

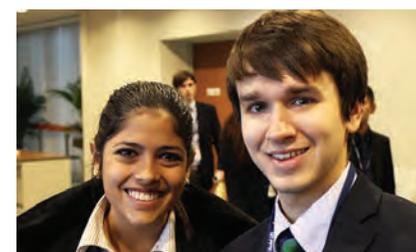


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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY BACKGROUND GUIDE 2017

Written by: Amanda Wong, Director;
Zachary Parker, Assistant Director



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations Canada Conference (NMUN•Canada) in beautiful Banff National Park! We are pleased to serve as the committee staff on the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA): Director Amanda Wong and Assistant Director Zackary Parker.

Amanda completed her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Simon Fraser University and holds a post-graduate diploma in Environmental Management from the University of London. She is a seasoned human resources practitioner and currently works for a major crown corporation in the province of British Columbia. Zachary is in the final stages of completing his Bachelor of Commerce with a major in Supply Chain Management from MacEwan University. He also currently works in Procurement for a North American construction company.

The topics under discussion for the United Nations Environment Assembly are:

1. Protection of the Environment in Areas Affected by Armed Conflict
2. Sustainable Consumption and Production

The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. The Assembly is comprised of all 193 Member States and works alongside other United Nations organizations, civil society, inter-governmental organizations, and the private sector to develop global environmental policy.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a [Position Paper](#) by 1 November in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

Two resources, to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Deputy Secretary-General Roger H. Tseng, at roger@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Amanda Wong, Director

Zackary Parker, Assistant Director



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Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Environment Programme (UNEP) is the “leading global environment authority” in promoting environmentally friendly practices and policies in the UN system.¹ It is a program and fund of the UN that ensures international, regional, and local coordination for environmental issues, and it also ensures that various other UN entities take environmental impacts into account when executing their missions.² UNEP reports to the General Assembly (GA) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).³

The **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** is the governing body of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, which is a programme and fund of the United Nations that reports to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

UNEP was created at the recommendation of the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden.⁴ Six months later, the GA adopted resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972 on “Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation,” which established UNEP as the official body concerned with environmental issues within the UN.⁵ The mandate of UNEP was subsequently broadened at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) by the adoption of the conference’s two outcome documents, *Agenda 21* (1992) and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992).⁷ Chapter 38 of *Agenda 21* calls for the creation of an inter-agency task force that would research the best ways to identify and address environmental issues.⁸ This led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), of which UNEP is a key member.⁹ 20 years after the adoption of the *Rio Declaration*, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) called for the creation of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) to better execute the mandate of UNEP and place environmental issues in the same standing as health, security, and economics.¹⁰

To better promote friendly practices and the coordination of environmental issues, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/251 of 2013 on “Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme,” which formally established UNEA.¹¹ Through its universal membership, UNEA aims to strengthen the role of UNEP in international affairs and increase the responsiveness and accountability of Member States in developing environmental policy.¹² UNEA has held two universal sessions since its creation.¹³ The first session of UNEA was held in June 2014 and a total of 17 resolutions and two decisions were adopted.¹⁴ The resolutions covered a wide range of topics, from marine plastic debris to environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.¹⁵ The second session of UNEA (UNEA-2) was held in May

¹ UNEP, *About UN Environment*.

² Ibid.

³ UN DPI, *The United Nations System*, 2017.

⁴ UNEP, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972.

⁵ UN General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation (A/RES/2997(XXVII))*, 1972.

⁷ UN DESA, *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit*.

⁸ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

⁹ UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *IACSD*.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 18.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/67/251)*, 2013.

¹² UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twelfth special session and the implementation of section IV.C, entitled “Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development”, of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/213)*, 2012, p. 3.

¹³ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

¹⁴ UNEP, *Resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme at its first session on 27 June 2014*, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.

2016 and focused on the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶ The third session of UNEA (UNEA-3) will be held in December 2017; the theme of UNEA-3 will be “Toward a Pollution-free Planet” and the overarching aim of this session is to deliver a political declaration on ending pollution in the air, sea, and land.¹⁷

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNEP’s structure includes the UNEA (formally known as the Governing Council), Secretariat, Environment Fund, and Committee of Permanent Representatives. At its inception, a Governing Council of 58 Member States oversaw UNEP until UNEA took its place in 2013.¹⁹ UNEA, comprised of all Member States, meets biennially to set the global environmental agenda and to discuss emerging challenges.²⁰ The UNEP Secretariat is also responsible for supporting UNEA and consists of a rotating President, three Vice-Presidents, and a Rapporteur.²¹ The Environment Fund is UNEP’s main source of funding.²² Member States’ financial contributions to the fund are based upon the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions, which means Member States are not required to provide funding to UNEP, though they are highly encouraged to donate.²³ UNEP’s Committee of Permanent Representatives consists of all Permanent Missions to the UN, and their purpose is to give advice to UNEA and create subsidiary organs that may be necessary to complete UNEP’s functions.²⁴

UNEP has six regional offices throughout the world that undertake UNEP’s projects on regional, sub-regional, and local levels.²⁵ Each office holds yearly Regional Consultation Meetings where representatives from various civil society organizations (CSOs) are invited to engage in an environmental policy dialogue.²⁶ The regional offices bring any concerns or ideas from these meetings to the next UNEA meeting for wider UNEP discussion and possible implementation.²⁷ The role of the regional offices was increased and enhanced to include the Regional Consultation Meetings and other projects in 2003, when the Governing Council approved decision 22/14 on the role of UNEP in strengthening regional activities.²⁸ This decision called for UNEP’s regional offices to strengthen their partnerships with other UN agencies in their region, create financial institutions to fund environmental causes, and establish or enhance partnerships with relevant local groups to strengthen UNEP’s mission in each region.²⁹

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Upon the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972 on “Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation,” UNEP was mandated to promote international and regional environmental cooperation; help in establishing environmental policy; highlight global and regional problems; facilitate the transfer of scientific knowledge; assist developing Member States in environmental matters; review reports of the Executive Director; and approve the annual program on the allocation of UNEP’s main source

¹⁶ UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

¹⁷ UNEP, *A Political Declaration on Pollution*, 2017.

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation (A/RES/2997(XXVII))*, 1972.

²⁰ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/67/784)*, 2013.

²² UNEP, *Funding for UN Environment*.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ UNEP, *Committee of Permanent Representatives*.

²⁵ UNEP, *Major Groups and Stakeholders In The Regions*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ UNEP, *Report of the twenty-second session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum*, 2003, pp. 61-62.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

of funding, the Environment Fund.³⁰ With the creation of UNEA and its universal membership, the mandate of UNEP has become more centered on the creation and promotion of environmental policy worldwide.³¹

Upon the adoption of the *Nairobi Declaration* at the 19th session of the UNEP Governing Council in 1997, UNEP realigned its core mandate to ensure a more modern and technological approach to environmental issues.³⁷ The new core mandate made UNEP responsible for using the best available scientific methods and evidence to analyze global environmental trends; utilizing early warning systems; furthering the development of international environmental law and policy; monitoring and fostering Member State compliance with existing international environmental norms; strengthening its role in coordinating UN environmental activities; serving as a link between the scientific community and the UN; and providing key policy advice for UN bodies, governments, and other institutions.³⁸ In 2002, the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* called upon UNEP and its partners to cooperate more closely across sustainable development initiatives for the implementation of *Agenda 21*.³⁹

UNEA was formed as a result of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).⁴⁰ Operating within the broad substantive priorities of UNEP, UNEA has a mandate to make major strategic decisions for UNEP, provide political guidance for state and regional programs, and promote scientifically-based environmental policies.⁴¹ UNEA has set a robust agenda for UNEP to address 12 specific thematic areas: coordinating the environmental dimension of the SDGs, implementing the *Paris Agreement*, promoting sustainable consumption and production, addressing food waste, safeguarding ecosystems, combating illegal trade in wildlife, advancing natural capital management, promoting biodiversity, monitoring and preserving air quality, protecting the environment in areas of conflict, preventing marine litter, and promoting waste management.⁴² The new mandate of UNEA allows for better monitoring and fostering of Member State compliance within these 12 thematic areas while creating an atmosphere for collaboration between Member States, UN entities, and CSOs.⁴³

UNEP ensures the implementation of UNEA's agenda by promoting international cooperation on existing environmental policies, guides the creation of new environmental policies, and uses environmental awareness to help Member States and CSOs respond to environmental threats.⁴⁴ To help achieve its mandate, UNEP has the ability to create task forces and subsidiaries to implement environmental policies.⁴⁷ However, the General Assembly or ECOSOC must approve any resolutions adopted by UNEP on environmental policy or creating new bodies.⁴⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNEP currently operates under seven thematic priorities: climate change; disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; chemicals and waste; resource efficiency; and environment under review.⁴⁹ A focus of these priorities is to decrease carbon emissions globally and promote the use of sustainable technologies in order to improve and maintain the state of the world's environment.⁵⁰ These seven thematic priorities expire at the conclusion of the *Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017* and have been renewed with minor alterations for the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*.⁵¹ Under the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*, "disasters and conflicts" will become "resilience to disasters and conflicts," "ecosystem management" will become "healthy and productive

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation (A/RES/2997/XXVII)*, 1972.

³¹ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 18.

³⁷ UNEP, *1997 - Nairobi Declaration redefines and strengthens UNEP's role and mandate*; UNEP.

³⁸ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

³⁹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199/20)*, 2002.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

⁴¹ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁴ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

⁴⁷ UN System Chief Executive Board of Coordination, *United Nations Environment Programme*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ UNEP, *Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017*, 2015, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

ecosystems,” and “chemicals and waste” will become “chemicals, waste and air quality.”⁵² These seven areas were chosen because they represent the most pressing and emerging issues, allowing UNEP to operate flexibly at international, regional, and state levels.⁵³

The adoption of the SDGs has permanently altered how the international community will develop sustainable development policy; the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021* is a primary example of this.⁵⁴ Rather than focus on decreasing global carbon emissions as a component of climate change response, UNEA has directed UNEP to focus on climate change in relation to all three pillars of sustainable development.⁵⁵ By 2050, global demands for food are expected to increase by over 60% and global demands for water are expected to increase by over 55%.⁵⁶ In response to increasing resource demands and changing demographics, the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021* focuses on improving utilization of natural resources that influence the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.⁵⁷ UNEP also recognizes the crucial importance of implementing the *Paris Agreement* to address climate change.⁵⁸ As the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021* has not yet come into action, performance measurements and indicators for how UNEA will hold Member States accountable under the *Paris Agreement* have not been fully developed.⁵⁹ However, during UNEA-2, the Assembly discussed various administrative and substantive issues that encompass the goal of the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021* and how various targets will be measured.⁶⁰

UNEA-2 was held from 23 to 27 May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme “Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”⁶¹ A total of 25 resolutions were adopted by the Assembly, ranging in coverage from administrative amendments and rules of procedure to substantive decisions on biodiversity and engaging with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁶² In order to increase the participation of private sector and civil society stakeholders in UNEA-2, an online policy forum was used for disseminating information and holding discussions on various topics of interest.⁶³ All adopted resolutions relate to one or more of the seven thematic priorities of UNEP and prepare for the implementation of the *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*.⁶⁴

Preparation for UNEA-3 is well underway as of July 2017.⁶⁵ An advance copy of the report, *Towards a Pollution-Free Planet*, by the Executive Director of UNEP has been provided to Member States for their review and input.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the President of the Assembly, Dr. Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta of Costa Rica, has commenced consultations with Member States and non-governmental stakeholders on a ministerial declaration on addressing pollution.⁶⁷ A draft declaration has been circulated amongst Member States, and various Member States have already submitted their input.⁶⁸ As of July 2017, the provisional agenda of UNEA-3 has not been published.

Conclusion

UNEP is the UN’s official program concerned with the environment. Its expertise and knowledge is crucial for the implementation of a variety of established programs within the UN and Member States’ governments. The creation

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ UNEP, *Policy Statement by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director*, 2014.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁵⁵ UNEP, *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*, 2016, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 2-4.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁰ UNEP, *Resolutions and Documents for the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly*.

⁶¹ UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

⁶² UNEP, *Resolutions and Documents for the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly*.

⁶³ UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

⁶⁴ UNEP, *Resolutions and Documents for the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly*.

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⁶⁶ UNEP, *Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: Report of the Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme*, 2017.

⁶⁷ UNEP, *A Political Declaration on Pollution*, 2017.

⁶⁸ UNEP, *Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”*, 2017; UNEP, *Member States and Stakeholders inputs to the Ministerial Declaration*, 2017.

of UNEA further accelerates UNEP's mission to ensure that the work of all UN entities, Member States, and CSOs are environmentally sustainable and in line with international laws and norms concerning the environment. The creation of an environmental entity with universal membership that oversees the world's environmental policy agenda reflects the growing importance of environmental issues and allows for a broader environmental agenda to be discussed and implemented to combat climate change as a whole.⁶⁹

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Agenda 21 is one of the outcome documents of UNCED in 1992 and is a comprehensive plan that involved the UN system, governments, and other levels of government to in partnership to meet the challenges of environment and development. This outcome document reinforced UNEP as the global environmental platform and created the Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor its implementation. To fully understand the mandate of the UNEP and the scope of its work, delegates shall become familiar with Agenda 21 due to its being the first reaffirmation and expansion of the global environment agenda.

United Nations Environment Programme. (n.d.). *Resolutions and Documents for the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 31 July 2017 from:

<http://www.unep.org/about/cpr/documents/resolutions-and-documents-second-session-un-environment-assembly>

This website is critical for delegates to understand what took place at the second session of the UNEA. It includes links to all of the resolutions adopted and official working documents that include the provisional agenda and reports from various entities on thematic issues. These documents provide delegates with an understanding of the scope of issues UNEP addresses, as well as changes to the rules of procedure unique to UNEA as the governing body of UNEP.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *About UNEA* [Website]. Retrieved 31 July 2017 from:

<http://web.unep.org/unea/about-unea>

This website provides a basic understanding of UNEA and its role within UNEP, including its structure, mandate, and why it is important to the UN system. It is a critical location for delegates to begin their research as it provides brief summaries on the functions, recent and past sessions, and thematic issues of UNEA, while also providing links to detailed resolutions and reports on various topics. This website should help delegates to easily distinguish between UNEP and UNEA and understand how they are connected to each other.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*. Retrieved 30 July 2017 from:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/rest/bitstreams/11369/retrieve>

This is the next medium-term strategy for UNEP, which will take effect in 2018 when the current medium term strategy expires. This document is of particular importance for the delegates as it takes into consideration the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while continuing to emphasize the seven priority areas. The document briefly outlines what has been achieved in the current medium strategy (more information is provided in the 2014-2015 Programme Performance Report) and uses a variety of statistics to illustrate the work and priorities of UNEP for the next five years.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2017). *Towards a Pollution-Free Planet: Report of the Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme*. Retrieved 9 July 2017 from:

http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21213/Towards_a_pollution_free_planet_advance%20version.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twelfth special session and the implementation of section IV.C, entitled "Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development", of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/213)*, 2012, p. 3.

This report is published by UNEP in support of UNEA-3, which will convene in December 2017. As its theme implies, the meetings of UNEA-3 will discuss the environmental impacts of pollution on the planet, and the public and private sectors have a role to play in pollution management and reduction. The economic and health toll of pollution can also create adverse secondary effects, such as mass migration or malnutrition due to an inhospitable climate. It will be important to think ahead to UNEA-3 and seek solutions that are holistic and productive towards meeting the SDGs.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2012). *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 31 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/66/288>

This is the outcome document of Rio+20 and formally establishes the UNEA as the next iteration of the Governing Council of the UNEP. By expanding the primary organ responsible for the environment to full universal membership, the UN signaled that it was ready to address the environment with the same prominence as issues such as peace and security and health. While the core responsibilities of UNEA remain in GA resolution 2997 (XXVII) (1972), delegates should familiar themselves with the new structure and explore how the expanded membership has introduced new elements towards shaping a truly universal environment agenda.

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I. Protection of the Environment in Areas Affected by Armed Conflict

“The environment has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict. From the contamination of land and the destruction of forests to the plunder of natural resources and the collapse of management systems, the environmental consequences of war are often widespread and devastating.”⁷⁰

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 40% of intrastate conflict is tied to natural resources.⁷¹ Furthermore, UNEP conducted over 20 post-conflict assessments and concluded that armed conflicts cause harm to the environment and to the communities that depend on the natural resources.⁷² The issue of environmental damage in warfare became an issue during the Vietnam War when Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide, created massive deforestation and damage to the local environment.⁷³ 19 million gallons of various herbicides were sprayed during the Vietnam War from 1962 to 1971.⁷⁴ Agent Orange was used to defoliate forests and farmlands and the soil contamination has remained for decades.⁷⁵ The herbicide has been linked to cancer, including prostate cancer and non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, and also nervous system related medical conditions such as Parkinson’s disease.⁷⁶ Environmental concerns arose again during the 1990-1991 Gulf War when oil wells were destroyed in Kuwait by withdrawing Iraqi forces.⁷⁷ The fires burned for 10 months and, in the aftermath, 300 lakes of oil remained and 5% of Kuwait’s landscape was covered in “tarcrete” comprised of a mixture of soot, sand, and gravel.⁷⁸ The damage caused loss of habitat and negative impacts on the local ecological systems.⁷⁹

Environmental damage and competition for resources also have an impact on peacebuilding efforts.⁸⁰ In conjunction with weakened or collapsed institutions, environmental impacts have a direct effect on the health, livelihood, and security of the affected populations.⁸¹ Competition for natural resources such as water, trees, and wildlife can influence migration patterns, create and perpetuate poverty cycles, and cause local conflicts.⁸² Countries that are mostly dependent on the wealth extracted from natural resources also have the most challenges with capturing the associated benefits without triggering new conflicts.⁸³ Governments therefore must harness the value of natural resources and convert them into jobs, infrastructures, and basic services.⁸⁴ When utilized effectively, natural resources can create positive relationships and empower groups such as women to support change.⁸⁵

To date, the international community has responded to environmental issues affected in armed conflict in isolation rather than by understanding the relationship between conflict and environment.⁸⁶ The international community has adopted a number of conventions, treaties, and other legal frameworks to protect the environment; however, in practice, the framework has not been enforced or implemented effectively.⁸⁷ There have been very few instances where states have been held accountable for environmental damage during times of war.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the

⁷⁰ UN, *Secretary-General Statement “International Day of Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict”* by Ban Ki-Moon, 2014.

⁷¹ UN Peacekeeping, *Conflict and Resources*.

⁷² UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, p 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p 8.

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, *Public Health: Facts about Herbicides*, 2015.

⁷⁵ The Aspen Institute, *What is Agent Orange?*.

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⁷⁷ United Nations Environment Programme, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, p 8.

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⁸⁰ The Pearson Papers, *Environmental Considerations for Building Peace*, 2009, p. iii.

⁸¹ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, p 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p 9.

⁸³ UNEP. *Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme*, 2016, p 8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p 12.

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⁸⁶ The Pearson Papers, *Environmental Considerations for Building Peace*, 2009, p. iii.

⁸⁷ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

international community has not developed tools or a standard of measure to evaluate environmental damage.⁸⁹ These outstanding issues make enforcement extremely challenging.⁹⁰

International and Regional Framework

In 1976, after the concerns raised during the Vietnam War regarding Agent Orange, the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted the *United Nations Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Use of Environmental Modification Techniques* (ENMOD) and, in that same year, adopted the *Geneva Convention – Additional Protocol I*.⁹¹ State Parties of ENMOD agreed not to engage in military actions that affect the environment adversely.⁹² As part of its action, ENMOD calls for a review conference to be convened five years after its coming into force, and a consultative committee was also established to raise issues associated with the application of its Article 1.⁹³ Under Article 55 of the *Additional Protocol I*, States are prohibited from attacking the natural environment by way of reprisals.⁹⁴ This is reiterated under Article 35 of the *Additional Protocol*, which affirmed that the method or means of warfare is not unlimited and that it is prohibited to use weapons that will have “widespread, long-term, and severe damage” to the environment.⁹⁵

In 1980, Member States also adopted the *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects* (CCW) and *Protocol III on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons*.⁹⁶ The CCW, similar to the *Geneva Convention*, states in its preamble the prohibition on the use of weapons that are “widespread, long-term, and causes severe damage”.⁹⁷ *Protocol III* prohibits the attack on forests and other kinds of plant cover the object of attack.⁹⁸

There are a number of related conventions on the prohibition of the use of chemical and biological weapons; their primary functions are to limit the use of certain weapons and protect civilian property or heritage sites.⁹⁹ For example, the *Hague Convention IV* (1907) regulates the laws and customs of war; the damage inflicted on an enemy must be proportional and must not cause unnecessary damage.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the 1968 *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* encourages the cooperative use of nuclear energy while also working on nuclear disarmament which has an indirect impact the environment.¹⁰¹ Lastly, there are the related legal frameworks on the protection of civilians.¹⁰² Under customary international humanitarian law (IHL) exists the principle of humanity which prohibits unnecessary suffering, such as starvation of innocent civilians; another example of this would be the intentional poisoning of waterways.¹⁰³

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UN ODA, *Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (ENMOD)*, 1977.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ UN, *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)*, 1977.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, p 12.

⁹⁷ UN, *Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)*, 1980.

⁹⁸ UN, *Protocol III to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Convectional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects*, 1980.

⁹⁹ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, p 12.

¹⁰⁰ UN, *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 1907.

¹⁰¹ UN, *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, 1970.

¹⁰² UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Role of the International System

In 1992, the GA adopted resolution 47/37 on the “Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict.”¹⁰⁴ In its preambles, the resolution acknowledged the existing environmental legal framework but also expressed concern regarding the law not being widely applied or disseminated.¹⁰⁵ The resolution also urged the Secretary-General to invite the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relevant bodies to report on activities related to the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the ICRC submitted a report to the GA in 1993 and, in its conclusion, encouraged the GA Sixth Committee to review a number of issues, including a review of the threshold for environmental damage and specifically the definition of “widespread, long-lasting, and severe” in ENMOD and *Additional Protocol I*.¹⁰⁷ The report also called for further review of how existing international law can protect the environment during armed conflicts.¹⁰⁸ Subsequently, the ICRC in 1995 drafted the ‘Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict.’¹⁰⁹ The guidelines highlight relevant international and the implementation and dissemination of the international framework.¹¹⁰ In 2008, the GA adopted resolution 63/211 on “Oil Slicks on Lebanese shores” and requested the Government of Israel to take responsibility for compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries for the clean-up of oil storage tanks.¹¹¹

In 2003, the Security Council (SC) unanimously adopted resolution 1509 on “Establishment of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).”¹¹² This resolution discussed the conflict in Liberia and also highlighted the role of natural resources in fueling the conflict.¹¹³ The SC held an open debate on the topic and the President of the Council gave a statement in 2007 addressing the “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: natural resources and conflict.”¹¹⁴ At this session, Member States debated the contribution of illegal natural resource exploitation to conflicts, the role of peacekeeping operations to help manage natural resources, the role of the private sector, and the need for better coordination for regional organizations.¹¹⁵

UNEP in August 2016 adopted resolution 2/15 on “Protection of the Environment in Areas Affected by Armed Conflict.”¹¹⁶ The resolution calls for Member States to review the 1996 ICRC Guidelines and to implement all related international law into existing national military guidelines.¹¹⁷ The resolution also calls for the support of other UN agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to support countries affected by armed conflict.¹¹⁸ In particular, the resolution calls for the protection of World Heritage Sites.¹¹⁹ Lastly, the resolution called for the Executive Director to continue working with the International Law Commission (ILC) regarding this topic.¹²⁰ Continued efforts have been seen in the engagement of civil society through *Environmental Peacebuilding*, a knowledge platform which is a partnership shared by UN Environment, academia, and civil society.¹²¹ The ILC’s Special Rapporteur Marie G. Jacobsson has also spoke favorably regarding the progress that the international community has made on this issue and is hopeful that the positive momentum will continue.¹²²

¹⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, *Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict (A/Res/47/37)*, 1992.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict (A/RES/47/37)*, 1992.

¹⁰⁸ ICRC, *Report of the ICRC to the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly*. 1993.

¹⁰⁹ ICRC, *Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict*, 1996.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Oil Slicks on Lebanese Shores (A/RES/63/211)*, 2008.

¹¹² UN Security Council, *Resolution 1509 (S/RES/1509 (2003))*, 2003.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2007/22)*, 2007.

¹¹⁵ Security Council Report, *Conflict Prevention and Natural Resources*, 2013.

¹¹⁶ UNEP, *Protection of the Environment in Areas Affected by Conflict (UNEP/EA.2/Res.15)*, 2016.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Environmental Peacebuilding, About*, 2017.

¹²² UNEP, *Working to Protect the Environment in Armed Conflict*, 2016.

UN agencies such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) have made efforts to address environmental concerns in the context of missions and investigations.¹²³ For example, in the Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Strip that was presented to the HRC, the Mission reaffirmed that war crimes include excessive damage to civilian casualties or damage to the environment.¹²⁴ The report also addressed the environmental concerns created by the buffer zone and that 80% of water wells in the Gaza were only partially functioning with untreated water being discharged into the sea and creating damage to environmental, human, and marine life.¹²⁵

Enforcement of Legal Framework

The existing legal framework speaks to the protection of the environment both directly and indirectly.¹²⁶ However, the framework has not been applied or enforced effectively.¹²⁷ The lack of a common consensus on key terms such as “conflict resource” and the narrow definition of “widespread *and* long-term *and* severe” damage under the *Geneva Convention* has impeded the international community’s ability to enforce the legal framework.¹²⁸ There is also no mechanism for monitoring legal infringements.¹²⁹ For example, on defining the term “armed conflict,” the opinions of states range from wanting a broad definition as to not limit prematurely to not wanting a definition at all; this lack of consensus can make it challenging develop effective enforcement tools.¹³⁰ Furthermore, most of the laws covering environmental protection were written for traditional international armed conflicts and therefore does not address the issue of intrastate conflicts.¹³¹

As a result of these challenges, the UN has taken steps to review the existing law and taken measures to encourage compliance by Member States.¹³² In 2013, the ILC appointed Marie G. Jacobsson as Special Rapporteur to address the topic of environmental protection in armed conflicts.¹³³ This led to the general debate of the same topic in the GA in 2014 and this debate demonstrated the complexity on defining certain key terms such as “environment” and “armed conflict.”¹³⁴ Member States and the Special Rapporteur also recognized the challenges in defining the three phases of conflict (prior, during and post) and how the law is applied at each stage.¹³⁵ There were also varying positions on what to include in the scope of this topic, including in the relevance of the protection of heritage sites, indigenous peoples, and refugees.¹³⁶ In 2015, the ILC submitted a report to the GA which shows the work of some Member States, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, applying the framework to their national laws.¹³⁷ German federal laws, in principle, only applied within its borders, but German environmental law has also been applied to its missions abroad while balancing the protection of personnel.¹³⁸ The United Kingdom also highlighted the role of the Standardization Agreement set out by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the protection of environment, which includes regulations on NATO camps and operations and “environmental protection practices for sustainability of military training areas.”¹³⁹

¹²³ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 50-51.

¹²⁴ UN HRC, *Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48)*, 2009, p. 413.

¹²⁵ UN HRC, *Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48)*, 2009, p. 266.

¹²⁶ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 4-7.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ UN ILC, *Second Report on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts*, 2015.

¹³¹ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp 4-7.

¹³² UN ILC, *Second Report on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts*, 2015.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

There is also a shift in the International Criminal Court's (ICC) approach to environmental issues by expanding the scope of existing offenses, such as crimes against humanity, to include environmental damage and impacts.¹⁴⁰ In September 2016, the ICC said it would look into crimes involving the destruction of the environment, land-grabbing, and exploitation of natural resources.¹⁴¹ The ICC intends to prosecute environmental crimes within the parameters outlined in the *Rome Statute* (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crime of aggression).¹⁴²

Impacts on Peacebuilding and Rebuilding Efforts

As global populations grow, demand and competition for resources also grow.¹⁴³ The effective use and management of natural resources can support the peacebuilding process and support economic growth and state-building.¹⁴⁴ In a report conducted by UNEP on the conflict in Sudan, the environment and natural resource management were considered as contributing factors to the ongoing conflict in addition to the main drivers, those being political, religious, and ethnic.¹⁴⁵ There is also substantial evidence to suggest a strong link between local conflict and environmental degradation.¹⁴⁶ In Afghanistan, 80% of the population depend on the local environment for sustenance including agriculture but the 2001 Afghan war caused substantial environmental damage to the areas and this led to increased rates of poverty.¹⁴⁷ As a result of the conflict, livelihoods were disrupted which caused the collapse of traditional living patterns; as an example, pistachio woodland areas were cut and sold for income and the land was used for farming which caused soil erosion in the area and a reduction of the pistachio industry.¹⁴⁸ To combat these challenges, the United States Agency for International Development founded the Afghanistan Conservation Corps (ACC) which saw Afghan people in labour intensive work generating income while also positively renewing natural resources.¹⁴⁹

Natural resources can also support the peacebuilding process in interstate conflict situations.¹⁵⁰ In the late 1990s, the Rwandan government focused on revitalizing local parks by charging tourists for single gorilla permits for visitors to have access to the national parks.¹⁵¹ For this program to succeed, there had to be cooperation locally and at the inter-state level with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.¹⁵² The three countries signed the *Declaration of Goma* (2005), which included joint patrols of the park and information exchange to manage the park and provide a mechanism for confidence building between the three states.¹⁵³ Revenue generated from this program was put into the management of the parks and shared with local communities for development projects.¹⁵⁴

On the other hand, exploitation of natural resources in Côte d'Ivoire has helped sponsor its conflict.¹⁵⁵ In November 2005, the UN Panel of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire detailed the efforts of rebel groups smuggling diamond, cotton, and cocoa to neighboring countries and the international market and this has limited peacebuilding efforts in the region.¹⁵⁶ The local government has also funded the war through revenues from cocoa sales.¹⁵⁷ As such, there is little interest by either party to reunify given these economic interests.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁰ Vidal & Bowcott, ICC Widens remit to include environmental destruction cases, *The Guardian*, 2016.

¹⁴¹ UN ICC, *Office of the Prosecutor: Policy Paper on a Case Selection and Prioritisation*, 2016, p 5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 2016, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴³ UNEP, *UNEP and Environmental Peacebuilding*.

¹⁴⁴ UNEP, *Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme*, 2016, p 12.

¹⁴⁵ UNEP, *Conflict and the Environment*, p 77.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 80.

¹⁴⁷ UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The role of natural resources and the environment*, 2009, p. 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

UNEP founded the Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding (ECP) in 2008 to support peacekeeping efforts by providing experts and opportunities related to natural resources and the environment.¹⁵⁹ The ECP covers seven areas of work: natural resources and peacekeeping; green peacekeeping operations; environmental diplomacy and mediation support; international law, conflict and the environment; women, natural resources and peacekeeping; environmental transparency and extractives; and climate change and security.¹⁶⁰ Through ECP, UN agencies are more involved in understanding how the environment impacts their area of work, support Member States in adopting policies that are aligned with international law, and support field operations with technical assistance to address peacekeeping efforts.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Adequate protection to environment can be provided as long as the associated environmental laws can be applied.¹⁶² As long as armed conflicts continue, environmental damage will occur.¹⁶³ Though it is clear that there are still many challenges in addressing environmental issues in armed conflict situations, natural resources have the potential to contribute positively to peace and the peacebuilding process.¹⁶⁴ The environment is often times a silent victim in conflict situations and the law has the capacity to protect and advocate for its protection.¹⁶⁵ As such, it is important that the international community continue to address these impacts through discussion, debate, concrete actions, and an accountability framework.¹⁶⁶ These steps are necessary not just for the protection of the environment but to also ensure long and sustained peace in these situations.¹⁶⁷ In summary, the international community must develop tools and systems to enforce and effectively implement the existing legal framework including a mechanism to evaluate environmental damage in armed conflict situations.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the development of jurisprudence will be strengthened when more States are formally held accountable for their actions.¹⁶⁹

Annotated Bibliography

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The ICRC compiled this document to outline all existing international law that relates to the environment and armed conflict. The General Assembly then invited all States to take these guidelines into consideration when developing their military manuals. Any action taken by the international community to make the existing framework more robust must find a way to compliment these existing guidelines. Delegates should ensure that new strategies should not duplicate the work that has already been addressed in this guideline.

United Nations Environmental Programme. (2016). *Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme* [Report]. Retrieved 20 May 2017 from: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/ECP/ECP_final_report_Nov2016.pdf

This report examines the role that the environment plays in the peacebuilding process. The document addresses the role of UNEP and peacebuilding, the Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding, and case studies of where UNEP have worked with States to protect the environment and its resource in post-conflict situations. The report also shows how UNEP partners with other UN bodies to achieve common objectives. Delegates should use this source to

¹⁵⁹ UNEP, *Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding Programme*, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² ICRC, *Guidelines for Military Manuals and Instructions on the Protection of the Environment in Times of Armed Conflict*, 1996.

¹⁶³ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 4-7.

¹⁶⁴ UNEP, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The role of natural resources and the environment*, 2009, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ UNEP, *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory and Analysis of International Law*, 2009, pp. 4-7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

determine what has already been done by the international community, how these actions can be duplicated, and what new actions can be taken to further address concerns.

United Nations Environmental Programme. (2009). *Protecting the Environment During Armed Conflict: An Inventory Analysis of International Law* [Report]. Retrieved 14 May 2017 from:

http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/int_law.pdf

This document from the UNEA provides a broad overview of the issues related to the issue of environmental protection in armed conflict situations. The document covers both the legal framework for the topic and the application of the framework in conflict and post-conflict situations. This report also thoroughly outlines the differences in Treaty, Customary, and Soft International Law as it relates to environmental protection. This is an excellent source for delegates looking for a comprehensive guide on the existing legal framework.

United Nations Environment Programme. (n.d.). *Conflict and the Environment* [Article]. Retrieved 10 June 2017 from: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/sudan/04_conflict.pdf

This document is part of a larger series on the conflict in Darfur. This particular chapter outlines the various environmental impacts related to the conflict. This analysis examines a number of direct and indirect impacts on the environment and the local people. From a broader context, this study highlights how conflict and the lack of environmental governance propel each other and this is not unique to the conflict in Sudan. This is a concrete case study related to environmental damage in a conflict situation that delegate can explore further as part of their research.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *Protection of the Environment in Areas Affected by Conflict (UNEP/EA.2/Res.15)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 15 June 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/UNEP/EA.2/Res.15>

This resolution stresses the importance of environmental protection and one of the key documents to come out of the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which met in 2016. The document outlines the steps the UN and Member States should take to ensure that environmental concerns are addressed in armed conflict situations. Delegates should reference this document to understand the scope of work of the UNEA as it relates to this topic; discussions in committee and outcome documents should ideally reference this resolution as well.

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II. Sustainable Consumption and Production

Introduction

As the world's population grows to an estimated 9.7 billion people by 2050, access and demand for the world's resources will become exponentially scarce, propelling sustainable consumption and production (SCP) to the forefront of international issues.¹⁷⁰ As multilaterally agreed upon at the 1994 Oslo Symposium, SCP is defined as “the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations.”¹⁷¹ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were one of the first major global attempts to further a broad set of needs that affected the international community.¹⁷² While success was defined through specific indicators, the international community was unable to meet all targets of the goals.¹⁷³ To further address the role of the international community towards SCP, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was adopted; Goal 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns are achieved throughout the world.¹⁷⁴ While the MDGs were one of the first sets of communal goals, the SDGs look at being able to provide a sustainable set of goals to further achieve a better world.¹⁷⁵

The three pillars of sustainability – economic, social, and environmental sustainability – have been identified as interrelated and the most significant opportunities and challenges for Member States on which to focus.¹⁷⁶ The inclusion of the three dimensions of sustainability have been reaffirmed by the United Nations (UN) Environment Assembly (UNEA) during its first session in 2014, as well as the 2014 Secretary-General report “The Road to Dignity by 2030.”¹⁷⁷ While economic sustainability can be achieved through encouragement of sustainable public procurement, or private business participation in sustainability, the social and environmental pillars can be achieved through areas of sustainable management of natural resources and reduction of inefficient fossil-fuels, reduction of global food waste, environmentally sound management of chemicals and other wastes, support for developing countries in SCP, and development of jobs in the SCP sector amongst others.¹⁷⁸

International and Regional Framework

As the comprehensive plan of action that was adopted during the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21* was a globally designed framework to be utilized by the UN and other major stakeholders in areas of sustainable development.¹⁷⁹ Specifically, this document was built as an action plan on being able to streamline environmental stewardship and development practices.¹⁸⁰ This framework was important, as it was one of the first international documents used to encourage sustainable consumption and production patterns.¹⁸¹ In Chapter 4 of *Agenda 21*, Member States are encouraged build an understanding of what affects their consumption and production patterns, while encouraging SCP on the national level.¹⁸² Chapter 4 identifies relevant areas for SCP including energy, transportation, waste, economic instruments, as well as technology transfer.¹⁸³ While *Agenda 21* identified unsustainable consumption and production from industrial countries as a root cause for environmental

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, *World Population Prospects*, 2015, p. 2

¹⁷¹ International Institute on Sustainable Development and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, *Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

¹⁷² UNDP, *Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs*, 2015.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development through the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary General (A/72/75-E/2017/56)*, 2017.

¹⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ UN DESA, *Agenda 21*, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁸¹ UN DESA, *Agenda 21*, 2017.

¹⁸² UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992, p. 18.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

degradation, it also identified that poverty and environmental degradation were linked.¹⁸⁴ As indicated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), this was due to a lack of knowledge and resources available efficient consumption and production.¹⁸⁵ *Agenda 21* aimed to promote patterns of consumption and production that reduced environmental stress, while meeting basic human rights, the creation of domestic SCP policy, and efficient production and waste reductions.¹⁸⁶

In September 2000, Member States gathered in New York to adopt the *Millennium Declaration*, which outlined a series of relevant global goals in order to reduce extreme levels of poverty and improve the global community.¹⁸⁷ Following the summit, a set of eight shared goals emerged from the *Millennium Declaration*, which went on to become known as the MDGs.¹⁸⁸ The eight goals ranged from eradication of extreme hunger and poverty to ensuring environmental sustainability; to be completed by 2015.¹⁸⁹ At the end of the campaign in 2015, it was identified that many of the goals made significant impact on the global community, yet many inequalities still existed.¹⁹⁰ Then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon identified that the MDGs progress was imbalanced, still leaving the most vulnerable populations in highly concentrated regions.¹⁹¹ Goal 7 of the MDGs was important for SCP, as it focused on ensuring environmental sustainability.¹⁹² Target 7.A focused on “[Integrating] the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.”¹⁹³ Through this, it was identified that substances depleting the ozone had been substantially reduced, however carbon footprint continued to grow over 50% since 1990.¹⁹⁴

Towards the end of the MDGs campaign, the world's leaders met in June 2012 for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).¹⁹⁵ The conference resulted in the creation of an outcome document, titled *The Future We Want*, which aimed at identifying attainable measures for sustainable development.¹⁹⁶ The conference and document discussed the many diverse areas of sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on green economic policies.¹⁹⁷ Throughout the conference and document, an outline on how to achieve sustainable development was discussed, as well as the decision to create a new set of goals, commonly known now as the SDGs.¹⁹⁸ It was stated that the new set of goals was to build on the success of the predecessor, but ensure that they were “action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.”¹⁹⁹ *The Future We Want* was also an important catalyst for SCP, as it outlined both the world's goals for SCP, but also reaffirmed their commitment and how they want to see the future of SCP.²⁰⁰ Rio+20 was an important step towards international commitment to the environment, as it called for the creation of the UNEA to act as the governing body for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).²⁰¹ From the conclusion of Rio+20 to 2015, the UN, Member States, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, and various experts participated in a multitude of discussions towards the creation of a new development agenda and new set of goals.²⁰² This led to the eventual adoption in September

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ FAO, *Poverty and Land Degradation*, n.d.

¹⁸⁶ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/55/2)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations, *Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015 Background*, 2015.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, 2015.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ UN DESA, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20*, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

¹⁹⁷ UN DESA, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20*, 2017.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 63.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 58-59.

²⁰¹ UN DESA, *United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) – UNEP*, 2017.

²⁰² UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet, Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda*, 2014.

2015 of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with a new set of 17 goals.²⁰³ In 2017, Member States began to implement these 17 goals and 169 targets.²⁰⁴ This adoption then led to the open and higher level discussion of SCP, under Goal 12, “Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.”²⁰⁵ Made up of 11 targets with 13 indicators, Goal 12 addresses a large variety of sub-issues associated with achieving SCP.²⁰⁶ These targets range from the successful implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP), achieving sustainable management of natural resources, encouragement of public organizations to implement sustainable practices and reporting, sustainable public procurement, and sustainable development aligning with environmental considerations.²⁰⁷ The 13 indicators provide tangible objectives for Member States to strive towards, such as the global food loss index, rate of recycling, material footprint, or number of countries with a national SCP policy.²⁰⁸

Role of the International System

In 1994, the Oslo Symposium gave light to a working definition of SCP, and it continues to be the universally recognized definition.²⁰⁹ Following the creation of the definition, SCP was further discussed in detail in the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)* (2002), adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.²¹⁰ JPOI identified SCP as one of fundamental topics to achieve sustainable development.²¹¹ As indicated in Chapter 3 of JPOI, the advancement of SCP and inclusion of social and economic development will be essential to the development of the 10YFP on sustainable development.²¹²

Following this call for development of 10YFP at the World Summit, there was an elevated focus on SCP, which led to the creation of the Marrakech Process in 2003.²¹³ This process was designed to support the creation of the 10YFP on sustainable consumption and production.²¹⁴ The Marrakech Process was made up of UNEP and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), with the goals of “assisting countries in their efforts to green their economies, to help corporations develop greener business models, and to encourage consumers to adopt sustainable lifestyles.”²¹⁵ This process would spend the next nine years working towards development of a draft 10YFP, that would be later negotiated at the 19th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSustD) in 2011.²¹⁶ The document was subsequently adopted at Rio+20.²¹⁷ At the national and regional levels, the 10YFP was designed to increase SCP commitment while protecting environmental resources.²¹⁸ A focal point for the 10YFP was to increase economic support and resource efficiency as this would lead to increased support for additional sustainable development sub-topics, such as environmental and social sustainability or poverty eradication.²¹⁹

A fundamental document on SCP is UNEA resolution 2/8 (2016), which acts as a guiding resource for understanding the current status of SCP as it relates to UNEA, the SDGs, and the 10YFP.²²⁰ While this was the first

²⁰³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/55/2)*, 2015.

²⁰⁴ United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals 17 Goals to Transform our World*, 2017.

²⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/55/2)*, 2015.

²⁰⁶ UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and Production*, 2017.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Intern International Institute on Sustainable Development and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, *Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

²¹⁰ UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and Production*, 2017.

²¹¹ United Nations, *World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²¹³ UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and Production*, 2017.

²¹⁴ UNEP, *The Marrakech Process*, 2008.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *Letter dated 18 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.216/5)*, 2012.

²¹⁸ UN HLPF, *Interim progress report prepared by the 10YFP Secretariat on behalf of the 10YFP Board for the High-Level Political Forum*.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ UNEP, *Sustainable consumption and production (UNEP/EA.2/Res.8)*, 2016.

resolution from the UNEA to specifically focus on SCP, it highlighted a number of priority areas for Member States.²²¹ Highlighted areas of importance included the promotion of sustainable public procurement, engagement in multi-stakeholder partnerships, the commitment towards the 10YFP in all forms, all while focusing on ways to further support sustainable consumption and production patterns and decisions.²²² Other bodies that discuss SCP previously included CSustD, which was replaced in 2012 with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development within the structure of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).²²³ The status of SCP has been identified in the ECOSOC resolution 2016/75, and identified the progress of the individual targets of Goal 12.²²⁴ A report on the progress on the 10YFP was delivered to Member States at the 2017 session and Goal 12 will be reviewed at the next session of HLPF in 2018 in support of the next theme.²²⁵

Sustainable Energy Production and Consumption

The energy sector accounts for 60% of greenhouse gas emissions and Goal 7 addresses the global need to develop renewable energy and energy access in order to combat climate change.²²⁶ The use of fossil fuels including coal, oil, and gas produces large amounts of greenhouse gases, which is invariably a contributing factor of climate change.²²⁷ Energy consumption is largely dictated by availability and affordability.²²⁸ Over 1.2 billion people do not have access to electricity and another 2.8 billion people rely on wood, charcoal, dung, and coal as their source of energy.²²⁹ Though there have been increases in energy efficiency and clean technology, economic and population growths have resulted in increased energy production and consumption overall.²³⁰ Energy consumption is four to 10 times higher in developed countries and the transportation sector has doubled its rate of consumption over the last 30 years.²³¹

In response to the SDGs and the *Paris Agreement* (2016), Secretary-General Ban founded Sustainable Energy for All to generate partnerships and financing for sustainable energy.²³² In 2016, the organization released a strategic framework for results during the 2016-2021 timeframe, which seeks to provide direction to partners to ensure universal access to modern energy services; double the global rate of improve in energy efficiency; and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.²³³ This framework was established with the support of private and public sector partners, the UN, development banks, civil society, and energy partners.²³⁴ Secretary-General Ban has praised the framework as a powerful tool to support both the SDGs and *Paris Agreement*.²³⁵ In terms of current work, Sustainable Energy for All is developing a global map to determine areas that will have the most impact and where action is most needed.²³⁶

In alignment with Goals 7, 12, and 13, access to efficient energy must be sought after, including the rationalization of inefficient fossil fuel resources.²³⁷ In 2016, the UN Secretary-General's Global Sustainable Transport Conference occurred and opened the dialogue to discuss sustainable transportation and the SDGs.²³⁸ Two of the key themes that

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ UN DESA, *Commission on Sustainable Development*, 2017.

²²⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016.

²²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (E/2017/63)*, 2017; UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and production*, 2017.

²²⁶ UN DPI, *Affordable and Clean Energy: Why it matters*, p. 2.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ UN DESA, *Sustainable Consumption and Production: Energy and Industry*, 2006, p. 5.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 6.

²³² Sustainable Energy for All, *Our Mission*.

²³³ Sustainable Energy for All, *Strategic Framework for Results*, 2016, p. 8.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ UN DPI, *Sustainable Energy for All shifts gear to speed delivery of affordable, clean energy*, 2016.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*, 2017.

²³⁸ Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016.

emerged included sustainable transport solutions to the climate crisis, and energy and transportation.²³⁹ From these themes, it was identified that renewable energy resources should be a direct by-product of an increased investment in science, technology, and innovation.²⁴⁰ Essential to food security, sustainable transportation was identified as a key proponent to achieving the SDGs.²⁴¹ In 2011, the FAO urged food producers to reduce fossil fuel usage, through transportation, production, consumption and more in order to explore new opportunities for becoming less dependent on fossil-fuels.²⁴² This also aligns with target 12.C, in that subsidies given for use of inefficient fossil-fuels must be rationalized.²⁴³ As further identified, wind, solar, hydroelectric, geothermal and biomass by-products could be a plausible source of alternate and efficient energy, that reduces the need for fossil fuel usage.²⁴⁴

Water and Food Security

Water is a fundamental element for several SDGs as both a target and as a means; Goal 6 calls for the sustainable management of water and sanitation, and water is vital towards achieving Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 2 on hunger and malnutrition, and Goal 13 on climate change.²⁴⁵ Global population is expected to rise to nine to 10 billion people by 2050 and global food supply needs to increase to meet growing demands.²⁴⁶ Commonly referred to as the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) nexus, this relationship is commonly underappreciated.²⁴⁷ Agriculture productions creates an excessively high demand on water consumption with 70% of all freshwater use by humans being put towards agricultural production.²⁴⁸ With the expected population growth, food creation would need to increase by 50 to 60%; however it expected that only 10% more water can be mobilized.²⁴⁹

Though it is expected that water supplies will also meet growing population demands, there will be regions that will face water shortages and this will impact food security, livelihoods, and economic activities.²⁵⁰ The relationship between urban and rural areas will become more complex as rural farmers will continue to require water for agricultural production in order to supply food to growing urban centers.²⁵¹ Furthermore, it is expected that climate change will impact greater variability in weather patterns and therefore new adaptation techniques will be required for water and agricultural management.²⁵² Lastly, key agricultural production areas are using water at an unsustainable rate with withdrawals occurring faster than natural recharge, which also has an impact on surrounding communities.²⁵³ Investments are needed to develop techniques that reuse water rather than relying on just groundwater sources. There has been success in Egypt where 10% of its annual freshwater withdrawal is reused.²⁵⁴ Though desalination has traditionally been seen as an expensive option given the financial and physical capital that is required for this process, the option is becoming more viable as the cost of groundwater increases.²⁵⁵ Long term, it is likely that a more comprehensive approach is required involving institutional support, incentives for farmers, and an overall change to the existing irrigation system.²⁵⁶

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016.

²⁴² FAO, "Energy-smart" agriculture needed to escape fossil fuel trap, 2011.

²⁴³ UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and production*, 2017.

²⁴⁴ FAO, "Energy-smart" food for people and climate, 2011.

²⁴⁵ UN DPI, *Sustainable agriculture, better managed water supplies, vital to tackling water-food-nexus*, 2017.

²⁴⁶ FAO, *Towards a water and food secure future – Critical Perspective for Policy Makers*, 2015, p. VII.

²⁴⁷ UN DPI, *Sustainable agriculture, better managed water supplies, vital to tackling water-food-nexus*, 2017.

²⁴⁸ UNDP, *Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production*, 2017.

²⁴⁹ UN DPI, *Sustainable agriculture, better managed water supplies, vital to tackling water-food-nexus*, 2017.

²⁵⁰ FAO, *Towards a water and food secure future – Critical Perspective for Policy Makers*, 2015, p. vii.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., p. viii.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. vii.

²⁵⁴ FAO, *The State of the Worlds Land and Water Resources for food and agriculture*, 2011, p. 155.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 156.

On the consumption side, it is estimated that one-third of food produced for human consumption is wasted, with a total loss of 1.3 billion tons of food wasted annually.²⁵⁷ This food wastage impacts both global food security and opportunities to improve environmental impacts.²⁵⁸ Low-income countries are most likely to waste food during the early stages of the supply chain and high-income countries at the consumer level.²⁵⁹ The FAO had led a Save Food initiative to bring awareness to the issue and to support systems that reduce food loss and waste.²⁶⁰ In 2015, policymakers in France pushed for an ambitious national food policy proposal, which builds from the goal established by the 2013 National Pact Against Food Waste to reduce wasted food by 50% by the year 2025.²⁶¹ Within the policy proposal, areas being addressed include barring supermarkets from throwing away edible food, clarification on food expiration dates, banning of destruction of edible foods, coordination of public policies towards food waste, changes to regional policies on food waste, all leading towards creating sustainable economic growth.²⁶²

Conclusion

SCP has been encouraged by numerous outcome documents and political declarations, but the SDGs have brought these practices to the forefront with its Goal 12.²⁶³ Fundamental actions must continue to be used and supported, such as the 10YFP, as it acts as a fundamental instrument in promoting sustainable development and sustainable consumption and production patterns.²⁶⁴ Sustainable energy consumption and production must be sought after to additionally support Goals 7, 12 and 13.²⁶⁵ Further, the relationship of sustainable consumption and production and Goals 1, 2, 6, and 13 must continue to be supported.²⁶⁶

Further Research

How can civil society and the private sector play a better role in supporting and promoting sustainable consumption and production? What will be the major issues needing to be discussed at the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and how can these issues begin to be addressed today? How will the relationships of energy consumption and production, food security and transportation affect both developed and developing countries? How does Agenda 21 continue to be pertinent in relationship to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? What will be the effect of developed countries consumption and production patterns on developing countries ability to achieve sustainable consumption and production?

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2012). *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 29 July 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/66/288>

The outcome document from Rio+20 provides a comprehensive outline of what the future of sustainable consumption and production should look like. This will be an important resource to delegates as it will provide them with a clear understanding of the goals that are being worked towards, and an identification of the priorities for SCP. This will be important when considering future implementation of this document and how to improve SCP globally.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (1992). *Agenda 21* [Outcome Document]. Retrieved 29 June 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

This is the principle document outlining the plan of action for the involvement of the United Nations and the environment. It will be a guiding document to some of the basic principles and

²⁵⁷ FAO, *Towards a water and food secure future – Critical Perspective for Policy Makers*, 2015, p. 25.

²⁵⁸ FAO, *Food wastage footprint: Impacts on Natural Resources*, 2013, p. 6.

²⁵⁹ FAO, *Towards a water and food secure future – Critical Perspective for Policy Makers*, 2015, p. 25.

²⁶⁰ FAO, *Food loss and food waste*, 2017.

²⁶¹ National Resources Defence Council, *France Moves Toward a National Policy Against Food Waste*, 2015.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ UN DESA, *Sustainable consumption and production*, 2017.

²⁶⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (E/2015/56)*, 2015.

²⁶⁵ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*, 2017.

²⁶⁶ UN DPI, *Sustainable agriculture, better managed water supplies, vital to tackling water-food-nexus*, 2017.

beliefs of environmental sustainability and stewardship. This will provide use for delegates as it outlines many of the core environmental principles that shaped future documents and conferences, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Rio+20.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. (2012). *Letter dated 18 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.216/5)* [Document]. Retrieved 9 July 2017 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/CONF.216/5>

This is an additional outcome document from Rio+20 that outlined 10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. It is relevant as it provides a detailed account as to the objectives of the framework on sustainable consumption and production patterns. This will prove beneficial to delegates as it identified many of the current and guiding principles for sustainable consumption and production, and the goals it provides over the time of its existence.

United Nations. (2017). *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform* [Website]. Retrieved 8 July 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

This website provides a comprehensive outline of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. This resource provides details on all aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and will have many of the fundamental documents to understanding sustainable consumption and production. Delegates will use this resource as a hub for all information regarding sustainable development, and will help them to better understand the current status, and relationships, and a variety of resolutions, reports, and other important documents.

United Nations. (2002). *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199/20)* [Report]. Retrieved 29 June 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/CONF.199/20>

This report outlines the resolutions of the adopted during the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. The report will provide a better understanding as to the involvement and relationship that the Johannesburg Summit had towards the creation of sustainable consumption and production. This will be useful for delegates as it acts as a fundamental document in moving sustainable consumption and production further in the international community and will provide a basis for the future of sustainable consumption and production.

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