of International Studies (1991): 201-212.

¹⁴¹ UNEP. "UNEP Climate Change Strategy." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 19 May 2010

http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP_CC_STRATEGY_web.pdf

¹⁴² UNEP IPCC AR-4 Figures and Tables. Chapter four, figure 4.2. 2007. <http://www.ipcc.ch/graphics/syr/fig4-2.jpg>

¹⁴³ UNEP. "UNEP Climate Change Strategy." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 19 May 2010

http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP_CC_STRATEGY_web.pdf

¹⁴⁴ UNEP. Actors. 2010. 18 May 2010 <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/Actors/tabid/231/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ UNEP. "UNEP And Partners to Combat Climate Change." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 22 May 2010

http://www.unep.org/pdf/081127_POZNANBKL_web.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Successful Policy Tools – Ongoing International Efforts

A number of countries have applied different policy tools with the explicit objective to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in buildings.¹⁴⁸ The 2008 UNEP annual report *Assessment of Policy Instruments for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Buildings* (UNEP 2008), reviewed 80 case studies from 52 countries, comparing 20 types of policy instruments, including regulatory, fiscal, economic, and capacity building measures.¹⁴⁹

The many policy instruments evaluated in this study can achieve high savings at low or even negative costs (i.e. economic savings) for society.¹⁵⁰ Among the policy tools evaluated, regulatory instruments such as building codes were revealed as the most effective and cost-effective category of instruments in this study if enforcement can be secured. A number of regulatory instruments achieved savings in the triple negative digit range of costs.¹⁵¹

On an international level, no state, however large or small, wealthy or poor, can escape the impact of climate change. This is a global problem, and the UNEP is committed to leading the charge to reduce the dangerous pollution that causes global warming, and to help draft policies that will make investments in the clean energy technology that will power sustainable growth in the future more affordable.¹⁵²

The international community has taken significant measures toward a global solution to climate change, including reinvigorating the Major Economies Forum (MEF), eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, fostering multilateral energy and climate partnerships with the United States, China, India, Mexico, Canada and other, and reaching an historic accord at the Copenhagen climate summit that maintains progress toward an international agreement that will ensure a prosperous and secure future for generations to come.¹⁵³

Sustainable Companies – A Case Study

As one of the world's largest independent firms operating in the carbon management sector, Carbon Clear Limited is a "carbon management company that helps business and individuals reduce their carbon impact."¹⁵⁴ Operating out of some of the world's two busiest cities, Paris and London, Carbon Clear Limited helps its costumers achieve carbon neutrality by reducing and offsetting their corporate emissions, and huge undertaking set to dissuade its partners from engaging in potentially harmful environmental practices.

The UNEP report on Carbon Clear Limited provides extensive background into the carbon offset program that the company manages. These types of programs have had varied success in different areas of the world:

"In 2007, Carbon Clear committed direct funding to 6 carbon offset projects in developing countries: funding for technology to help artisan brick and tile producers in Nicaragua.¹⁵⁵ The project reduces greenhouse gas emissions by introducing agricultural residues to displace non-renewable fuel wood to fire brick kilns. The project helps to preserve the resource base by dramatically reducing the amount of wood that kiln operators must use to fire their bricks. In addition, the new kiln designs reduce fuel costs by up to 35%, helping to boost incomes for small entrepreneurs and their employees in one of Latin America's poorest countries.¹⁵⁶ The project will avoid emissions of 40,000 tones of CO2 over its five-year lifetime.¹⁵⁷"

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Environment Programme. "Submission of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Sustainable Building Initiative (SBCI) to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA)." Annual Report. 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Imber, Mark F. "Environmental Security: A Task for the UN System." Review of International Studies (1991): 201-212.

¹⁵¹ UNEP. Actors. 2010. 18 May 2010 <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/Actors/tabid/231/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ UNEP. Actors. 2010. 18 May 2010. <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/Actors/tabid/231/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁵⁴ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 26 June 2010. <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=741>

¹⁵⁵ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 25 June 2010. <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=233>

¹⁵⁶ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 26 June 2010. <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=741>

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

“Support for four community tree planting initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Tamil Nadu, India. These projects reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the growth of trees to achieve long-term CO2 sequestration on formerly degraded lands in low-income tropical communities. In addition, the projects improve local livelihoods by providing ongoing income linked to tree survival and growth.¹⁵⁸ This income reduces communities' vulnerability to crop failures and other shocks. The trees provide further benefits by helping to reduce soil erosion on agricultural lands, and by ultimately yielding fruits, seeds and other useful products for local farmers. These four projects will sequester over 100,000 tones of CO2 over the next ten years.¹⁵⁹”

Also, as a private company, Carbon Clear Limited is attempting to serve as a model for other similar business out there by engaging in multiple international economic and political forums that focus on the adoption of clean energy technologies. As mentioned on their website, “Carbon Clear is an active member of the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air (PCIA), an initiative launched at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development; of the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP); and of the Household Energy and Development Network (HEDON).”¹⁶⁰

While the UNEP is unable to directly control or intervene in NGOs such as Carbon Clear Limited, delegates may wish to build on their work as they develop their own solutions to these issues.

The World Cup as an Environmental Forum – A Case Study

While regulating private entities and companies is outside of UNEP’s mandate, it is important to combine some of the positive environmental contributions made by the aforementioned actors to state and international organizations policies. One of the best case studies demonstrating this tunnel of cooperation between the private sector and nations is the 2010 Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup held in South Africa.¹⁶¹

South Africa has been committed to integrating environmental principles into the planning and organization of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.¹⁶² This follows a similar commitment of the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, which resulted in the sensitization of the local and international football community to ecological issues and the securing of a long-term foundation for environmental concerns in national and international football.¹⁶³ To this end the FIFA Local Organizing Committee has set up an Environmental Forum to plan, co-ordinate and monitor national Greening 2010 activities related to the stadia, fan parks, training grounds, accommodation facilities and the networks and amenities that service and connect them.¹⁶⁴

The Environmental Forum brings together representatives from the 2010 FIFA League of Champions, national and provincial government departments, the nine host cities, and United Nations agencies, amongst others. As the 19th FIFA World Cup, the 2010 FIFA World Cup represents the first tournament to be hosted by a nation in Africa.¹⁶⁵ This is an amazing opportunity for South Africa and the African continent to host an event of this magnitude and that in itself is a great achievement. As mentioned by the UNEP website, “We will be proudly hosting a green 2010 FIFA World Cup™ and will use this opportunity to raise awareness and to lay a foundation and set new and higher standards for greening future events in South Africa.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 25 June 2010. <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=233>

¹⁵⁹ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 27 June 2010. <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=351>

¹⁶⁰ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 27 June 2010 <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=351>

¹⁶¹ SA Sports Packages. 2010 Fifa World Cup. 2010. 30 June 2010.

<http://sasportspackages.co.za/Football/2010FifaWorldCup/tabid/15865/Default.aspx>

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 26 June 2010 <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=741>

¹⁶⁴ SA Sports Packages. 2010 Fifa World Cup. 2010. 30 June 2010.

<http://sasportspackages.co.za/Football/2010FifaWorldCup/tabid/15865/Default.aspx>

¹⁶⁵ FIFA. 2010. 1 July 2010 <http://www.fifa.com/index.html>

¹⁶⁶ UNEP. Climate Neutral Network. 2010. 26 June 2010 <http://www.unep.org/ClimateNeutral/Default.aspx?tabid=741>

This world renowned tournament presents an opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability for South Africa and its citizens. The aim of South Africa was to reinforce the significance of environmentally responsible lifestyles within the context of the 2010 Soccer World Cup and the country's economic and social development programs.¹⁶⁷

Event greening has steadily gained momentum in the past decade. FIFA World Cup host cities and event organizers continue to organize their events in such a manner that embraces the concept of sustainable development.¹⁶⁸ This is done through successfully implementing initiatives, programs and practices which have a minimum or neutral impact on the natural resource base.¹⁶⁹

The South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), the lead government department responsible for promoting sustainable use and protection of natural resources, has proudly committed to building partnerships and a coordinated network of actions that would ensure an environmentally friendly outcome for the World Cup in 2010.¹⁷⁰

South Africa strives to remain on top of global environmental management best practice through lessons learned from the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and new initiatives which combined, will deliver a 2010 event with a minimum ecological footprint. FIFA's mission statement for the 2010 World Cup includes three key messages "Develop the Game", "Touch the World" and "Build a Better Future."¹⁷¹ South Africa's Greening 2010 program will therefore be a demonstration and contribution to the quest to raise awareness, minimize waste, diversify and use energy efficiently, consume water sparingly, compensate the carbon footprint, practice responsible tourism, and construct the infrastructure with future generations in mind.¹⁷² These greening initiatives look beyond the actual timeframe of the sporting activity and include concerns for post-event, environmental, social and economic impact of the event on the immediate and extended environment.

South Africa was committed to greening the 2010 World Cup by focusing on the following pillars: conservation of water and energy, waste management, transport and mobility and carbon offsetting.¹⁷³

Conclusion

While reducing the worldwide carbon emission footprint is no small undertaking, it still remains far from impossible if done correctly. Many nations such as South Africa, Germany, France, Japan, and Switzerland to name a few have actively sought to reduce their carbon emissions, but nothing has been done to help them expand their efforts on both a regional and international level. Taking into account both aforementioned case studies, the UNEP should actively seek to strengthen ongoing local efforts while attempting to bring them on the international scene. A company's approach to reducing their carbon footprint could well be a state-sponsored solution; a Non-Governmental Organization's outreach to bring awareness to climate-related issues such as impacts of not reducing our worldwide carbon footprint could well become the strengthening factor needed by the UNEP and the international community as a whole to help resolve this global crisis.

Committee Directive

With global warming increasingly becoming an urgent international issue, educating and promoting the best "green" practices has proven to be an enormous challenge. This is why UNEP is dedicated to promoting a strong ecosystem management through the use of international cooperation and diplomacy.

¹⁶⁷ SA Sports Packages. 2010 Fifa World Cup. 2010. 30 June 2010.

<http://sasportspackages.co.za/Football/2010FifaWorldCup/tabid/15865/Default.aspx>

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ FIFA. 2010. 1 July 2010. <http://www.fifa.com/index.html>

¹⁷² SA Sports Packages. 2010 Fifa World Cup. 2010. 30 June 2010.

<http://sasportspackages.co.za/Football/2010FifaWorldCup/tabid/15865/Default.aspx>

¹⁷³ SA Sports Packages. 2010 Fifa World Cup. 2010. 30 June 2010.

<http://sasportspackages.co.za/Football/2010FifaWorldCup/tabid/15865/Default.aspx>

Although the UNEP cannot create nor dictate orders to private entities and businesses, some have excellent environmental practices, that when examined carefully, can be applied on a national and even regional level. As shown by the first case study, the policies of companies such as Carbon Clear Limited should be used as research aids when considering various ways in which the UNEP can promote the best practices for the reduction of the worldwide carbon emission footprint.

Also, throughout the research process, delegates are encouraged to consider the following questions: What actions have private entities and companies undertaken that can be used as best environmental practices at a regional and international level? What steps have member states undertaken to reduce their carbon footprints that work at both a national and international level? What UN-wide action has taken place to reduce the worldwide carbon footprint?

Technical Appendix Guide

Topic I: Evaluating Environmental Crisis Response throughout the UN System

UNEP Main Website. “Environment for Development” <http://unep.org/>

The main UNEP website provides valuable insights into the inner workings of the organization. This website should be consulted daily as it gives detailed assessments of ongoing UNEP efforts in collaboration with other UN bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme and the its later formed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Caribbean Environment Programme. “News and Events” <http://www.cep.unep.org/news-and-events/deepwater-horizon-oil-spill-update>

As a regional focused body of the UNEP, CEP’s main website (and news section) is a very important resource for any delegate that attempting to understand how the UNEP operates on a regional level. This resource is valuable especially when it comes to analyzing regional environmental responses, and various aspects can be included in the writing process.

About.com. “Environmental Issues” <http://environment.about.com/>

Used interchangeably by some as a “Google” search tool, this website provides insights into various aspects of environmental issues, and how various aspects of the international community go about to solve them. This website also provides links to other important websites (i.e. OCHA.org) and scholarly blogs.

Topic II: Assessing Efforts to Promote Future Global Biodiversity

“Biodiversity” The Encyclopedia of Earth. National Council for Science and the Environment.
<http://www.eoearth.org/article/biodiversity>

This source provides delegates with a great general understanding of exactly what biodiversity is. Delegates are strongly encouraged to read this article before the conference so that they have a thorough working knowledge of the subject. Delegates can only adequately address this complicated topic if they know the limits of the term they are working under.

Global Issues. “Environmental Issues” <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/168/environmental-issues>

Focusing on many different aspects of environmental issues (i.e. Biodiversity, climate change), this website goes in depth about these topics and allow valuable interactions between delegates and the various resources that are available to them. With biodiversity being a center pillar of this topic, this website provides up-to-date topics, and how the international community is attempting to resolve them.

“Kyoto Protocol.” United Nations Convention on Climate Change. 2010.
http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

The Kyoto Protocol is one of the most important international agreements on environmental issues that has ever been drafted by the United Nations. The document covers climate change issues that are at the center of environmental debates throughout the world, and the Protocol will continue to be relevant in the coming decades. Delegates are strongly encouraged to study the Protocol for all three topics that UNEP will consider at SRMUN XXI.

Science Daily. “Environmental Issue News”
http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/environmental_issues/

As a well known academic source, this resource should often be used by delegates as a trustworthy updated source of biodiversity issues, and how various states, regions, and organizations attempt to resolve them. With the possibility of being used with the other two topics, this website also offers the possibility to access multiple other “technical oriented” blogs for any delegate who is interested in going in depth about specific aspects of their topics.

Topic III: Strengthening and Promoting Best Practices for the Reduction of the Worldwide Carbon Footprint

UNEP. "UNEP And Partners to Combat Climate Change." 2010. United Nations Environment Programme. 22 May 2010. http://www.unep.org/pdf/081127_POZNANBKL_web.pdf

This document provides delegates with an understanding of the overall policy of the UNEP regarding environmental policy in the near future. The document also identifies several private and public partnerships the UNEP is engaged in to combat global climate change. Since so much of the UNEP’s work on these issues is through private entities and NGOs, it is critical that delegates understand how to build on these programs to achieve meaningful solutions to the growing problems related to climate change.

IPCC Main Website. “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Regarded as one of the most influential and well known efforts by the UNEP to bring awareness to climate change, the IPCC’s website is the main source of information any delegate should relate to when it comes to climate change related topics.

Global Policy Forum. “The Environment.” <http://www.globalpolicy.org/social-and-economic-policy/the-environment.html>

The global policy forum serves as a tool to any judge with a passion for current global events. Providing a wide range of topics, this forum addresses many international issues, but also goes in depth about key environmental issues and concepts such as energy and carbon taxes. Apart from the UNEP’s website, this forum should be viewed regularly as it is updated and facts about each facet of environmental policy can prove to be very important.