



THE 2017 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). This year's staff is: Directors Aiskell Roman (Conference A) and Tyler Goudal (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Danielle Curtis (Conference A) and Mark Anthony Dizon (Conference B). Aiskell completed her B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs in 2011 and currently works for the journal *Latin American Perspectives*. This will be her fourth year on staff. Tyler is completing his B.A. (Hons) in International Security and Conflict from Simon Fraser University. He is currently working on his undergraduate thesis and is looking forward to his third year on NMUN•NY staff. Danielle graduated with a B.A. International in Political Science, Sociology and Social Justice in 2015 from University College Dublin, Ireland, and is now undertaking a Master's in Law. Mark is a Juris Doctor candidate. He received his B.A. in Consular and Diplomatic Affairs in 2014 and is looking forward to his second year on NMUN•NY staff.

The topics under discussion for UNEA are:

- I. Combating Illegal Trade in Wildlife
- II. Implementation of the Paris Agreement
- III. Sustainable Use of the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources

UNEA is an example of the evolution in the structure and priorities of the United Nations system. UNEA was created at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012 to act as the “parliament of the environment.” In this capacity, UNEA exemplifies a structural transition to accommodate universal membership and a heightened importance for environmental issues in international affairs. UNEA offers a forum for the international community to discuss environmental policy through a fruitful, authoritative agenda. It will be critical for delegates to understand the role and mandate of UNEA as a normative body that creates and promotes international 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 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two essential resources for your preparation are the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) and the [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) available to download from the NMUN website. The [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. The [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 tandem, these documents thus serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions.

Please take note of information in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) on plagiarism and the prohibition of pre-written working papers and resolutions. Additionally, please review the [NMUN Policies and Codes of Conduct](#) on the NMUN website regarding the Conference dress code; awards philosophy and evaluation method; and codes of conduct for delegates, faculty, and guests regarding diplomacy and professionalism. Importantly, any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. Adherence to these policies is mandatory.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Alexander Rudolph (Conference A) and Samantha Winn (Conference B), at usg.development@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A

Aiskell Roman, *Director*
Danielle Curtis, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Tyler Goudal, *Director*
Mark Anthony Dizon, *Assistant Director*



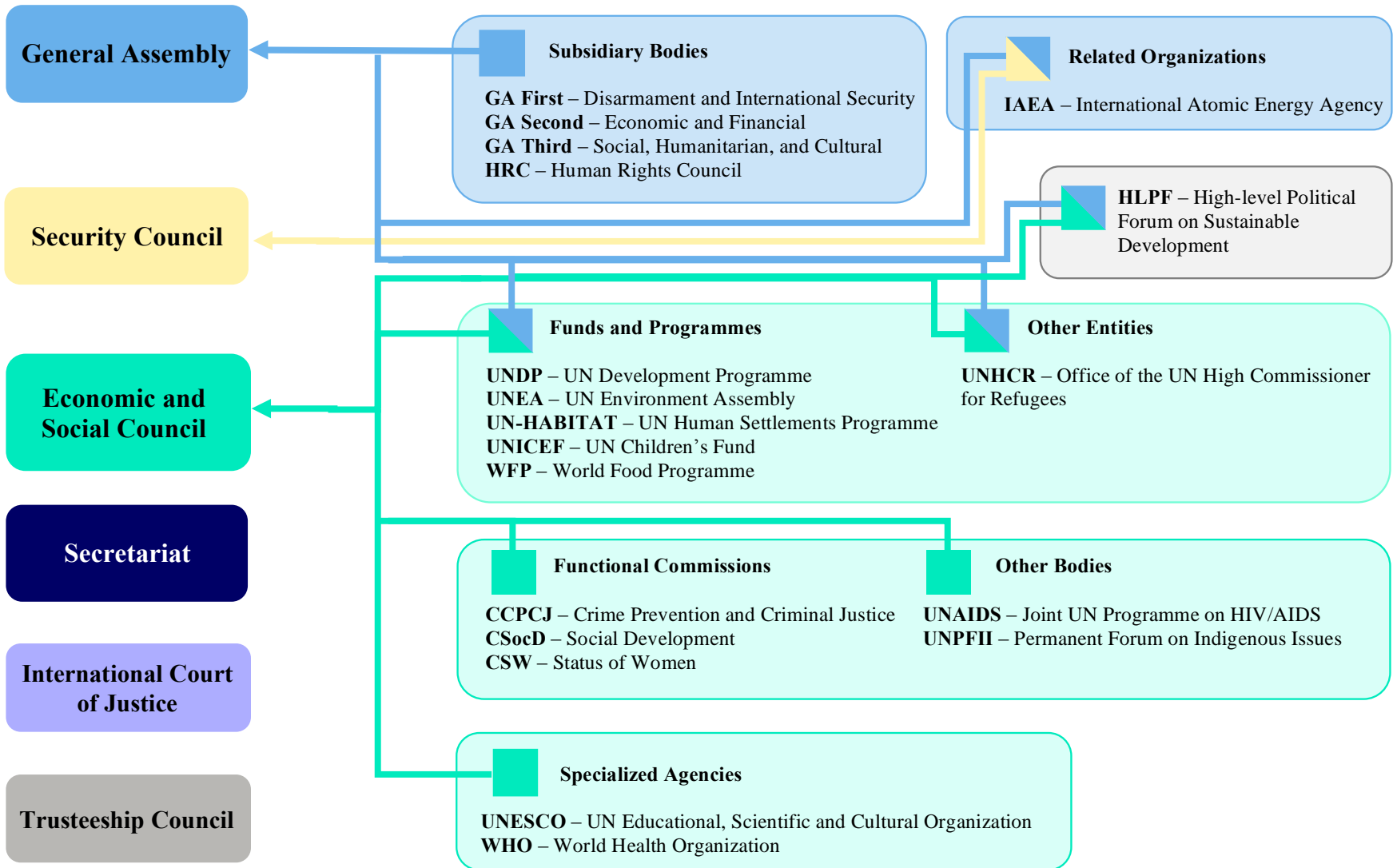
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.





Abbreviations

AC	Adaptation Committee
CITES	<i>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora</i>
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil society organization
CTI-CFF	Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EMG	Environmental Management Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IACSD	Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development
ICCWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
IIED	International Institute of Environment and Development
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IOC-	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
UNESCO	
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU	Illegal, unreported, and unregulated
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity Building
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small island developing states
TEC	Technology Executive Committee
TEP	Technical Examination Process
TRAFFIC	Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	<i>United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCI	Wildlife Crime Initiative
WWF	World Wildlife Fund



Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Environment Programme (UNEP) is the “advocate, educator, catalyst, and facilitator” 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 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 General Assembly 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 Since that time, UNEP has played a significant role in coordinating environmental policy across various UN agencies.⁶ UNEP helped in the planning and execution of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.⁷ UNCED led to the adoption of *Agenda 21* (1992) and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992).⁸ 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.⁹ This led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), of which UNEP is a key member.¹⁰ IACSD has a system of task managers, each in charge of specific thematic areas, with UNEP being the task manager concerned with the areas of the atmosphere, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, desertification and drought, and biodiversity.¹¹ Twenty 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.¹²

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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ UNEA has held two universal sessions since its creation.¹⁵ The first

¹ UNEP, *What UNEP Does*.

² *Ibid.*

³ UN DPI, *The United Nations System*, 2015.

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.

⁶ UNEP, *What UNEP Does*.

⁷ UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁰ UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 18.

¹³ UN General Assembly, *Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/RES/67/251)*, 2013.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

session of UNEA was held in June 2014 and a total of 17 resolutions and two decisions were adopted.¹⁶ The resolutions covered a wide range of topics, from marine plastic debris to environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.¹⁷ The second session of UNEA (UNEA-2) was held in May 2016 and focused on the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁸

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNEP's structure includes the UNEA, Secretariat, Environment Fund, and Committee of Permanent Representatives.¹⁹ At its inception, a Governing Council of 58 members oversaw UNEP until UNEA took its place in 2013.²⁰ UNEA, comprised of all Member States, meets biennially to set the global environmental agenda and to discuss emerging challenges.²¹ The UNEP Secretariat is also responsible for supporting UNEA and consists of a rotating President, three Vice-Presidents, and a Rapporteur.²² The Environment Fund is UNEP's main source of funding.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

UNEP has six regional offices throughout the world that undertake UNEP's projects on regional, sub-regional, and local levels.²⁶ Each office holds yearly Regional Consultation Meetings where representatives from various civil society organizations (CSOs) are invited to engage in an environmental policy dialogue.²⁷ The regional offices bring any concerns or ideas from these meetings to the next UNEA meeting for wider UNEP discussion and possible implementation.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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.³⁰

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, *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.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

¹⁹ UNEP, *UNEP Governance Structure*.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation (A/RES/2997(XXVII))*, 1972.

²¹ UNEP, *UNEP Governance Structure*.

²² UN General Assembly, *Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/67/784)*, 2013.

²³ UNEP, *UNEP Funding*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ UNEP, *Committee of Permanent Representatives*.

²⁶ UNEP, *Major Groups and Stakeholders In The Regions*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UNEP, *Report of the twenty-second session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum*, 2003, pp. 61-62.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 9.

of funding, the Environment Fund.³¹ 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.³²

The first expansion of UNEP's mandate came in 1992 via *Agenda 21*, which led to UNEP's involvement with IACSD.³³ In 1995, the General Assembly held a special session to review the implementation of *Agenda 21* and amended UNEP's mandate by stating, "UNEP is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda."³⁴ In 1997, the Secretary-General requested that the General Assembly create a Task Force to review and propose reforms for UN activities concerning the environment and human settlements.³⁵ In October 1998, per the guidance of the Task Force, the General Assembly put forth a set of recommendations that would further modify UNEP's mandate.³⁶ As a result, the Executive Director of UNEP was placed in charge of a new committee called the Environmental Management Group (EMG).³⁷ The key purpose of EMG is to coordinate and facilitate access to relevant information and findings concerning the environment and human settlements, in order to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective allocation of resources and information.³⁸

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.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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*.⁴¹

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.⁴² 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.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵ UNEP also monitors the state of the global environment on both an international and regional scale and shares that information with interested parties.⁴⁶ Under

³¹ UN General Assembly, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental co-operation (A/RES/2997(XXVII))*, 1972.

³² UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, p. 18.

³³ UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

³⁴ UN General Assembly, *Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/RES/S-19/2)*, 1997, par. 123.

³⁵ UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Environment and human settlements: Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/463)*, 1998.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ UNEP, *1997 - Nairobi Declaration redefines and strengthens UNEP's role and mandate*; UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

⁴⁰ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2016-17*, 2016.

⁴¹ UNEP, *UNEP's Coordination Mandate*.

⁴² UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁵ UNEP, *What UNEP Does*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

the direction of UNEA, UNEP works to develop international environmental law and ensure the proper use of environmental information and instruments.⁴⁷ To help achieve its mandate, UNEP has the ability to create task forces and subsidiaries to implement environmental policies.⁴⁸ However, the General Assembly or ECOSOC must approve any resolutions adopted by UNEP on environmental policy or creating new bodies.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ These seven thematic priorities expire at the conclusion of the 2014-2017 Medium Term Strategy and have been renewed with minor alterations for the Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021.⁵² Under the Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021, "disasters and conflicts" will become "resilience to disasters and conflicts," "ecosystem management" will become "healthy and productive ecosystems," and "chemicals and waste" will become "chemicals, waste and air quality."⁵³ 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.⁵⁴

The adoption of the SDGs has forever altered how the international community will develop sustainable development policy; the Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021 is a primary example of this.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ 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%.⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ UNEP also recognizes the crucial importance of implementing the *Paris Agreement* to address climate change.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹

UNEA-2 was held 23-27 May 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme "Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."⁶² 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.⁶³ 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

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UN System Chief Executive Board of Coordination, *United Nations Environment Programme*.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ UNEP, *Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017*, 2015, p. 1.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., p. 18.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁴ UNEP, *Policy Statement by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director*, 2014.

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁵⁶ UNEP, *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*, 2016, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 2-4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶¹ UNEP, *Documentation for UNEA 2*, 2016.

⁶² UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

⁶³ UNEP, *Documentation for UNEA 2*, 2016.

holding discussions on various topics of interest.⁶⁴ 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 2018-2021.⁶⁵

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 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.⁶⁶

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations Environment Programme. (n.d.). *UNEP's Coordination Mandate* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://www.unep.org/newyork/UNEPsCoordinationMandate/tabid/56200/Default.aspx>

This webpage contains the entirety of UNEP's official mandate, including all amendments and updates. It gives dates, membership information, information about the Secretary-General Review requirements, and a multitude of other important facts that govern UNEP. This document is one of the most important sources of delegates participating in UNEP, because it gives detailed information about what can be done and/or suggested by the body. It contains links to programs, various UN entities, and other relevant links that delegates will find useful in further research for a variety of topics.

United Nations Environment Programme. (n.d.). *What UNEP Does* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=493&>

This webpage gives the basic information concerning what UNEP does and how their responsibilities are executed. It gives a basic overview of what UNEP's mandate allows and how proposed programs and resolutions get put into action. Delegates should read over this page and follow the links to more detailed information in order to fully understand UNEP's powers and functions as a committee.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *About UNEA* [Website]. Retrieved 16 July 2016 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). *Documentation for UNEA 2* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://web.unep.org/unea/documentation-unea-2>

As the official outcome document for UNEA-2 is not yet available, 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

⁶⁴ UNEP, *The path towards UNEA 2*.

⁶⁵ UNEP, *Documentation for UNEA 2*, 2016.

⁶⁶ 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.

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). *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021*. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: http://apps.unep.org/publications/index.php?option=com_pub&task=download&file=012120_en

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.

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United Nations Environment Programme. (2014, June 27). *Policy Statement by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director* [News Article]. Retrieved 31 October 2016 from: <http://www.unep.org/NewsCentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2791&ArticleID=10930>

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I. Combating Illegal Trade in Wildlife

“Time is running out to save some of the world’s most iconic species. Much more needs to be done by key actors on all continents and across sectors to combat poaching and address both the demand and the supply of wildlife products.”⁶⁷

Introduction

On World Wildlife Day, 3 March 2016, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that animal poaching increased by an astounding 8,000% in the past seven years.⁶⁸ Similarly, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) identified that the demand for animal and forestry products continues to drive the illegal wildlife trade.⁶⁹ The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) notes in their *Living Planet Report* that within the past 40 years over 58% of the world’s animal populations have decreased, with the status of vertebrate animals declining by 58% and freshwater species declining by an alarming 81%.⁷⁰ WWF recognizes illegal trade in wildlife as the second biggest threat to species after environmental damage.⁷¹ The ongoing poaching and hunting of these animals will lead to their eventual extinction, with elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers representing three of the most endangered species that are killed annually in large numbers for their skins, bones, and ivory.⁷² Additionally, some species are used for traditional medicine, food, and décor products, or captured as prize animals for the pet trade.⁷³ In Cameroon, for instance, 450 elephants were reported killed in 2012 in Bouba Ndjida National Park by poachers.⁷⁴ Since 2010, UNODC has estimated that 7,500 elephants were poached for market purposes, with an annual gross income of \$100 million and an average price of \$2 million per elephant.⁷⁵ African states are increasingly under threat when it comes to the poaching of animals, with each region facing distinct problems.⁷⁶ UNODC reports that Central Africa struggles with elephant ivory poaching, while Southern Africa struggles with rhinoceros horn poaching.⁷⁷ South Africa over the past years has experienced a 30% rise in rhinoceros poaching with just over 600 in 2012 to over 1,000 rhinoceroses poached in 2013.⁷⁸ This also includes the black rhinoceros, which is recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically in danger, with approximately 4,000 remaining in the wild to date.⁷⁹ As a result, animal poaching causes significant economic damage to the economies of these regions due to environmental damage, corruption, and support of criminal networks.⁸⁰

UNEP notes that due to the increase animal poaching, biodiversity is threatened and could lead to the extinction of some of the most fragile species, which would negatively affect social and economic development.⁸¹ The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) recognized the need to take a stance at a global level to combat the illegal trade in wildlife, but also the need for regional and international cooperation.⁸² UNEP recognizes that the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intrinsically linked with the environment, given that sustainable development cannot be achieved if there is not a sustainable environment.⁸³ Illegal trading in wildlife not only affects the species and ecosystems in question,

⁶⁷ UNODC, *On World Wildlife Day UN Implores Urgent Action to End Poaching Crisis*, 2016

⁶⁸ Ibid.; UNEP, *The Rise of Environmental Crime*, 2016.

⁶⁹ UNEP, *Illegal Trade in Wildlife Fact Sheet*, 2016, p. 1.

⁷⁰ WWF et al., *Living Planet Report*, 2016, p. 3.

⁷¹ WWF, *Unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade*, 2016.

⁷² WWF, *Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2016.

⁷³ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ UNEP, *Illegal Trade in Wildlife Fact Sheet*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁶ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁸ WWF, *Black Rhino*, 2016.

⁷⁹ WWF, *Black Rhino*, 2016; Doak, *Polishing off the Ivory: Surveys of Thailand’s Ivory Market*, 2014.

⁸⁰ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 4.

⁸¹ UNEP, *Illegal Trade in Wildlife Fact Sheet*, 2016, p. 4.

⁸² TRAFFIC International, *UN adopts resolution on tackling wildlife trafficking*, 2015.

⁸³ World Bank, *United Nations System and International Organizations Applaud Sustainable Development Commitments Made by the World’s Governments to Battle Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2015.

but it also affects the livelihoods and economies of local communities and undermines the efforts of the global community to achieve sustainable development.⁸⁴

International and Regional Framework

The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) was signed and recognized by over 80 countries in 1973.⁸⁵ Today, CITES acts as an information platform for endangered species and regulates international trade for over 35,000 species worldwide.⁸⁶ At each annual conference additional species are considered by members for CITES listing.⁸⁷ *Agenda 21*, adopted in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, recognizes the importance of low-cost, community-managed systems for the collection and sharing of information relation to the status of wildlife, as well as it highlights the importance of ecotourism to local communities and the need to support and manage it.⁸⁸ Principle 4 of the 1992 *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* states that “in order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.”⁸⁹

In 2015, the first United Nations (UN) resolution on wildlife trafficking was adopted; the resolution on “Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife” was referred to by UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner as a “historic step forward” and one in which he believes will “spark the firm and concerted international action needed to combat poaching and those who profit from it.”⁹⁰ This resolution led to the reexamination of practices surrounding the trade in wildlife.⁹¹ The resolution encourages all Member States “to develop sustainable and alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking” in wildlife, adopt effective measures to prevent wildlife crime by strengthening actions against both supply and demand, and strengthen enforcement and criminal justice responses to these crimes.⁹² Additionally, the UN Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2013/40 on “Crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora.”⁹³ The resolution focused on ways in which Member States can utilize UN frameworks on organized transnational crime to combat illegal trading in wildlife while also strengthening their national legal and criminal regimes and law enforcement and judiciary capacity.⁹⁴

A number of the SDGs and underlying targets will contribute to fighting the illegal trade in wildlife including SDG 1, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17, which calls upon Member States to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea, and marine resources for sustainable development and protect, restore and promote sustainable use of ecosystems.”⁹⁵ Target 15 specifically sets out to “take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.”⁹⁶ Following the adoption of the SDGs, regional conferences were held in London, Kasane, and, Brazzaville to address the issue at large with all three recognizing the importance of engaging with local communities for the planning, management, and use of wildlife for sustainable development means.⁹⁷

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife (A/RES/69/314)*, 2015.

⁸⁵ CITES, *What is CITES?*.

⁸⁶ CITES, *United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife and the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2016.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

⁸⁹ UNCED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

⁹⁰ UNEP, *First UN Resolution on Wildlife Trafficking Historic Step Forward, Chief of UN Environment Programme Says*, 2015.

⁹¹ UN General Assembly, *Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife (A/RES/69/314)*, 2015.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ UN ECOSOC, *Crime Prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna (E/RES/2013/40)*, 2013.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, *Statement*, 2015, pp. 3-6.

Role of the International System

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recognized the need to encourage international cooperation from all levels of society to incorporate environmental policy into development strategies.⁹⁸ The summit identified nine major groups including: business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous people, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific and technological community, women, and workers and trade unions.⁹⁹ In 2010, the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) was established and its membership includes CITES, The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), UNODC, the World Bank, and the World Customs Organization.¹⁰⁰ The purpose of the consortium is to offer communities coordinated enforcement support by centralizing the efforts and resources available from its membership.¹⁰¹ INTERPOL works to dismantle the criminal networks and to gather information and intelligence for local communities to support law enforcement on all levels.¹⁰² Furthermore, INTERPOL works to heighten knowledge and the profile of environmental crime to motivate action by states and law enforcement.¹⁰³ UNODC took the lead in developing the ICCWC Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytical Toolkit.¹⁰⁴ The toolkit outlines the purpose, concepts, and objectives to countries who wish to combat illegal trade in wildlife.¹⁰⁵ In addition, it provides users with a guide to all areas pertaining to the illegal trade of wildlife such as legislation, enforcement, judiciary and prosecution, drivers, and data analysis.¹⁰⁶

Civil society plays a major role in addressing the lack of resources provided to combat the illegal trade in wildlife.¹⁰⁷ Many organizations such as the WWF, IUCN, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), The Thin Green Line Foundation, and others provide awareness and educational resources to the international community.¹⁰⁸ They do this through campaigning, as well providing much needed resources, including equipment, funding, and reports on the dangers facing wildlife, and the communities surrounding them.¹⁰⁹ In addition, civil society organizations work to alleviate the burden of wildlife trafficking on communities by empowering people to protect wildlife through education programs, training, and financial and non-financial incentives to discourage trafficking.¹¹⁰

IUCN is the world's largest and most diverse environmental organizations focusing on issues ranging from species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication.¹¹¹ Another large organization, WWF, uses scientific research to recognize a number of endangered species worldwide and produces annual reports addressing this.¹¹² WWF has been a part of a number of wildlife recovery efforts such as Southern Africa's black rhinoceros where WWF worked by empowering local people to protect wildlife and work in coordination with The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC) to stop wildlife crime.¹¹³ TRAFFIC, established in 1976 as a part of a strategic alliance of WWF and IUCN, is an NGO that works globally on combating trade in wild animals and plants.¹¹⁴ TRAFFIC focuses on combining research and

⁹⁸ Halle & Dodds, *UNEP and Civil Society: An Exchange*, 2016, p. 5.

⁹⁹ UN DESA, *About Major Groups and other stakeholders*.

¹⁰⁰ UNEP, *Illegal Trade in Wildlife Fact Sheet*, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ UNEP, *The Rise of Environmental Crime*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁰² INTERPOL, *Vision and mission*, 2016.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ CITES, *Heads of global consortium to fight wildlife crime meet to discuss future strategies to combat transnational organized wildlife and forest crime*, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ UNODC, *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit: Revised Edition*, 2012, p. 6; UNODC, *ICCWC*, 2016.

¹⁰⁶ UNODC, *Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit: Revised Edition*, 2012, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ International Fund for Animal Welfare, *Stopping Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Halle & Dodds, *UNEP and Civil Society: An Exchange*, 2016, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ UNODC, *UNODC calls for support to beat the illegal trade in wildlife*, 2014; UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Illegal Wildlife and Timber*.

¹¹¹ IUCN, *About*, 2016.

¹¹² WWF, *Snow Leopard*, WWF *Wildlife and Climate Change Series*, 2016; WWF, *Polar Bear*, WWF *Wildlife and Climate Change Series*, 2016; WWF, *Mountain Gorilla*, WWF *Wildlife and Climate Change Series*, 2016; WWF, *Asian Elephant*, WWF *Wildlife and Climate Change Series*; WWF *African Elephant*, WWF *Wildlife and Climate Change Series*, 2016.

¹¹³ WWF, *What does WWF do?*, 2016.

¹¹⁴ TRAFFIC International, *What we do*, 2008.

analysis to produce guidance to local communities and organizations on a wide range of wildlife trade issues.¹¹⁵ The Wildlife Crime Initiative (WCI) is a collaborative initiative between WWF and TRAFFIC to support civil society.¹¹⁶ WCI acts as a vital link between international organizations, local governments, businesses, and consumers, and its overall aim is to create systematic change with all sectors through four core pillars.¹¹⁷ The four pillars are to stop the poaching, trafficking, and buying of wildlife and to implement international policy to ensure an enabling environment to achieve them all.¹¹⁸

Effects of Illegal Trading in Wildlife

Illegal trade of wildlife threatens local ecosystems and negatively impacts the economic stability of many developing states that depend on local tourism.¹¹⁹ The illicit ivory and rhinoceros horn trade within both China and Africa weakens macroeconomic and fiscal stability of developing regions.¹²⁰ It has a negative impact on ecotourism, deters investment in a region, contributes to income inequality, and hinders growth at all levels of the economy.¹²¹ The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) notes that an increase in wildlife crime can result in widespread inequality, poverty, and underfunding for ongoing conservation efforts.¹²² Tourism was recognized by General Assembly resolution 66/288 as being capable of making a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as becoming a key sector in developing a green economy for sustainable development.¹²³ UNWTO notes that in 2013, the total international tourism receipts for Africa came to a total of \$34.2 billion, with numbers expected to double by 2020.¹²⁴ The illegal trade in wildlife leads to the exploitation of not only endangered species, but also local governments and people.¹²⁵ This exploitation occurs due to lack of protection over biodiverse lands, ineffective laws, weak judicial systems, and light sentences afforded to these criminal networks.¹²⁶ This leads to an industry of corruption, densely populated by organized crime groups.¹²⁷ UNODC reports that environmental crime has become more lucrative over the past years, leading to an increasing organized black market industry.¹²⁸

Governance and Enforcement

Since the early 1990s, community conservatories have become increasingly more effective in tackling wildlife trafficking than that of international action.¹²⁹ In Africa, local conservatories are now responsible for a vast majority of protected lands, but due to lack of regulations surrounding protected land, protected lands account for only 7% of land mass within the area, most of which is home to the African elephant.¹³⁰ The conservatories offer a unique attribute in that they can offer local support in remote areas that governments cannot usually monitor.¹³¹ Conservatories illustrate the link between environmental protection and development, as their presence generates financial and non-financial benefits for the local communities involved.¹³² As an example, in Zimbabwe, local organizations aid in protecting the interests of the local economy by supporting farmers and protecting wildlife.¹³³

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ WWF, *Wildlife Crime Initiative*, 2016.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 1.

¹²⁰ UNWTO, *Towards Measuring Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa*, 2015, pp. 5-22.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 5-24.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 5-24.

¹²⁵ UNODC, *Financial Flows from Wildlife Crime*.

¹²⁶ WWF, *Causes of Illegal Trafficking of Wildlife*, 2016.

¹²⁷ UNWTO, *Towards Measuring Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa*, 2015, p. 40.

¹²⁸ UNODC, *Financial Flows from Wildlife Crime*.

¹²⁹ IIED, *Conservation, crime and communities: case studies of efforts to engage local communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade*, 2015, p. 11.

¹³⁰ African Wildlife Foundation, *Tackling Poaching & Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Africa*, 2014.

¹³¹ IIED, *Conservation, crime and communities: case studies of efforts to engage local communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade*, 2015, p. 10.

¹³² Ibid., p. 13.

¹³³ Worldwatch Institute, *Wildlife Conservation Offers Economic Benefits to Zimbabwe Farmer*, 2013.

Rhino Conservation Trust notes farming communities benefit economically from being incorporated in efforts to save the rhinoceros population, which allows farmer to realize that protecting wildlife with sustainable farming methods can be to their own best interest.¹³⁴

Since 2008, INTERPOL has coordinated several operations targeting the illegal trade in wildlife; the most recent operation, Operation Worthy II, took place in 2015 and targeted ivory trafficking in Africa.¹³⁵ Operation Worthy II was supported by The Wildcat Foundation and IFAW through INTERPOL's Project Wisdom.¹³⁶ Project Wisdom was founded in 2008 to investigate and dismantle major environmental crime networks and infrastructure.¹³⁷ Since May 2016, INTERPOL has made significant development on targeting and arresting environmental criminals in East Africa.¹³⁸ The purpose of Project Wisdom is to cooperate and collaborate with local law enforcement, to support them and provide information exchange, whilst emphasizing deterrence.¹³⁹ Project Wisdom ensures that community voices are supported and strengthened by recognizing the importance of community and local enforcement participation in the decision-making process.¹⁴⁰

The need for stronger community enforcement was echoed by Member States at a symposium held by the Centre for Energy, Environment and Sustainability, Sustainable Livelihoods Specialist Group, and the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED).¹⁴¹ The symposium, which took place in late 2015, was organized to address the severe rise in wildlife trafficking in 2015.¹⁴² The symposium highlighted that wildlife trafficking is as much a development issue as it is a conservation and environmental one.¹⁴³ IIED recognizes community-based wildlife management as a vital tool to tackle the illegal trade of wildlife.¹⁴⁴ The IIED "Theory of Change" focuses on solutions coming from the bottom up, which are grounded in local context and owned and driven by local people.¹⁴⁵ The IIED suggests that a "Theory of Change" will have to occur in local communities to "strengthen disincentives for illegal behavior, increase incentives for protecting and managing local wildlife via financial and non-financial means, decreasing the costs of living with wildlife, and lastly by supporting alternative livelihoods not funded by criminal activities associated with the illegal trafficking of wildlife."¹⁴⁶

Supporting Local Communities

The extinction of species can have significant economic impacts on local communities' tourism industries.¹⁴⁷ UNWTO highlights that wildlife watching and wildlife tourism provide approximately 60% of the income of most African regions.¹⁴⁸ Wildlife poaching and the illegal trafficking of wildlife threaten the long-term sustainability of these areas, as well as development opportunities.¹⁴⁹ Wildlife tourism has direct economic benefits for the region through the creation of employment opportunities for the local community and offers indirect benefits linked to redistribution of protected area fees and community funds.¹⁵⁰

In 2014, approximately 200 rangers were killed while protecting endangered animals.¹⁵¹ WWF found that there is a severe lack of support for wildlife rangers.¹⁵² It surveyed 530 rangers, across 11 tiger range countries, and found that

¹³⁴ African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, *Long Term Impact of Illegal Hunting and Trade of Wildlife Products on Conservation Efforts in Africa*, 2016.

¹³⁵ INTERPOL, *Vision and mission*, 2016.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ INTERPOL, *Elephant ivory and rhino horn trafficking targeted across Africa in Operation Worthy II*, 2015.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ INTERPOL, *Projects*, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ IUCN, *Beyond Enforcement: Communities, governance, incentives and sustainable use in combatting wildlife crime*, 2015.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Biggs et. al., *Engaging local communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade, Can a 'theory of change' work?*, 2015, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ IIED, *IIED launches new five-year strategy*, 2014.

¹⁴⁸ UNWTO, *Towards Measuring Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa*, 2015.

¹⁴⁹ WWF, *The Economic Value of Virunga National Park*, 2013.

¹⁵⁰ UNWTO, *Towards Measuring Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa*, 2015.

¹⁵¹ WWF, *Ranger Perceptions Africa*, 2016.

63% had faced a life threatening situation at least once in their time as a ranger.¹⁵³ Further issues faced by rangers are a lack of equipment and inadequate training.¹⁵⁴ Another issue identified in the WWF survey was the lack of work-life balance, with many reporting irregular incomes and lack of payment in some situations.¹⁵⁵ Rangers have become the first line of defense and means of protecting endangered species as animal poaching rises.¹⁵⁶ In May 2016, the 8th Annual Rangers Congress took place and noted that bravery is no longer enough and proper support is needed.¹⁵⁷ To address this, The Thin Green Line Foundation provides rangers with essential training and equipment to carry out their role as front line defenders and provides financial support to the widows and orphans of those who are killed.¹⁵⁸ The majority of their services are aimed at developing regions, with a number of projects ongoing in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sumatra, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Thailand, and Vietnam.¹⁵⁹ The objectives of the projects vary from providing training and equipment, to the provision of shelter and infrastructure for the rangers, to more technological solutions such as anti-poaching drones, which have been tested in both Zimbabwe and Zambia.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

Wildlife crime is no longer a distinct environmental issue as there is an intrinsic link between the environment and social and economic development.¹⁶¹ Illegal trafficking of wildlife hinders the achievement of SDGs 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17.¹⁶² Environmental crime has increased exponentially and unless strong intervention occurs on both a regional and international level, it will continue to rise.¹⁶³ Partnership and engagement with local communities will play a significant role in preventing these environmental crimes.¹⁶⁴ Wildlife crime has become a serious threat to the sovereignty of many Member States.¹⁶⁵ This threat has led to civil conflict, alongside the destruction of many biodiverse landscapes and species.¹⁶⁶

Further Research

As delegates proceed in research, there are multiple questions to keep in mind. How can the IIED's theory of change be effectively implemented? How can local governments provide better supports and infrastructures to park rangers? How well grounded is the prohibition of illegal trafficking of wildlife within the SDGs? Is there a need for more specific resolutions targeting key areas and issues surrounding the illegal trading of wildlife? In practice, how well have partnership programs worked in tackling the illegal trafficking of wildlife and can other areas be identified in which partnership programs can benefit? Can any other key stakeholders be addressed? How can local community engagement on the issue be effective?

Annotated Bibliography

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This strategic plan provides an in-depth analysis of where the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species lies now, with 178 parties having signed it since its formation. The strategic vision will prove useful for delegates as it evaluates the place of CITES within the

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Halle & Dodds, *UNEP and Civil Society: An Exchange*, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ The Thin Green Line Foundation, *Our Story*, 2016.

¹⁵⁹ The Thin Green Line Foundation, *Our Projects*, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.; Richardson Center for Global Engagement, *Protecting Threatened Wildlife with Technology and Training*, 2013.

¹⁶¹ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 4.

¹⁶² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁶³ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ TRAFFIC International, *UN adopts resolution on tackling wildlife trafficking*, 2015.

¹⁶⁵ UNEP, *The Rise of Environment Crime*, 2016.

¹⁶⁶ UNODC, *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber*.

development agenda as well as the environmental one. The paper recognizes the conservation of wildlife as an integral part of the global ecosystem. The strategic vision also encourages the promotion and wider involvement of NGOs and civil society and recognizes that for the Convention to be effective, it requires equal commitment from all signatories across the board. The strategic vision is set out in three broad and simple goals; each with concise underlying objectives that demonstrate how they can be achieved that will be important for delegates to learn.

European Commission. (2016). *EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking*. Retrieved 12 July 2016 from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2016:87:FIN>

In this report, published in 2016, the European Commission examines the importance of coordinating efforts across Europe to combat illegal trade in wildlife. Europe acts as a key player in combating illegal trade in wildlife as it is currently a destination market for trafficking in transit to other regions. This report analyzes the importance of strengthening and coordinating the efforts of Member States and the international community. Overall, the document identifies many key themes within the debate of illegal trafficking of wildlife and acts as a good source for delegates as it makes reference to key international conventions and task forces which have been established to combat this issue.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2015). *Sustainable Wildlife Management and Human-Wildlife Conflict*. Retrieved 12 September 2016 from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4893e.pdf>

The following briefing will provide delegates with a very concise look at both wildlife-human conflict and human-human conflict which is caused due to wildlife and the illegal trafficking of wildlife. The briefing identifies and explores the following issues: safety and security, food security and livelihoods, the causes of human-wildlife conflict and the consequences and opportunities surrounding it. This document will provide delegates with a good basis for further research in terms of initiatives which have evolved to combat human-wildlife conflicts. One key component of the paper to guide delegates in their research is the section dedicated to what is still to be learned which addresses key questions which are still yet to be addressed by the international community in terms of trafficking of wildlife.

Kasane Conference on The Illegal Wildlife Trade. (2015). *Statement*. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417231/kasane-statement-150325.pdf

This statement provides a concise and in-depth analysis on the outcomes and discussions which took place in Kasane, Botswana on the 25th of March 2015 between representatives of government and regional economic integration organizations on the topic of illegal trafficking in wildlife. It also provides an update on the workings which have taken place since the London 2014 conference, hosted by David Cameron. The statement clearly outlines the actions needed to be taken by the international community in order to combat the illegal trading of wildlife.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2015). *Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife (A/RES/69/314)* [Resolution]. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/69/L.80 and Add.1). Retrieved 12 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/314>

On 30 July 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on 'Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife,' which is cognizant of the discussions which took place at UNEA-2. The resolution not only expresses the concerns of the international community but also illustrates the rising political concern over this issue. The resolution calls for strengthened national measures, and an enhanced regional and global response at the issue. The resolution addresses both the issue of supply and demand, as well as the need for prosecution of offences relation to the illegal trafficking of wildlife, whilst also encouraging targeted strategies to help economies dependent on the trading of wildlife. The resolution recognizes that the development of comprehensive and cohesive structures surrounding the illegal trafficking of wildlife is required for the future of sustainable development.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 12 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

In order for delegates to understand and fully appreciated the intrinsic link between the prohibition of illegal trafficking of wildlife and sustainable development, they will have to

undertake an assessment of the SDGs. There is an intrinsic link between the environment and the SDG's in over half of the SDGs and over 86 of the targets laid out under each goal. In particular the one of more importance will be goal 15 which makes a distinct reference to the illegal trafficking of wildlife. UNEP has recognized the substantial role that the environment will play in delivering on the SDG's, as the environment is noted as providing many of the key material resources which act as foundations in achieving the 17 SDG's. Examples of this are land, construction material, energy, food and substance.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.). *Environmental Crime – The Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber* [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved 12 July 2016 from:

https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/factsheets/TOC12_fs_environment_EN_HIRES.pdf

This fact sheet illustrates the intrinsic link between transnational organized crime and trading of wildlife and timber. The fact sheets centers its attention on two main areas: first, wildlife trafficking in Africa and South-East Asia, and second, trafficking in timber from South-East Asia to the European Union. This fact sheet provides delegates with a regional outlook on these issues, as well as the flows and prices of the different commodities and the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to combat these entering the market.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (n.d.) *Financial Flows from Wildlife Crime* [Report]. Retrieved 12 August 2016 from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Financial_Flow_Wildlife_Crime.pdf

This report offers a good overview and synopsis for delegates on the financial flows from wildlife crime. It a concise digest which will expose delegates to the not only the financial flow from wildlife, but the idea that when identifying the financial flow one must target the operational costs that organized criminal gangs use to initiate illegal poaching of animals. The digest identifies UNODC as having a crucial role to play in this area. The aim of monitoring the financial flow is retrospective as well as proactive. This guide offers delegates a number of questions which will identify opportunities for delegates to provide solutions, as well as guiding them in further research.

United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2015). *Towards Measuring Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa* [Report]. Retrieved 9 September 2016 from:

<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/unwtowildlifepaper.pdf>

This paper provides delegates with an excellent example of how the illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife can have a detrimental effect on the economies of local communities. The briefing provides an overview as to how tourism enables sustainable development within these regions and how the act of illegal trafficking of wildlife could destabilize the economies beyond repair. It also evaluates the cost and economic value of wildlife watching tourism, as well as giving delegates an inside to living examples through the use of surveys and fact sheets throughout the briefing paper.

World Wildlife Fund. (2016). *Ranger Perceptions Africa*. Retrieved 12 July 2016 from:

[http://assets.worldwildlife.org/publications/880/files/original/Ranger_Perception_Africa_\(FINAL\).pdf?1464013250&_ga=1.220906328.1121466110.1468455195](http://assets.worldwildlife.org/publications/880/files/original/Ranger_Perception_Africa_(FINAL).pdf?1464013250&_ga=1.220906328.1121466110.1468455195)

This survey conducted by the WWF provides delegates with an excellent insight into the social dimension of the illegal trading in wildlife. The survey was done with a total of 570 responses from 65 sites, in 12 different African countries including Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Through the responses, which are clearly illustrated via diagrams, delegates get an insight into the threats facing rangers in Africa. From the results, there arose a number of recommendations which should be implemented to improve conditions for rangers in the areas of basic employment conditions, education, access to proper and critical equipment, and increased studies in how to best support the welfare of rangers.

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II. Implementation of the Paris Agreement

"This is a pivotal moment for the future of your countries, your people and our common home. You can no longer delay. Let me be clear: The fate of a Paris agreement rests with you. We cannot afford indecision, half measures or merely gradual approaches. Our goal must be transformation."¹⁶⁷

Introduction

The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) is the core organ to promote negotiations and actions that recognize, prevent, and combat climate change.¹⁶⁸ The UNFCCC has helped to build awareness of the adverse effects climate change has and will have to our society, economic system, and environment.¹⁶⁹ Article 1 of UNFCCC defines climate change as the “change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”¹⁷⁰ In November 2015, the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the UNFCCC took place in Paris, France, to discuss a universal agreement on climate change, which was solidified in its outcome document, the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁷¹

The objective of this global agreement is to combat the negative effects of climate change through adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, climate-friendly finance, technology access, and transparent reporting of Member State commitments through Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).¹⁷² INDCs will become the Member States’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) once the Agreement comes into force.¹⁷³ Furthermore, the Agreement places the responsibility on all parties to fulfill their obligations in order to maintain “global temperature rise this century well below 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to only 1.5° Celsius.”¹⁷⁴ This target is a key element of international climate negotiations because allowing temperatures to rise above pre-industrial levels would cause the climate to go beyond the normal historical range to a catastrophic level that would further threaten the stability of our ecosystem, biodiversity, and communities.¹⁷⁵ The *Paris Agreement* entered into force on 4 November 2016 after at least 55 States parties representing 55% of total global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions ratified the Agreement.¹⁷⁶ As of November 2016, 100 States parties of the 193 signatories have ratified the Agreement.¹⁷⁷

International and Regional Framework

Climate change became part of the international agenda in 1979 at the World Climate Conference where scientists highlighted that human activities contribute to climate change.¹⁷⁸ In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was created to assess climate change based on scientific knowledge.¹⁷⁹ However, greater emphasis was not given to climate change until 1992 when the UNFCCC was adopted during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to direct international cooperation efforts to limit the adverse effects of climate change.¹⁸⁰ To implement the measures taken by parties to the convention, the COP first met in Berlin, Germany, (COP 1) in 1995 and decided to continue meeting annually.¹⁸¹ To take greater action to combat climate change, COP 3 adopted the *Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC* (1997) as the first treaty to commit developed states to reduce GHG

¹⁶⁷ UNFCCC, *Speech by UN Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon on to COP21 Leaders Summit at the Paris Conference on 30 November 2015, in Paris*, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ UNFCCC, *Climate: Get the Big Picture*, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ UNFCCC, *The Paris Agreement*.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ UNFCCC, *Climate: Get The Big Picture*, 2016.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Carbon Brief, *Two degrees: The history of climate change’s speed limit*, 2014.

¹⁷⁶ UNFCCC, *Paris Agreement – Status of Ratification*, 2016.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ UNFCCC, *The international response to climate change*.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ UNFCCC, *Background on the UNFCCC: The international response to climate change*.

¹⁸¹ UNFCCC, *Conference of the Parties*.

emission levels.¹⁸² As a result, a complex market system to promote climate friendly investment and to trade emissions was created for states to meet their commitments.¹⁸³ To further the efforts of the *Kyoto Protocol*, the *Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation* was established in 2005 as a platform to promote best policies and knowledge for adaptation as suggested by the Convention and its subsidiary bodies, including future decisions such as those taken in the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁸⁴ In the years after, other important outcomes included *The Bali Road Map* (2007), the *Cancun Agreements* (2010), the *Durban Platform for Enhanced Action* (2011), and the *Doha Climate Gateway* (2012) that all continued parties' plans to combat climate change by expanding the scope of the negotiations to include long-term mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology, and monitoring plans.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, COP 19 in Warsaw, Poland, in 2013 continued to make progress as efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradations became key elements of the climate agenda.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was adopted to address the adverse effects of climate change, and the Green Climate Fund was recognized and supported as a main financing source for developing states.¹⁸⁷ During COP 20 in Lima, Peru, in 2014, greater emphasis on adaptation for climate change was generated and its outcome document, *Lima Call for Climate Action*, encouraged all parties to submit INDCs ahead of the Paris Conference.¹⁸⁸

Building international awareness for climate change was further supported by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets as established in General Assembly resolution 70/1, "Transforming our world: the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*."¹⁸⁹ The objective of these goals is to ensure social, economic, and environmental development while preserving and protecting our world for future generations.¹⁹⁰ The SDGs are interrelated, but it is important to highlight that "about half of the SDGs are directly environmental in focus or address the sustainability of natural resources: poverty, health, food and agriculture, water and sanitation, human settlements, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems."¹⁹¹ Goal 13 calls for urgent global action to combat climate change and its targets encourage mitigation, adaptation, capacity-building, continued support for financing by developed states, and participation of under-recognized groups such as women and indigenous people in climate change planning.¹⁹²

Role of the International System

Established by the *Paris Agreement*, the first session of (APA 1) took place in May 2016.¹⁹³ One of its most important objectives was to prepare for the agreement's entry into force as well as to provide guidance for mitigation, adaptation, and transparency sections and aid with the overall implementation of the agreement.¹⁹⁴ To provide parties with a technical approach for the implementation and compliance of the agreement, this session agreed to hold three future meetings to discuss these subjects to determine the course forward, to assess progress and lastly to evaluate the results.¹⁹⁵

The second session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2), held in May 2016, particularly focused on reviewing environmental progress of the SDGs to ensure global cooperation in the implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, UNEA-2 also directed the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to increase capacity-building efforts to carry out the *Paris Agreement* and to promote climate

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ UNFCCC, *Making those first steps count: An Introduction to the Kyoto Protocol*.

¹⁸⁴ UNFCCC, *Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP)*.

¹⁸⁵ UNFCCC, *Background on the UNFCCC: The international response to climate change*.

¹⁸⁶ UNFCCC, *Warsaw Outcomes*.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ UNFCCC, *Lima Call for Climate Action Puts World on Track to Paris 2015*.

¹⁸⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ UNEA, *UNEA Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*, 2016.

¹⁹² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 23.

¹⁹³ UNFCCC, *Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement on the first part of its first session, held in Bonn from 16 to 26 May 2016 (FCCC/APA/2016/2)*, 2016, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 2-5.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 4-6.

¹⁹⁶ UNEA, *UNEA in Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*, 2016.

finance and technology.¹⁹⁷ As a way of supporting the implementation of the Agreement, UNEA-2 highlighted the key role of UNEP in streamlining cooperative efforts to increase public education and participation; support adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development policies and assist the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.¹⁹⁸ UNEP played a key role in the discussions ahead of COP 21 by achieving the support of financial investors to pledge to decarbonize \$600 billion of investments, assisting countries in the execution of their INDCs plans, and building partnerships to reduce GHG emissions and promote renewable sources of energy.¹⁹⁹ UNEP published the Adaptation Finance Gap report to build awareness about what is needed the action needed to limit global temperatures below the 2° Celsius target.²⁰⁰ The report recognizes the need for developing states to gain capacity in order to access and benefit from climate finance, technology, and knowledge to meet their social and environmental responsibilities.²⁰¹

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund launched the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition to bring together governments and the private sector to create support for carbon pricing as a way to reduce GHG emissions.²⁰² Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is organizing regional discussions to help states determine, review, and implement their NDCs targets as required by the *Paris Agreement* and in anticipation of future COP sessions.²⁰³ At the regional level, even though Africa is one of the regions with the lowest levels of GHG emissions, the continent is determined to contribute to the implementation of the agreement.²⁰⁴ Given that Africa heavily depends on the agricultural sector for survival, the African Union Commission and UNEP established the Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly as platform to promote sustainable agricultural practices that is based on climate adaptation and agricultural productivity.²⁰⁵

Development and Implementation of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

Member States were and encouraged to publish their individual climate action plans, commitments, and targets in the form of INDCs in preparation for COP 21.²⁰⁶ The main objective of INDCs is to fulfill the goals set forth in Article 2 of the *Paris Agreement*.²⁰⁷ The article calls for limiting the increase in global average temperatures to less than 2° Celsius and for promoting efforts to hold temperature increase to 1.5° Celsius.²⁰⁸ In addition, Article 2 recognizes that each state has common, but different, responsibilities in fostering climate resilience and adaptation capacity based on each country challenges and strengths.²⁰⁹ Thus, INDCs are independent commitments by each state party that recognizes the state party's future plans to integrate GHG emission reduction strategies as well as climate-related mitigation and adaptation plans into their national policy.²¹⁰

INDCs will not only enhance international accountability for keeping global temperatures from rising, but will open opportunities for financial investment to realize a country's mitigation potential.²¹¹ As of November 2016, 163 parties representing 190 countries submitted their INDCs to the Secretariat for publication in the UNFCCC website.²¹² Based on these submissions, most contributions include mitigation and adaptation plans on their INDCs and include a short-term plan for the implementation of their INDCs and a long-term objective for reducing GHG

¹⁹⁷ UNEP, *At UN Environment Assembly Convening in Nairobi: Governments Agree to 25 Landmark Resolutions to Drive Sustainability Agenda and Paris Climate Agreement*, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ UNEP, *Supporting the Paris Agreement (UNEP/EA.2/Res.6)*, 2016, p. 1-2.

¹⁹⁹ UNEP, *UNEP Annual Report 2015*, 2016, p. 4.

²⁰⁰ UNEP, *Adaptation Finance Gap Report*, 2016, p. xii.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

²⁰² Carbon Pricing Leadership, *Home*.

²⁰³ UNDP, *UNDP Launches Global Discussions on Implementation of Paris Climate Agreement*, 2016.

²⁰⁴ UN DPI, *Africa Renewal*, 2016, p. 26.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26-27.

²⁰⁶ UNFCCC, *Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)*, 2016.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ COP 21, *Paris Agreement, 2015*, p. 22.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ UNFCCC, *Climate: Get the Big Picture*, 2016.

²¹¹ Levin, et al., *Designing and Preparing Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)*, 2016, pp. 14-15.

²¹² UNFCCC, *INDCs as communicated by Parties*.

emissions.²¹³ UNDP, in partnership with the World Resource Institute, published *Designing and Preparing Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)* as a guidance document to provide Member States with an overview on how to develop INDCs and what benefits can their implementation achieve.²¹⁴ In addition, the second part of the report goes over a set of options and policies available for Member States to use in their INDC plan.²¹⁵

Even though the Agreement does not have a specific submission format or provide a tracking mechanism to ensure accountability and progress of NDCs, it states that each “Party shall communicate its NDCs, in relation to mitigation efforts, every five years and each NDC should be increasingly more ambitious.”²¹⁶ Thus, INDC commitments are expected to set in motion a global climate action plan for a sustainable future.²¹⁷ As states need assistance to implement their NDC, it will be necessary to incorporate mechanisms to track, record, and manage NDC implementation and to mobilize financing resources.²¹⁸

Mitigation and Adaptation Action Plan

Mitigation of climate change aims to reduce or prevent GHG emissions by promoting efficiency in new and old technologies, fostering renewable sources of energy, and designing sustainable infrastructure.²¹⁹ On the other hand, to curb the negative effects of climate change, adaptation seeks to implement long-term socio-ecological and economic policies to build climate-resilient societies and environment.²²⁰ In Article 4 of the Agreement, states parties are encouraged to incorporate mitigation efforts in the implementation of their NDCs, and it draws attention to the relationship between mitigation and adaptation to improve economic and social development.²²¹ Furthermore, Article 7 highlights that while adaptation requires a national approach, inclusive global action is necessary to aid those states that are vulnerable or lack the capacity necessary to address climate change.²²²

International efforts to encourage mitigation efforts include developing Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), as established by the *Bali Action Plan* (2007), to incorporate a system to measure, report, and verify national mitigation policies to reduce greenhouse emissions below business as usual by 2020.²²³ Also, to further support mitigation policies, the Technical Examination Process (TEP) serves as a knowledge-building platform for sharing mitigation best practices and initiatives.²²⁴ To assist in the implementation of these practices, the Agreement assigned TEP to hold meeting to discuss the work of the Parties, enable access to mitigation technologies, and provide support for INDCs.²²⁵ In addition, the *Paris Agreement* has increased international cooperation to foster capacity-building efforts by bringing together regions and organizations to support and learn from each other.²²⁶ For example, the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership and the Low Emission Capacity Building Programme in collaboration with the UNFCCC on Climate Change Regional Collaboration Centre came together in June 2016 to assist Caribbean governments and stakeholders in building climate mitigation actions that incorporate low-emission plans, develop their NAMAs, and take advantage of climate financing resources.²²⁷

Climate mitigation action must start now to be on track to reduce global emissions by 2020, which is essential to limit global temperature increase.²²⁸ To achieve this goal, a variety of global approaches can include promoting

²¹³ UNFCCC, *Synthesis Report By The Secretariat On Aggregate Effect Of The Intended Nationally Determined Contributions: An Update (FCCC/CP/2016/2)*, 2016, pp. 4-6.

²¹⁴ Levin, et al., *Designing and Preparing Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)*, 2016, p. 8.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-49.

²¹⁶ UNFCCC, *More Clarity Needed on Adaptation to Effectively Implement Paris Outcomes of Adaptation Forum in Rotterdam*, 2016; UNFCCC, *Climate: Get The Big Picture*, 2016.

²¹⁷ Comstock, *Next Steps toward Implementing NDCs*, *UNDP Geneva*, 2016.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, pp. 22-23.

²²² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

²²³ UNFCCC, *Pre-2020 Ambition*.

²²⁴ UNFCCC, *Policy Options*.

²²⁵ UNFCCC, *Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A)*.

²²⁶ UNDP, *UNDP and UNFCCC Initiates Training Seminars for Climate Mitigation Actions in the Caribbean*, 2016.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ UNEP, *The Emissions Gap Report 2015*, 2015, p. 30.

renewable and efficient energy sources, improving land use and urban planning, fostering carbon capture technology, and reducing non-carbon dioxide gas emissions.²²⁹ To reduce GHG emissions, forest management strategies are essential to climate mitigation efforts by encouraging developing states to adopt sustainable policies.²³⁰ For instance, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) initiative includes conservation, protection, and sustainable management of forests; working with indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities to ensure effective use of land and forests; and developing national policies to seek to eliminate drivers of deforestation.²³¹ To take advantage of the commitments made at COP 21, UN-REDD presented its *2016-2020 Strategic Framework* to foster the implementation of the Agreement by providing Member States with to design and implement national climate mitigation policies to reduce deforestation and monitor REDD actions.²³²

According to a recent UNEP report, “the cost of adapting to climate change in developing states could rise to between \$280 and \$500 billion per year by 2050.”²³³ In order to support the global implementation of adaptation policies, the *Cancun Adaptation Framework* (CAF) (2010) was established to “expedite support for the least developed countries and other developing states for the formulation of national adaptation plans (NAPs),” and to ensure their execution.²³⁴ In addition, CAF established the Adaptation Committee (AC) to further adaptation efforts through recommendations and global collaboration.²³⁵ The role of AC for 2016–2018 is to support the decisions of the *Paris Agreement* by upholding the adaptation recommendations in Article 7 of the Agreement.²³⁶ These recommendations include encouraging global cooperation among regional and international organizations, groups and networks to promote technical and provisional support and by facilitating guidance, raising awareness and exchanging information on adaptation finance, technology and capacity-building.²³⁷ For instance, COP 21, with the support of AC, along with other partners, launched the Adaptation Knowledge Portal to increase access to experiences, resources, good practices, and lessons learned, especially by emphasizing regional participation.²³⁸ Furthermore, through AC, COP 21 established the Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A) to ensure that measures are identified and put in place to reduce and manage adaptation policies.²³⁹ TEP-A is to meet annually to discuss these measures and their implementation, and the outcome is to be published in an annual technical paper.²⁴⁰

Climate Finance

One of the main objectives of the *Paris Agreement* is to mobilize investment for climate-resilient activities and to encourage developed states to provide financial resources to support adaptation and mitigation policies in developing states.²⁴¹ The provisions also urge Member States to jointly contribute to the Green Climate Fund and to continue to support the transition to low-carbon economies, particularly in developing states, by mobilizing \$100 billion per year by 2020 and to remain doing so until 2025.²⁴² For instance, multilateral development banks pledged to finance and invest in climate action efforts by working with the public and private sectors, encouraging innovation, knowledge sharing and cooperation with other resources such as the Green Climate Fund.²⁴³ Concrete actions have been taken in various developing states; for example, Bangladesh, in cooperation with the Bangladesh

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

²³¹ Ibid., pp. 46-49.

²³² UNDP, *Helen Clark: Speech at the REDD+ post-2015 COP21 side-event*, 2015.

²³³ UNEP, *Ahead of UN Environment Assembly UNEP Says Cost of Adapting to Climate Change Could Hit \$500 Billion per year by 2050*, 2016.

²³⁴ Green Climate Fund, *Adaptation planning processes*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

²³⁵ UNFCCC, *Adaptation Committee*, 2016.

²³⁶ UNFCCC, *Revised work plan of the Adaptation Committee for 2016–2018*.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ UNFCCC, *Towards a Multilingual Adaptation Knowledge Portal*.

²³⁹ UNFCCC, *Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A)*, 2016.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Thwaites, *What Does the Paris Agreement Do for Finance?*, 2016.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ World Bank, *Joint Statement by the Multilateral Development Banks at Paris, COP21 Delivering Climate Change Action at Scale: Our Commitment to Implementation*.

Bank, developed the Environmental Risk Management Guideline policy to foster environmentally sustainable financing.²⁴⁴

Article 9 of the Agreement calls upon developed states to financially assist developing states in achieving adaptation and mitigation obligations by providing them with resources and tools to support them based on their states' unique characteristics and priorities.²⁴⁵ In addition, the Agreement commits developed states to increase, allocate, and track public funds every two years to developing states while developing states would also report on the finance received.²⁴⁶ Currently, the Agreement lacks specific details on how the reporting will be implemented, but provisions to decide such tracking and guidelines to meet climate finance goals will commence in 2017.²⁴⁷

To place emphasis on finance, UNEA directed UNEP to continue and expand efforts to promote financing for sustainable development through the UNEP Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System and the UNEP Finance Initiative.²⁴⁸ The UNEP Inquiry into the Design of a Sustainable Financial System published a report title *The Financial System We Need*, which outlines a comprehensive set of approaches to enable environmental policies such as by streamlining sustainable development in national policies through structural changes in the financial system.²⁴⁹ Additionally, the report calls for governments to consider their own financing challenges and opportunities to be able to receive the help required to promote efficient financing based on sustainable development.²⁵⁰ The report also stresses the importance of international cooperation to support and advance national action and align investors and markets to maintain a sustainable financial system.²⁵¹

Capacity-Building and Technology Development

Capacity-building plays a crucial role in ensuring that developing states have access to the tools necessary to implement the provisions put forward in the *Paris Agreement*.²⁵² However, climate change initiatives must be streamlined to increase coordination to avoid duplication and to monitor, evaluate and track efforts toward building long-term measurable and sustainable results.²⁵³ To assist developing states to enhance their capacity-building activities, the *Paris Agreement* established the Paris Committee on Capacity Building (PCCB) as a way to address challenges in implementing the capacity-building framework by enhancing efforts and streamlining activities under the UNFCCC.²⁵⁴ As a result, the *Paris Agreement* established the Coalition on *Paris Agreement* Capacity Building to offer a platform for global experts to coordinate and provide strategic input on capacity-building activities.²⁵⁵ Moreover, the Durban Forum on Capacity-building held a meeting in May 20, 2016 titled *Enhancing Capacity to Implement the Paris Agreement*.²⁵⁶ The goal of the Forum is to support the implementation of the *Paris Agreement* by enhancing and sharing capacity-building measures and create opportunities for activity and knowledge collaboration between developing states, organizations and stakeholders.²⁵⁷

As a way to promote climate-resilient technology development and access for developing states, Article 10 of the Agreement created the Technology Mechanism to provide guidance and strengthen cooperation and ensure access to technology for developing states.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, established in COP 16, the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) aims to promote technology development and transfer; thus, it is required to extend its activities to aid the

²⁴⁴ UNEP, *Green Financing for Developing Countries Needs, Concerns and Innovations*, 2016, p. 26.

²⁴⁵ UNFCCC, *Climate Finance*, 2016.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Thwaites, *What Does the Paris Agreement Do for Finance?*, 2016.

²⁴⁸ UNEP News Centre, *At UN Environment Assembly Convening in Nairobi: Governments Agree to 25 Landmark Resolutions to Drive Sustainability Agenda and Paris Climate Agreement*, 2016.

²⁴⁹ UNEP, *The Financial System We Need*, 2015, pp. xiv-xvi.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-62.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-62.

²⁵² WRI, *3 Reasons Why Capacity Building Is Critical for Implementing the Paris Agreement*, 2015.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, p. 12.

²⁵⁵ Coalition on Paris Agreement Capacity Building, *About the Coalition*, 2016.

²⁵⁶ UNFCCC, *Durban Forum on Capacity-building - 5th Meeting "Enhancing Capacity to Implement the Paris Agreement,"* 2016.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015, p. 29.

implementation of the Agreement by increasing its efforts for the pre-2020 climate action.²⁵⁹ To achieve this objective, the TEC commits for the 2016 – 2018 period to work with the Technology Mechanism to: “(a) enhance clarity, coherence and continuity of activities undertaken by the TEC; (b) maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its work; [and to] (c) provide flexibility for organizing and sequencing its activities.”²⁶⁰

Conclusion

The *Paris Agreement* made history by achieving strong political commitments to ensure our future generations do not face the adverse consequence of climate change.²⁶¹ To work toward the successful implementation the Agreement, global climate efforts must focus on providing Member States with the necessary guidance, approach and resources to carry out their NDCs and integrate climate policy and participation into their national agenda.²⁶² In addition, the *Paris Agreement* provides a platform to incorporate sustainable development with efforts to limit global temperatures to below 2° Celsius while promoting environmental sustainability.²⁶³ Based on these objectives, UNEA’s work will need to focus on building strong international participation and collaboration to assist Member States’ ability to adopt mitigation and adaptation efforts.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, UNEA’s role will be essential for building the support necessary to capacity-building measures for Member States’ to be able to take full advantage of financing and technology opportunities.²⁶⁵

Further Research

In light of the remarkable political commitment achieved through the adoption of the *Paris Agreement*, it is now necessary to ensure that even greater effort is exercised by the international community to work collaboratively and efficiently in the implementation of the Agreement. For instance, how can Member States strengthen their commitments to reduce carbon emissions and take climate-resilient actions to reach the goals set in the Agreement? How can Member States ensure the implementation of their NDCs? How can the international community assist in ensuring monitoring and accountability in the implementation of NDCs? How can developing states take advantage of the economic benefits of climate finance to implement their NDCs? How can your country integrate adaptation and mitigation plans into their national climate action plan? What can developed states do to support developing states’ investment in environmental action and restructure investment for a low-carbon future? How can capacity-building assist to increase climate financing and support technology sharing? How can UNEA take a greater role in the future implementation of the *Paris Agreement*? How can underrepresented groups and non-governmental organizations be involved in the implementation of the Agreement?

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http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

The Paris Agreement is the outcome document of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. The outcome document sets long-term goals to take action against global warming, in particular by decreasing carbon consumption and keeping the increase of global temperatures to well below 2 degrees Celsius. Delegates should be fully familiar with the commitments put forth in the agreement and examine how these commitments can be achieved through national and international efforts alongside the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Delegates should consider how mitigation, adaptation and financial sections of the Agreement assist in the development and implementation of INDCs.

²⁵⁹ UNFCCC, *Twelfth meeting of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC/2016/12/13)*, 2016, pp. 7-8.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ UNFCCC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change 195 Nations Set Path to Keep Temperature Rise Well Below 2 Degrees Celsius*, 2015.

²⁶² Northrop, After COP21: 7 Key Tasks to Implement the Paris Agreement, *World Resource Institute*, 2016.

²⁶³ UNEA, *UNEA in Delivering on the 2030 Agenda*, 2016.

²⁶⁴ UNEP, *Supporting the Paris Agreement (UNEP/EA.2/Res.6)*, 2016, p. 1-2.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Levin, K., et al. (2016). *Designing and Preparing Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)*. Retrieved 28 September 2016 from: <http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/designing-preparing-indcs-report.pdf>

This source will provide delegates with an overview understanding of how to approach and implement INDCs as national policies to combat climate change. This source focuses on options and opportunities that could be incorporated into individual INDCs to identify challenges and take advantage of opportunities to adapt national strategies toward climate resilience and mitigation. This portal will give delegates access to other sources for understanding INDCs and guiding information on how to prepare and execute them. This website also provides the access portal to the list of INDCs already submitted to the UNFCCC.

United Nations Environment Assembly. (2016). *UNEA in Delivering on the 2030 Agenda* [Brochure]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from: http://www.unep.org/docs/UNEA_2_Brochure.pdf

This source provides delegates with an overview of UNEA and UNEP's plan of action for the upcoming years. Delegates should familiarize themselves with the upcoming work of the committees and how their work provides guidance and support for the implementation of the Agreement. Given that SDG 13 on climate action is closely related with the efforts stated in the Paris Agreement, delegates should further look closely to the events and initiatives described in this document. This document highlights the environmental dimension of the SDGs and how can the work between UNEA and UNEP support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thus, delegates will be able to better understand the interrelation between achieving the SDGs as a tool to promote environmental efforts that in turn can help combat climate change.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2015). *The Emissions Gap Report 2015*. Retrieved 24 August 2016 from: http://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/theme/13/EGR_2015_301115_lores.pdf

This report provides delegates with an overview of available mitigation resources focused on financial, technical and capacity-building opportunities. In addition, this report discusses how international cooperation and mitigation activities for climate change can help to reduce GHG emissions. This is a great resource for delegates in order to better understand how mitigation can assist in closing the gap between already made commitments and the results that must happen to successfully achieve climate resilience. The report explores the importance of early action toward the implementation climate policies to halt global warming to below 2°C. Additionally, this source reports and analyzes the efforts and progress made by G20 based on their unique country situation, pledges and policy approaches. Lastly, this report will be useful for delegates as it details opportunities available for reducing the emission gap.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *UNEP Annual Report 2015*. Retrieved 28 September 2016 from: <http://www.unep.org/annualreport/2015/en/UNEP-AnnualReport-2015-EN.pdf>

UNEP's annual report is a detailed summary of UNEP's leadership, achievements and collaboratively work done on the most current environmental issues needing our attention today. The first chapter focuses on UNEP's work in combating climate change and it details UNEP's three major focus areas: climate resilience, low-emission growth and reducing greenhouse emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. In addition, the chapter on environmental governance will help delegates understand the importance increasing participation at all levels of society and ensuring coherence among programs and international instruments to ensure proper integration of environmental policies. Thus, it will be integral for delegates to understand how is UNEP dealing with climate change and how can those efforts be directed toward the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *Green Financing for Developing Countries Needs, Concerns and Innovations* [Report]. Retrieved 26 August 2016 from: http://unepinquiry.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Green_Finance_for_Developing_Countries.pdf

This comprehensive report focuses on the efforts made by many developing states to work together with the private sector to incorporate climate finance as a strategic national policy. The report also highlights how green finance is used to promote sustainable development. This source recognizes the importance of financial mobilization, inclusion and innovation for sustainable financial practices to realize the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. This report will be useful for

delegates as it outlines different national initiatives, policies, and international recommendations to enhance access and availability of green financing.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *Background on the UNFCCC: The international response to climate change* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from:

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php

This website will help delegates understand the international climate change framework by providing them with a historical overview of negotiations, conferences, decisions, and agreements. It is necessary that delegates familiarize themselves with the climate negotiation history in order to have a better understanding of the decisions made during the Paris Agreement. Delegates will find this overview helpful as they learn about the purpose and outcome of each international climate conference. This website will also allow delegates to have access to key outcome documents such as the Kyoto Protocol, Bali Road Map, Marrakesh Accords, Cancun Agreement, Doha Amendment, Warsaw Outcomes, and the Lima Call to Action.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2016). *Adaptation Committee* [Website]. Retrieved 20 August 2016 from: http://unfccc.int/adaptation/groups_committees/adaptation_committee/items/6053.php

The work of the Committee focuses on mainstreaming adaptation policies at all levels of society through enhanced collaboration and mobilization of resources such as finance, technology and capacity-building to implement adaptation action. Thus, the work of the Adaptation Committee will become essential for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Delegates should be aware of the Adaptation Committee work plan for the 2015-2018 period. It will be essential to understand how can the Committee support developing states in the facilitating adaptation for climate change while providing technical support and monitoring. In addition, the Committee will be helpful to build awareness about good practices and lessons learned in national and local adaptation planning.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2016). *Climate: Get the Big Picture* [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://bigpicture.unfccc.int/>

This website outlines the big picture of the international climate change agenda by providing an overview of the UNFCCC's role in ensuring international cooperation to support global climate action and defining key terms in the climate discussions such as adaptation, mitigation, climate finance, technology transfer and development, and INDCs. Delegates will find this website useful given that it discusses these important issues in the context of the UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, and the Kyoto Protocol. Through this website, delegates will learn about subsidiary bodies, funds, and reporting and data mechanisms already established by the Convention, agreement, and protocol.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 14 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets forth international goals and expectations under 17 SDGs and 169 targets. It will be essential for delegates to examine the SDGs' correlation with the Paris Agreement and how Member States can make progress toward implementing both commitments simultaneously. Delegates should consider SDG 13 on urgent action to combat climate change, as well as the importance of SDGs 7, 9, 11, 14, and 15 and how these goals relate to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

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III. Sustainable Use of the Oceans, Seas, and Marine Resources

*"Oceans are the point at which planet, people, and prosperity come together. And that is what sustainable development is about. It is about all of us as shareholders of Earth, incorporated, acknowledging and acting on our responsibility to the planet, to the people, and to its bloodstream, the oceans."*²⁶⁶

Introduction

In the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), *Our Common Future*, sustainable development was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."²⁶⁷ This definition contains two important concepts: the needs that should be provided and the scarcity of resources that may serve as a hindrance to meeting the current and future needs of the people.²⁶⁸ Oceans play a critical role on this concept of sustainable development; over 3 billion people rely on marine biodiversity for their livelihoods.²⁶⁹ Fisheries provide 4.3 billion people with more than 15% of their annual consumption of animal protein.²⁷⁰ World oceans also serve as a buffer for the impacts of global warming by absorbing almost 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans.²⁷¹ Oceans and seas are also vital for global economic prosperity.²⁷² The economic gains generated by the oceans are estimated to be between \$3 trillion and \$6 trillion.²⁷³ Moreover, coastal tourism comprises 5% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and 6-7% of global employment.²⁷⁴ It is therefore paramount that oceans, seas, and marine resources maintain a central place in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁷⁵ It is also imperative to address the sustainable utilization of seas including food security, emerging problems on marine pollution, development of efficient and sustainable use of marine living resources, and the ways and means to pursue a blue economy.²⁷⁶

International and Regional Framework

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) incorporated ocean-related objectives in MDG 7, Target 7.A, Target 7.B, and Indicator 7.4.²⁷⁷ Target 7.A aimed to integrate the principles of sustainable development into a program of action to address the loss of environmental resources.²⁷⁸ Target 7.B focused on the reduction of biodiversity loss.²⁷⁹ In September 2015, the General Assembly adopted *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which established the 17 SDGs that articulated international commitments through 2030.²⁸⁰ SDG 14 deals with the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.²⁸¹ It covers 10 targets relating to oceans, seas, and marine resources.²⁸²

²⁶⁶ Cicin-Sain, *Goal 14 – Conserve and Sustainably Use Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

²⁶⁷ WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1987.

²⁶⁸ IISD, *Sustainable Development*.

²⁶⁹ UNEP, *Blue Economy: Sharing Success Stories to Inspire Change*, 2015, p. 1; UN DPI, *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*.

²⁷⁰ Cicin-Sain, *Goal 14 – Conserve and Sustainably Use Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

²⁷¹ UN DPI, *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*.

²⁷² Cicin-Sain, *Goal 14 – Conserve and Sustainably Use Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ UNEA, *Oceans and seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res.10)*, 2016.

²⁷⁷ Houghton, *A Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean: Moving from Goal Framing Towards Targets and Indicators for Implementation*.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN DPI, *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² *Ibid.*

Foundational agreements that articulated international goals for marine environment conservation and established best practices for the sustainable management of marine resources include chapter 17 of *Agenda 21* (1992), the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992), the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* (2002), and the *Paris Agreement* (2015).²⁸³ In developing specific goals and targets for oceans, seas, and marine resources, the MDGs and SDGs also drew upon international agreements governing the protection of marine resources. In August 1975, the *London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter* came into force to mitigate marine pollution caused by human activities.²⁸⁴ *The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of Ships* (1973), as modified by the Protocol of 1978, and the *International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Cooperation (OPRC)* (1990) were put into effect to cover the marine pollution caused by routine operations of ships.²⁸⁵

Another relevant agreement ratified to address ocean governance was the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) (1982).²⁸⁶ UNCLOS created a comprehensive framework to govern the rights and responsibilities of Member States in the world's oceans.²⁸⁷ It also covers issues relating to continental shelf, rights to the deep seabed, exclusive economic zones, navigational rights on the high seas, and the protection and preservation of the marine environment.²⁸⁸ Part XII of UNCLOS includes measures to mitigate land-based and sea-based marine pollutants such as toxic wastes and other harmful substances.²⁸⁹ It also discusses various measures to avoid intentional and unintentional discharges of toxic wastes, pollution from installations, and devices in exploration of the seabed and subsoil.²⁹⁰

Role of the International System

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) plays an important role in promoting dialogue and policy towards the sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources.²⁹¹ UNEP actively engages in cooperation with different UN bodies, such as UN-Oceans, an inter-agency organization that promotes coordination of different UN organizations in conformity with UNCLOS.²⁹² UN-Oceans' mandate includes the need to strengthen the coherence of UN system activities that address ocean and coastal areas, explore possible collaboration and synergy of different UN agencies, and to contribute to the annual reports of the Secretary-General.²⁹³

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the governing body of UNEP, has universal membership of all 193 Member States.²⁹⁴ This gives all Member States an opportunity to directly develop and draft policies concerning environmental issues.²⁹⁵ The second session of UNEA pursued several measures to address emerging environmental challenges.²⁹⁶ UNEA resolution 2/11 on the topic of "marine plastic debris and microplastics" was adopted on 4 August 2016 and focused on addressing the issue of marine pollution caused by marine plastics and explored possible approaches to mitigate the level of microplastics in the marine environment.²⁹⁷ Moreover, the resolution established an advisory group composed of 29 representatives nominated by Member States and major stakeholders.²⁹⁸ The advisory group aims to explore various thematic areas involving the sources of marine pollution and effective monitoring methodologies, which will be reported to UNEA.²⁹⁹ Additionally, UNEA resolution 2/10

²⁸³ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992; *Convention on Biological Diversity*, 1992; WSSD, *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development*, 2002; COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

²⁸⁴ IMO, *Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter*, 1972.

²⁸⁵ IMO, *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)*, 1973.

²⁸⁶ *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Bean, *Law of the Sea*, 2015.

²⁸⁹ *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ UN-Oceans, *About UN-Oceans*, 2015.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ UNEA, *Marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.2/Res.11)*, 2015.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

on “Oceans and seas” was adopted on 4 August 2016 and calls for continued cooperation by the international community to achieve SDG 14.³⁰⁰ The resolution also highlights the importance of intersectoral cooperation among Member States in integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning, and conservation of marine living resources on the high seas and those under national jurisdiction.³⁰¹

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO), an autonomous organization for marine science within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was established in 1960.³⁰² This entity aims to promote international cooperation in marine research and data and information consolidation in order to efficiently manage the resources of the ocean and coastal areas.³⁰³ UNEP and IOC-UNESCO coordinate with the Global Ocean Observing System to develop a unified network of information and data exchange on the physical, chemical, and biological features of the ocean which are relevant for the efficient conservation of marine resources.³⁰⁴

In 1958, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was established to advance regulatory framework and environmental compliance with the international shipping.³⁰⁵ It also aims to implement regional and global regulations on the protection of the environment.³⁰⁶ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is another UN specialized agency that has a vital role in the pursuit of sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources.³⁰⁷ The agency works with relevant UN agencies, such as IMO and UNEP, to promote food security through the sharing of policy expertise in terms of world fisheries and aquaculture.³⁰⁸

Assessing Marine Pollution

As defined by UNEP in its 2016 report *Marine Litter: Vital Graphics*, marine litter is “any anthropogenic, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, or abandoned in the environment, including all materials discarded into the sea.”³⁰⁹ Marine litter poses a global challenge to achieving SDG 14.³¹⁰ As reported by UNESCO, sewage outfalls and agricultural runoff have resulted to the number “dead zones” of low oxygen that can cause the collapse of some ecosystems.³¹¹ Moreover, UNEP estimated in 2006 that every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastics.³¹² Such plastic debris can cause death in more than a million seabirds and more than 100,000 sea mammals.³¹³

Marine environmental degradation has two main sources: land-based sources and shipping and sea-based activities.³¹⁴ Land-based sources comprised of almost 80% of marine pollution.³¹⁵ Land-based sources have different variations, such as the nature and intensity of the development activities, size of population, geographical location, and agricultural industries.³¹⁶ Land-based pollutants are either released directly into the sea or through coastal waters, rivers, or by atmospheric deposition.³¹⁷ The most common sources of land-based pollutants are sewage, sediments, and marine litter.³¹⁸ Shipping and sea-based activities are another factor of marine environmental

³⁰⁰ UNEA, *Oceans and Seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res.10)*, 2016.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² UNESCO, *About the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)*, 2016.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ UN Oceans, *About UN-Oceans*, 2015.

³⁰⁵ IMO, *Brief History of IMO*, 2016.

³⁰⁶ IMO, *IMO and the Environment*.

³⁰⁷ FAO, *About FAO*, 2016.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ UNEP & GRID-Arendal, *Marine Litter: Vital Graphics*, 2016.

³¹⁰ UNESCO, *Facts and Figures on Marine Pollution*, 2016.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ GRID-Arendal, *What is Marine Pollution and How Does it Affect Marine Life*, 2014.

³¹⁵ UNEP, *An Overview of Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution*, 2001.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

degradation.³¹⁹ These include accidental spills and offshore oil drilling, dumping of wastes from ships, discharge of oily engine wastes, and bilge from shipping operations.³²⁰ Some of the major sources of sea-based pollution are merchant shipping, ferries, cruise liners, naval vessels and research ships, and offshore oil and gas platforms.³²¹

The disposal of untreated wastewater and a large number of sewage treatment plants with poor operating conditions have extremely affected the coastal waters.³²² Increasing numbers of ships and recreational vessels with several tanks for sewage have also contributed to the problem, since most of these ships are dumping their sewage in the ocean.³²³ A UNEP report *In Dead Water* indicates that there is a high percentage of untreated waste water that is being released around the world: 60% in the Caspian Sea, 80% in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 80-90% in Africa and the Indo-Pacific.³²⁴ Sediments are also one of the major sources of land-based pollution.³²⁵ Human activities have greatly contributed to the alarming increase in sedimentation in coastal waters, such as agricultural activities, deforestation, and urbanization.³²⁶ Moreover, increased sedimentation can extremely damage coral reefs.³²⁷ It can block the light needed for photosynthesis and diminish oxygen levels available to juvenile coral.³²⁸

Sustainable Use and Conservation of Marine Living Resources

As part of *Agenda 21*'s objectives on sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources, the international community has committed to develop and increase the potential of marine living resources to meet human nutritional needs, maintain and restore populations of marine species, enforce the use of appropriate fishing gear, preserve habitats, and promote scientific research relevant to marine living resources.³²⁹ Pursuant to Article 204 of UNCLOS, all signatories have to abide by the rights and obligations concerning the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and shall monitor the effects of marine pollution.³³⁰

One measure pursued by the international community to more sustainably use ocean resources is the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF).³³¹ This is a multilateral partnership between Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands that was formed to recognize the need to protect marine resources for sustainable development.³³² This partnership aims to address vital issues of marine pollution, food security, and marine biodiversity.³³³ CTI-CFF has five goals: strengthen the management of seascapes, promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, improve management of marine protected areas, develop coastal community resilience to climate change, and protect threatened species.³³⁴

The international community faces several challenges in terms of monitoring and implementing conservation measures.³³⁵ Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapitalization, inaccurate data, and poor cooperation among countries have made it extremely difficult to address issues of marine conservation.³³⁶ IUU fishing was defined in the *International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated Fishing* (2001) as "fishing activities initiated by national or foreign vessels without the approval of the

³¹⁹ UNEP, *Shipping and Sea-based Pollution*.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² UNEP & UN-Habitat, *Sick Water? The Central Role of Wastewater Management in Sustainable Development*, 2010.

³²³ UNEP, *An Overview of Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution*, 2001.

³²⁴ GRID-Arendal, *What is Marine Pollution and How Does it Affect Marine Life*, 2014.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ UNEP, *An Overview of Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution*, 2001.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Coral Triangle Initiative, *About CTI-CFF*.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

³³⁶ UNEP, *Regional Seas Visioning Ocean Goals*, 2014.

State.³³⁷ It can also be committed by vessels operating in violation of national or international laws relating to fisheries management.³³⁸ Unreported fishing refers to fishing activities that have not been declared or that have been misreported to the authorities.³³⁹ Unregulated fishing refers to fishing activities that are contrary to a Member State's obligations for the conservation of living marine resources.³⁴⁰

IUU fishing has significantly contributed to the unsustainable extraction of marine resources.³⁴¹ Approximately 50% of the world's fish stocks are fully exploited, thereby operating to an optimal yield level, with no ability to expand further.³⁴² Moreover, 30% of world's fish stocks are overexploited, which means that the fishery is being exploited above the optimal yield level with a high risk of stock depletion.³⁴³ IUU fishing can also result in mortalities of threatened, protected, and endangered species, and damage vulnerable marine habitats.³⁴⁴ SDG Target 14.4 is "to regulate harvesting and end IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible."³⁴⁵ SDG 14, Indicator 7.4 addresses the proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits.³⁴⁶

The Blue Economy

The blue economy, also referred to as the oceans economy, is an approach in which marine spatial planning works hand in hand with marine conservation.³⁴⁷ UNEP differentiates the blue economy from the concept of a "brown development model" where oceans only served as a free source of extraction and waste dumping.³⁴⁸ Some of the fundamental approaches promoted under the concepts of a blue economy are the optimization of benefits received from the utilization and extraction of marine living resources; promotion of national equity, inclusive growth, and decent jobs for all; and building capacity to support the interests of small island developing states (SIDS) and coastal Member States in the use of oceans, seas, and marine environments.³⁴⁹

Blue economy practices also adhere to the creation of low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive societies.³⁵⁰ The concept of a blue economy was pioneered by SIDS and Member States with high economic interest in marine resources.³⁵¹ The concept highlights the vital role of oceans in sustainable development.³⁵² SIDS have questioned the excessive focus on the concept of "green economy," in which the economic growth is driven by investments that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity.³⁵³ For this reason, several SIDS have implemented ocean governance frameworks under the marine spatial planning approach.³⁵⁴ However, ocean dependencies are not homogenous among SIDS.³⁵⁵ Each Member State has different economic interests.³⁵⁶ Resource-dependent SIDS, such as Papua New Guinea, Nauru, and Trinidad and Tobago rely

³³⁷ FAO, *Report of the FAO/UNEP Expert Meeting on Impacts of Destructive Fishing Practices, Unsustainable Fishing, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing on Marine Biodiversity and Habitats*, 2009.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ UNEP, *Regional Seas Visioning Ocean Goals*, 2014.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ UN DPI, *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*.

³⁴⁶ Houghton, *A Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean: Moving from Goal Framing Towards Targets and Indicators for Implementation*.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ UNEP, *Blue Economy: Sharing Success Stories to Inspire Change*, 2015.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Houghton, *A Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean: Moving from Goal Framing Towards Targets and Indicators for Implementation*.

³⁵⁴ UNCTAD, *The Oceans Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Island Developing States*, 2014.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

on fish exports, oil, phosphate, and gas while service-oriented SIDS, such as Saint Lucia, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Barbados rely on their tourism industries; therefore, policy approaches vary by country.³⁵⁷

As emphasized in *Agenda 21*, SIDS and coastal states would benefit from capacity-building measures and transfer of marine technologies to better pursue blue economy practices.³⁵⁸ Some of the proposed measures in *Agenda 21* include providing incentives for industries to adopt cost-effective pollution control technologies and assisting developing countries in implementing appropriate methods for responding to oil and chemical spills.³⁵⁹ In terms of human resource development, regular training and workshops should be provided for personnel enforcing marine protection.³⁶⁰ SDG 14 targets and indicators that are relevant to the blue economy include reduction of marine pollution, sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, minimizing the impacts of ocean acidification, restoration of fish stocks to levels that can sustain maximum yield, eliminating IUU fishing, and increasing economic benefits to SIDS from the sustainable use of marine resources.³⁶¹

Conclusion

The UN put great emphasis on the vital role of oceans when it established a standalone SDG for oceans, seas, and marine resources.³⁶² This has placed maritime concerns at the same level as other global issues such as peace and security and human rights.³⁶³ This action acknowledges that oceans are one of humanity's most important natural resources.³⁶⁴ However, there is a pressing need to regulate the utilization of these resources.³⁶⁵ Despite several conventions and agreements in the international community, challenges remain in the sustainable management of oceans, seas, and marine resources.³⁶⁶ Therefore, active cooperation among Member States is necessary and UNEA plays a critical role in achieving ocean-related SDGs and associated targets.

Further Research

How can international mechanisms and frameworks be updated to address emerging issues on the sustainable use of oceans, seas, marine resources? How can UNEA effectively contribute to addressing the issue on ocean governance? How can UNEP better promote cooperation among states and regional organizations to promote sustainable development on oceans? How can UNEP better incorporate civil society and the private sector in these efforts?

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Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas. (1958). Retrieved 1 October 2016 from: http://www.gc.noaa.gov/documents/8_1_1958_fishing.pdf

This Convention highlights the importance of prevention of over-exploitation of fisheries in the high seas. It was agreed to as part of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. This document will be vital for the topic since it presents important measures to achieve food security and frameworks to promote cooperation among Member States for the conservation of living resources on the high seas.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (n.d.). *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries*. Retrieved 1 October 2016 from: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.HTM>

This is a non-binding agreement among Member States with regard to responsible fisheries. It is a set of principles to promote marine conservation and development of marine resources. The document will be important for exploring the concept of sustainable development on oceans, seas,

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ UN DPI, *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources*.

³⁶² Houghton, *A Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean: Moving from Goal Framing Towards Targets and Indicators for Implementation*.

³⁶³ UNEP, *About UNEA*, 2016.

³⁶⁴ Costanza, *The ecological, economic, and social importance of the oceans*, 1999.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

and marine resources since it deals with fisheries management, aquaculture development and integration of fisheries into coastal area management, post-harvest practices, and trade responsibilities.

International Maritime Organization. (2004). *International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM)*. Retrieved 1 October 2016 from:

[http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-control-and-management-of-ships'-ballast-water-and-sediments-\(bwm\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-control-and-management-of-ships'-ballast-water-and-sediments-(bwm).aspx)

This convention was adopted in February 2004 and entered into force on 8 September 2017. The Convention requires all Member States to manage their ballast water in the international shipping in accordance with the standard and guidelines presented in the convention. This is an important document in relation to the topic since one of the main objectives of the convention is to mitigate the spread of harmful aquatic organisms that may affect world fisheries.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (1992). *Agenda 21 [Outcome Document]*. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

This is the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It is a comprehensive plan of action that explores the socio-economic dimensions of sustainable development, the conservation and management of resources for development, strengthening the role of major groups in pursuing sustainable development, and the means of implementation. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 is a relevant reference on the issue of sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources. It focuses on the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, and coastal areas and promote the protection, rational use and development of marine living resources. Further, chapter 17 also discusses proposals on marine environmental protection.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2014). *The Oceans Economy: Opportunities and Challenges for Small Island Developing States [Report]*. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from:

http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted2014d5_en.pdf

This document discusses the concept of the ocean economy that promotes economic growth, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and the strengthening of oceans ecosystems. It highlights the need to establish an effective governance regime to sustainably utilize and protect marine resources and ecosystems. Moreover, this document aims to further analyze the potential of ocean economy to address food security through the identification of the main trade and development opportunities and challenges in the ocean space.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. (1982). Retrieved 20 July 2016 from:

http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is an international agreement that governs the rights of all Member States with respect to the world's oceans and seas. The Convention addresses the issues on the continental shelf, exclusive economic zone, territorial seas and high seas, and conservation and management of marine living resources. It also discusses the obligations of Member States to prevent and control marine pollution and possible liabilities for non-compliance with such obligation. The Convention will be vital since the topic will seek to explore the provisions of UNCLOS on sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources within the exclusive economic zone.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (n.d.). *Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources [Website]*. Retrieved 31 August 2016 from:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>

This website offers delegates a comprehensive view of SDG 14, which deals with conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources. This goal's accompanying targets and indicators provide a measurable framework for action by 2030. The website also provides supporting documents, including reports and news articles from global authorities working towards this goal.

United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, Second session. (2016). *Oceans and seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res.10)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/unep/ea.2/res.10>

This resolution calls for continued international cooperation to achieve SDG 14, which is to conserve the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. The resolution also highlights the importance of assisting countries Member States to pursue intersectoral cooperation in integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning, and conservation of marine living resources on the high seas and those under national jurisdiction. Further, the resolution encourages all Member States to continue to be involved in the ongoing negotiation on the development of an international legally binding framework under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity within the exclusive economic zone.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2015). *Blue Economy: Sharing Success Stories to Inspire Change* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: http://apps.unep.org/redirect.php?file=/publications/pmtdocuments/-Blue_economy_sharing_success_stories_to_inspire_change-2015blue_economy_sharing_success_stories.pdf.pdf

This report highlights the vital role of the blue economy in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It offers an alternative approach to sustainable development that addresses the issues specifically in coastal and island developing states. The concept of the blue economy was pioneered by small island developing states, coastal countries, and stakeholders with relevant interest on the waters beyond their national jurisdiction. It emphasizes the need to address issues of equity, and management beyond historically defined boundaries. This report is important in discussing the topic since it analyzes the concept using six case studies to reflect the diversity and continuing evolution of the blue economy.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *Regional Oceans Governance* [Report]. Retrieved 31 August 2016 from: http://apps.unep.org/redirect.php?file=/publications/pmtdocuments/-Regional_oceans_governance_Making_Regional_Seas_programmes_regional_fishery_bodies_and_large_marine_ecosystem_mechanisms_work_better_together-2016R.pdf

This 2016 report offers a comprehensive review of UNEP's expertise on regional oceans governance. Regional governance and cooperation is key to the achievement of SDG 14. This document compiles legal frameworks and governance mechanisms, recommendations for ecosystem management strategies, and lessons learned from global case studies. Delegates should review this source for insights on activities taking place in their region. Additionally, the report demonstrates the importance of multilateral collaboration on this topic.

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