



37th Annual MVHSMUN Conference

“Opus Justitiae Pax”

The Work of Justice Shall be Peace

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Hi! My name is Jerry Huo and for the 37th MVHSMUN conference, I will be the head chair of the UNEP Novice committee. I am currently a junior at Mission Viejo High School, and am also part of the varsity boy's volleyball team at this school. In addition, I also like to hang out with my friends as well as experience other cultures through eating. I am excited for this upcoming conference and I hope you are as well!

My name is Tennyson Smith and I will be your vice chair for your conference. I am a sophomore and am involved on the varsity water polo and swim team. I enjoy spending time with my friends and meeting new people. I am excited to meet you all at our conference! You can contact us at noviceunep@gmail.com.

Destruction of Coral Reefs

Background

Climate change is likely the most threatening problem the world faces today. While problems will not appear until years into the future, they will have extremely detrimental effects. Climate change can be seen with a gradual increase in global temperatures, inconsistent weather patterns, terrifying storms, and more. A very noticeable change is the increase of the sea level. As time goes on, coastal cities will find it difficult to exist with the nearby ocean. Climate change is caused by carbon dioxide and methane emissions among other things. Pollution also has a large impact on the climate. All these factors added together results in an unhealthy Earth. The deaths of many coral reefs contribute to this problem. Physically, coral reefs act as barriers that reduce the force and impact powerful waves have on coasts.



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Environmentally, coral reefs support upwards of thousands of species of marine life. In addition, through coral reefs, scientists are developing medicines to cure a multitude of illnesses.

Furthermore, coral reefs play a significant role in the tourism industry, which many nations rely on.

All humans are involved in climate change since they are the ones not only causing it, but also the ones who have the most to lose from it. Those who have the heaviest hand in climate change and the deaths of coral reefs would be nations that produce extremely large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions as well as pollution. However, there are multiple organizations attempting to limit the impact of gas emissions and pollution. The most notable being the United Nations, environmentalists, forward-thinking nations, and more.

Climate change is an astronomical problem. This is because as climate change develops, the closer we are to our inevitable deaths. Climate change will reduce the amount of land available, which is problematic considering our current overpopulation problem. In addition, the deaths of coral reefs will ruin the balance of the marine ecosystem. This will result in the deaths of many marine animals, and possibly whole species. All this death and destruction will have a domino effect, in which humans will be affected. These deaths will result in a lack of food caught from the ocean as well as a lack of life to study for scientists to create medicines.



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UN Involvement

The United Nations is involved in matters pertaining to coral reefs through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP joined the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and created the Coral Reef Unit (CRU) in 2000 to help fund the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN). In addition, there is another agency called the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This agency also contributes help for the protection of coral reefs.

As stated in the previous paragraph, the UNEP and UNESCO is involved in the protection of coral reefs. After 2011, the CRU established by the UNEP is leading the Coral Reef Partnership which enforces the ICRI's Call to Action and Framework for Action through partnerships with the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. On the other hand, UNESCO also has a major role. The World Heritage Convention, adopted by the UNESCO in 1975, launched the World Heritage Marine Programme which works to conserve “existing and potential World Heritage marine areas”. There is the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The IOC is the UN agency for ocean sciences. The IOC is closely involved with the ICRI, mainly through its data, on the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network. Also, there is the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). This programme deals with the relationships between people and the environment globally.



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Possible Solutions

There are many ways which can help reduce the effects of climate change to save the coral reefs. One such way is to cut down on carbon emissions. There are many ways in which this can be done such as switching from fossil fuel power to renewable sources such as nuclear, solar, and wind power. Switching to these forms of power production will reduce the extreme amounts of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. However they also come with a new host of problems which still require solving. This solution could accompany other policies that reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced.

Alternatively, new forms of heat resistant coral have proven to be able to withstand the effects of climate change and have the ability to revitalize coral reefs affected by climate change. These new corals resist bleaching and may save the coral reefs. While not a permanent solution, it may be able to keep coral reefs alive until a more permanent solution to climate change is found.

Guiding Questions

1. Why are coral reefs important?
2. What is causing coral reefs to collapse?
3. How can my country prevent coral reefs from collapsing?



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4. How is my country already contributing to the collapse of coral reefs?

Citations

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<https://www.icriforum.org/about-icri/coral-reefs-and-un>

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Species Endangerment Due to Poaching

Background

Poaching is a threat to our world and the animals we live with. Poaching is when people kill animals for the sake of body parts. Due to the highly profitable nature of this practice, many animals are killed. Poaching is an unsustainable practice which is a leading cause of endangerment for many species. The animals killed are generally sold as food, decor, jewelry, and occasionally tribal medicine. A side fact to emphasize the cruelty of poachers in Africa: albino animals are highly sought after by poachers, and among these animals are albino humans. The animals are highly desired not due to any scientific benefits, but purely due to looks and tradition.

We should care about poaching due to the gradually lowering biodiversity of our planet. Biodiversity is important since all types of ecosystems rely on the various different species to be stable. If these species were to become extinct, the ecosystem that relies on those species



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would slowly become unstable, which would have a detrimental effect on our planet. In addition, biodiversity is beneficial to the economy in ways like tourism. Furthermore, the imbalance in the ecosystems will cause a domino effect. As more and more species go extinct, the species dependant on the extinct species will go extinct themselves, further increasing the number of disappearing species.

UN Involvement

The United Nations is involved in the matters pertaining to poaching through UN Environmental Program and the UN Development Program. The UNDP has worked to protect 272 million hectares of land in 85 countries. The UNEP is part of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The CITES secretariat is administered by the UNEP. CITES is an international agreement to protect flora and fauna. Its goals lean toward the economic sector of protecting animals, but still includes poaching. It fights for sustainable and legal trading of animals.

In addition, there have been multiple resolutions adopted by the UN. The General Assembly (GA) adopted resolutions such as the 69/314 “Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife” resolution. In the 68th and 69th sessions of the GA, Germany and Gabon conducted events pertaining to poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking.



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Possible Solutions

Many solutions can be taken in an attempt to prevent poaching. One type of solutions would be to directly target poachers and the animals they hunt by either stopping poachers from poaching or making the product they are trying to attain unsellable. An example of this is in some countries where military forces have been tasked with protecting animals. While in other instances rhino horns have been dyed various colors such as red to make the horn of the rhino un sellable to poachers so they have nothing to gain from the poachers. An alternative approach would be to lower the demand for such products in the target markets. One way to do this may be to educate the buying market about the harmful effects poaching has on the environment or to educate them about the how the products do not have medicinal properties.

Guiding Questions

1. How does poaching affect biodiversity and the environment?
2. What are the motives people have behind poaching?
3. What misconceptions may people have in regards to poached animal products?
4. Why is poaching an important international issue?



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Citations

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“What is CITES?”.

<https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>