



## UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

**Topic:** “Promoting the transition to electric vehicles to reduce global emissions, while addressing the environmental damage of lithium battery production.”



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**Chair:** Amaya de Diego Sainz Trápaga

Dear Delegates, It is our deepest pleasure to welcome you to the NICMUN edition of the United Nations Environment Programme. Your participation represents an important contribution to the ongoing global effort to protect our shared environments. By actively participating in debate, you are shaping solutions that will influence the world's environmental future.

As delegates, your actions hold the power to inspire real change. Each speech, resolution, and negotiation you take part in represents the values of diplomacy that define the United Nations. By engaging in this conference, you are not only learning to analyze and debate complex global issues, but also practicing the art of creating consciousness and driving action.

## Committee History



The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 in response to the growing concerns about environmental decay and the need for international coordination. It was created during the United

Nations Conference on the Human Environment, located in Stockholm, Sweden, which marked an iconic moment for global environmental control. UNEP's main mission is to encourage sustainable development with a healthy environment in mind , helping countries to enforce environmentally friendly policies and programs within themselves and each other.

Over the years, UNEP has played an important role in solving key growing environmental issues, including climate change, flora and fauna loss, and pollution. It works with various countries and organizations to enforce research, policy development, and consciousness . UNEP also provides guidance and support for international agreements, helping nations collaborate to deal with global challenges. The organization recognizes the importance of protecting the planet for future generations, advocating for a balance between human needs and environmental sustainability.

UNEP plays a critical role in helping countries recover and rebuild after conflicts by focusing on environmental restoration and sustainable development. In post-conflict settings, environmental degradation can exacerbate existing challenges, such as food and water shortages, which can further destabilize communities. UNEP provides technical expertise and resources to assist nations in assessing environmental damage, implementing clean-up initiatives, and restoring ecosystems. By promoting sustainable practices, UNEP helps ensure that recovery efforts not only address immediate needs but also lay the groundwork for long-term resilience and stability. This holistic approach fosters peace and security while empowering local communities to take charge of their environmental future, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and harmonious society.



## Committee Faculties

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In this committee, delegates can suggest which environmental problems should be solved first, explain those problems with clear facts, and recommend actions that help different groups work together, such as governments, scientists, communities, and companies. Delegates may also encourage training, guides, and simple tools that make it easier for countries to act, and they can support existing international agreements by suggesting helpful next steps. Delegates are invited to promote honest reporting, so countries and companies share results in a clear way the public can understand. However, delegates should remember what UNEP cannot do. This committee does not make national laws, cannot punish countries, and cannot force any country to give money or join a plan. It also cannot sign treaties by itself because only countries can do that. For delegates, this means proposals must be realistic. You can recommend good practices, ask for training and capacity building, suggest simple and fair ways to report progress, and invite partnerships with other UN groups and NGOs. You should not ask for actions that UNEP has no power to enforce.

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## Introduction to the Topic

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Gasoline and diesel cars release pollution that warms the planet and hurts our health. Electric vehicles (EVs) can help because they run on electricity and usually create fewer total emissions over their whole life, especially when the electricity comes from clean sources like wind and solar. Cleaner air helps everyone breathe better, and lower climate pollution protects our common future. At the same time, batteries for EVs must be made carefully. The world needs minerals such as lithium, nickel, cobalt, and graphite, and getting these minerals can use a lot of water, disturb plants and animals, and create waste if not managed well. Building batteries in factories also uses energy and chemicals that must be handled safely. When batteries are no longer strong enough for cars, they can sometimes be reused to store energy in buildings, and later they should be recycled to recover valuable materials. Countries also need enough chargers so people can use EVs easily, and the electricity grid must be ready to handle new demand while growing clean energy. Our goal is to move fast toward clean transport while also protecting nature and communities at every step.

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## **Background Information of the Topic**

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Electric vehicles (EVs) matter because they help reduce air pollution from cars, buses, and trucks, which is called the transport sector. When we burn gasoline or diesel, the engine makes

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gases that warm the planet and tiny particles that make the air unhealthy to breathe. EVs don't burn fuel inside the car; they use electricity stored in a battery to turn the wheels. That means the car itself does not release smoke from a tailpipe when it moves. If the electricity used to charge the battery comes from cleaner sources, like wind, solar, or water power, the total pollution over the car's whole life becomes even lower. This is called the "life cycle," and it includes everything from making the car, to driving it, to what happens when the car and battery are old. As power plants add more clean energy each year, EVs get better for the environment across their full life cycle.

To understand EVs, it helps to learn where their batteries come from. Batteries are made from materials taken from the Earth, such as lithium, nickel, cobalt, and graphite. People mine these materials in different places around the world. If mining is not managed carefully, it can use a lot of water, disturb plants and animals, and leave behind waste that must be handled safely. For example, in dry areas, taking too much water from the ground can hurt local communities and wildlife that depend on that water. In forest areas, cutting trees for mines can remove important animal habitats. That is why good rules are needed to keep nature safe. Governments can set limits for water use, require clean-up plans, and check that mining companies follow the law.

Including local communities is an important part of doing things the right way. People who live near mines should have a voice in decisions, because they are the ones who feel the changes first. This includes Indigenous communities, who may have lived on the land for many generations and have special knowledge about how to protect it. When communities are included, plans can be made to share benefits more fairly, such as jobs, training, or support for schools and clinics.



Listening to local people also helps spot problems early, like dust, noise, or changes in water levels, so they can be fixed quickly.

After mining, the materials go to factories where batteries are made. Battery factories need energy and sometimes use strong chemicals to clean and prepare the materials. The factories should use safer methods and cleaner energy to lower pollution. Workers must have good training and protective equipment, and buildings need fire-safety systems because batteries store a lot of energy. Clear rules help keep people and places safe during shipping and storage, too. For example, batteries should be packed the right way and kept at safe temperatures so they do not overheat. When factories follow strong safety rules, the risk of accidents becomes much smaller.

Batteries do not last forever inside a car, but that does not mean they are useless when they get older. When a car battery can no longer power the vehicle well, it may still hold enough energy to be helpful in other places. This is called “second life.” A second-life battery can store energy for a school, a clinic, a store, or even a group of homes. It can charge during times when electricity is cheap or when the sun is shining and then give power back when people need it later in the day. This helps the electric grid by making it steadier and reduces the need for new power plants. Second-life projects must be checked for safety, labeled clearly, and installed by trained workers so that they are reliable and do not create fire risks.

When a battery is truly too old to be used again, recycling is the best next step. Recycling means taking the battery apart and saving the valuable metals inside so they can be used to build new batteries. This is good for two reasons. First, it keeps heavy materials out of landfills, where they could cause problems if they leak. Second, it means we do not have to mine as many new materials from the Earth. To make recycling work, countries need easy drop-off points, simple

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labels so people know what to do, safe trucks and warehouses, and recycling plants that follow strict health and safety rules. Good recycling programs can recover a large amount of the important metals, which lowers cost and protects nature at the same time.

For EVs to grow, people must be able to charge them easily. That means we need many simple, reliable chargers in the places where people live, learn, and travel. Homes with garages can use home chargers, but many families live in apartments or student housing without private parking. Public chargers at schools, libraries, parks, and stores can help everyone. Fast chargers along highways make long trips possible, while slower chargers in neighborhoods can work well overnight. Clear signs, simple payment systems, and good lighting make charging safer and more comfortable for families and students.

As more EVs plug in, electric companies must plan ahead so the grid can handle busy times. This includes adding more clean energy, like wind and solar, and using “smart charging,” which means cars charge more during hours when there is extra electricity and less when the grid is crowded. Some EVs and chargers can talk to the grid to choose the best time to charge automatically. Batteries in buildings can also help by storing energy during the day and sharing it at night. Planning well keeps costs lower for everyone and helps prevent blackouts.

Fairness matters in every part of this change. Students, people in apartments, and low-income families should not be left out. Cities and schools can add chargers in shared spaces, start electric school bus programs, and create simple rules so more people can charge at work or at home. Car-sharing programs with EVs let people drive clean cars without having to buy one. Discounts and loans can make EVs and home chargers more affordable. Training programs can prepare



young people for new green jobs, such as charger installation, battery maintenance, and recycling plant work, so the benefits are shared across the whole community.

EVs are only one piece of a bigger plan to cut pollution and protect health. Walking, biking, and public transportation also reduce traffic and clean the air. Electric buses and delivery vans can lower emissions in busy areas where many people live and work. When cities plan streets that are safe for walking and cycling, families can choose healthier ways to get around. Putting all these ideas together—clean electricity, strong recycling, fair access to charging, and better city design—helps everyone breathe cleaner air and keeps our planet safer.

In the end, EVs matter because they give us a real chance to reduce pollution while still meeting our need to travel. They work best when the electricity that charges them is clean, when mining follows strong rules, when factories protect workers and nature, when second-life projects are used wisely, and when recycling is done safely. They also work best when all families have fair access to charging and when the grid is prepared to support millions of clean miles. By making smart choices at every step—from the mine, to the factory, to the road, to the recycling center—we can protect water, land, and wildlife, keep communities healthy, and build a future where clean transportation is possible for everyone.

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## **International Actions**

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Several international frameworks and agreements aim to address the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) while protecting people and nature across the whole battery life cycle. Around the world, countries, the United Nations, city networks, development banks, companies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working together to cut air pollution from transport, use minerals responsibly, and build safe systems for battery reuse and recycling. The actions below show how different groups are moving in the same direction and learning from one another.

**United Nations guidance (UNEP & UNEA).** UNEP and the UN Environment Assembly share clear science and practical toolkits to help countries plan cleaner transport, measure progress, and protect water, land, and wildlife where battery minerals are taken and processed. They also help coordinate projects so efforts line up instead of overlapping.

**Paris Agreement transport goals.** Many countries include EV targets in their climate plans, such as more EV sales, better fuel economy, and cleaner electricity. These plans guide budgets and laws that support chargers, buses, and battery recycling.

**Zero-emission vehicle cooperation.** Groups of countries and regions agree to speed up EV adoption by sharing rules, safety standards, and best practices. This makes it easier for companies to build vehicles and chargers that work across borders.

**European Union battery rules.** The EU created modern rules for a safer battery design, strong recycling, and better information. A new “battery passport” tracks where materials are from and how a battery was produced, used, and recycled, ensuring safe life cycles.



**United States clean transport programs.** The U.S. funds charging stations in cities and along highways, helps battery factories and recycling stations, and sets vehicle pollution standards that get stricter over time..

**China's scale-up of EVs and charging.** China has encouraged EVs for years, helping lower costs worldwide. It also has rules for collecting used batteries so valuable metals are recovered instead of wasted, so now they have one of the biggest EV Markets in the world.

**India and Asia's practical pilots.** India is rolling out electric buses for cleaner city air and supports electric two- and three-wheelers that many families use every day. Some programs try battery swapping so drivers can quickly exchange low batteries for full ones.

**Latin American city leadership.** Cities in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and others are adding electric buses, taxis, and delivery vans to cut pollution where many people live. They partner with companies and banks to pay for chargers and maintenance.

Together, these actions point to the same goal: cleaner electricity, accessible charging, safe and conscious batteries, reliable data, and strong recycling. By coordinating rules, funding, and good ideas, the world can grow EVs faster while protecting people and nature.

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## **Recommendations for Further Investigation**

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As you prepare, consider what is true in your own country today. Think about how clean your electricity is now and how it might improve in the next five to ten years. Look at simple rules that protect water, land, and local communities in places where lithium and other minerals are taken. Plan how the voices of nearby residents including Indigenous peoples will be heard and how benefits can be shared fairly. Imagine a clear “circular” plan so old batteries are collected easily, labeled simply, and recycled safely. Decide when second-life use makes sense for schools and buildings and how to keep those systems safe. Consider how apartments, schools, and public places can get easy-to-use chargers, and how fair prices, discounts, loans, or city programs can help more people use clean transport. Finally, think about how UNEP can help with guides, training, and simple shared measurements so countries learn quickly and can compare progress.

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## **Recommendations to do Resolution Paper**

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When you write your resolution, make sure your ideas fit with existing laws and UN rules and that your language is clear and respectful. Use preambulatory and operative phrases to explain the problem, show past actions, and describe what should happen next. Look for sponsors and friendly delegations that can support your plan, and include NGOs that can help carry out the work. Keep your country’s position steady and do not contradict yourself. Be realistic about who will do each task, how long it will take, and where funding or training will come from so your plan can truly work.



#### Sample Preambulatory Phrases

Affirming	Expecting	Having studied
Alarmed by	Expressing its appreciation	Keeping in mind
Approving	Expressing its satisfaction	Noting with regret
Aware of	Fulfilling	Noting with deep concern
Bearing in mind	Fully alarmed	Noting with satisfaction
Believing	Fully aware	Noting further
Confident	Fully believing	Noting with approval
Contemplating	Further deploring	Observing
Convinced	Further recalling	Reaffirming
Declaring	Guided by	Realizing
Deeply concerned	Having adopted	Recalling
Deeply conscious	Having considered	Recognizing
Deeply convinced	Having considered further	Referring
Deeply disturbed	Having devoted attention	Seeking
Deeply regretting	Having examined	Taking into account
Desiring	Having heard	Taking into consideration
Emphasizing	Having received	Taking note
		Viewing with appreciation
		Welcoming

#### Sample Operative Phrases

Accepts	Encourages	Further recommends
Affirms	Endorses	Further requests
Approves	Expresses its appreciation	Further resolves
Authorizes	Expresses its hope	Has resolved
Calls	Further invites	Notes
Calls upon	Deplores	Proclaims
Condemns	Designates	Reaffirms
Confirms	Draws the attention	Recommends
Congratulates	Emphasizes	Regrets
Considers	Encourages	Reminds
Declares accordingly	Endorses	Requests
Deplores	Expresses its appreciation	Solemnly affirms
Designates	Expresses its hope	Strongly condemns
Draws the attention	Further invites	Supports
Emphasizes	Further proclaims	Takes note of
	Further reminds	Transmits
		Trusts

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## Questions to Consider While Creating Your Resolution

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As you design your solution, ask yourself how your plan can be fair to all countries and how it fits your country's situation today. Think about cooperation with neighbors so everyone gains something and about steps that help now and steps that help later, both short-term and long-term. Decide which groups should be involved such as ministries, schools, city leaders, community groups, and companies and whether your plan needs money, training, or help from NGOs. Consider how you will convince delegations that disagree, and think about a simple backup plan.



in case part of your idea faces problems. Clear goals, simple timelines, and honest reporting will make your proposal stronger.

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## **Research and Preparation Questions**

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Before the debate, find your country's official position on EVs and on responsible battery production. Explain how the problem affects your country's people, economy, and environment, and describe what your country is already doing to help. Write about support your country has received from others and support your country has given to others. Explore partnerships that could make battery supply chains safer and more legal, and think about practical actions that citizens can take such as using public transport, supporting recycling programs, and learning about safe charging to help your plan succeed.

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## **Bibliography**

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The resources must be in APA citation format. You can use as many resources as you need. They must be in a list format.

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