



**Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Model United Nations Conference XI
February 8-10, 2019
Boston, Massachusetts**



Welcome to the 2019 MIT Model United Nations Conference (MITMUNC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). We, Camellia Huang and Rene Reyes, will be your chairs for the course of this conference.

Camellia is a freshman from Queens, New York pursuing a degree in Biological Engineering. She was a member of the Francis Lewis MUN and a delegate in the MUN General Assembly Second Committee. She is passionate about biological research, medicine and social science.

René is a freshman who was born in Honduras and raised in Costa Rica, pursuing degrees in Urban Science & Planning with Computer Science, and Applied Mathematics. He has been a delegate at Lincoln School MUN in Costa Rica in the Security Council. He is passionate about math proofs, computer stuff, guitar, public policy and transportation.

The topics that we plan to debate in the UNEP include:

- I. Reaching Net Zero Emissions: Technologies for Emission Reduction and Carbon Removal
- II. Partnerships Between Developing Countries and Superpowers to construct Sustainable Infrastructure

This is meant to be an introduction to the topics and should not replace individual research. We hope that you take the time to research your topics and your delegation's affiliation with the given issues. In preparation for the conference, each delegate will submit a single page position paper on each topic to mitmunc-unep@mit.edu.

We encourage you to take the time to read up on parliamentary procedures - however in the interest of time and fruitful debate, we will go over a few changes to our committee at the start of the conference.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at mitmunc-unep@mit.edu.

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

Sincerely,

Camellia Huang & René Reyes
Chairs, UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)

Reaching Net Zero Emissions:

Technologies for Emission Reduction and Carbon Removal

Radioactive waste is becoming more prevalent and pertinent to everyday people as the world becomes more connected and dependant on nuclear power. As a committee, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must take a firm stance on the reduction of waste involving atomic energy. Moreover, the IAEA must provide research that both allows a modern and international definition of rad waste. In this plan, we suggest recognizing four distinct groups positively or negatively affected by radioactive waste: rad workers, owners of power plants, hospitals that buy the materials produced, and people in the developing world who do not generate radioactive waste themselves.

Key Terms

Nuclear Waste

Radioactive waste (or Rad Waste) is a pejorative term for the material associated with nuclear power, dangerous post-production materials, weapons manufacturing, and certain medical procedures. The material may be difficult to handle properly, dangerous to the surroundings, or too hot to handle.¹ According to the US Nuclear Regulatory Committee, **radioactive** (or **nuclear**) **waste** is a byproduct of **nuclear** reactors, fuel processing plants, hospitals and research facilities. The **NRC** also regulates high-level **wastes** generated by the Department of Energy that are subject to long-term storage and not used for, or part of, research and development activities. Many nations around the world use nuclear materials for a wide range of different industry applications, energy, and of course nuclear arms. These countries are the

target audience to be involved with a solution on tackling new developments in nuclear technology and the dangerous waste it creates.²

Containment

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) defines rad work as “work that involves the use of radioisotopes, their precursors, and the equipment used to generate the material.”³

With the increasing use of nuclear power generation and the widespread use of radioisotopes for beneficial purposes in research, industry, medicine and agriculture, there is a growing need for sharing information and knowledge on disposal approaches.”⁴ When used safely, the use of ionizing radiation in medicine, energy production, industry, and research brings enormous benefits to people. However, the potential radiation risks must be assessed and controlled.

The IAEA develops safety standards to protect the health and minimize the danger to life and property associated with such use.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-level_waste

²<http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/nuclear-wastes/radioactive-waste-management.aspx>

³<https://www.iaea.org/OurWork/ST/NE/NEFW/Technical-Areas/WTS/disposal.html>
N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Jun. 2016.

⁴<http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2011/ph241/ali2/>

Background

Tackling climate change is one of the most pressing global issues facing our world today. The United Nation's IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) recently released a report on Oct. 2018 detailing the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, warning that even an increase of 1.5 degrees would spell disaster for certain regions and ecosystems.¹ “The report finds that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities.”¹ As of now, global temperatures have already risen by 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and if the current warming trend is not reversed, we are likely to reach 1.5 degrees by 2040.² According to the IPCC analysis, human carbon dioxide emissions would need to reach net zero by 2050 - a fast approaching deadline - in order to prevent warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius.¹ In light of the current urgency to reach net zero emissions, it is essential to invest in and implement technologies for emission reduction and carbon removal. Technology promises major effective tools to aid in limiting climate change. However, questions remain as to what types of technologies should be invested in, how nations should go about investing in and implementing new technologies, and how global cooperation can be achieved.

Key Terms

1. Climate Change:

Widespread changes in climate including rising sea levels, increasing number and severity of heat waves and droughts, stronger hurricanes, increased flooding, shifts in

¹ http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/session48/pr_181008_P48_spm_en.pdf

² http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_faq.pdf

flora/fauna ranges, loss of certain ecosystems, etc. Climate change is mainly caused by global warming.

2. Global Warming:

An overall rise in global temperatures. Even slight changes in overall global temperatures can have wide-ranging effects on climate. Global temperatures have been rising since the early 20th century due to human actions.³

3. The Greenhouse Effect:

Scientists agree that the major cause of rising global temperatures is human emissions of greenhouse gases that warm the Earth via the greenhouse effect. Greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide trap the heat from the sun within the Earth, preventing the heat from being irradiated back into space. Natural levels of greenhouse gases keep the Earth warm enough to be habitable, but human emissions have raised the level of these gases way beyond their natural concentrations, causing global warming³

4. Carbon Dioxide (CO₂):

5. Carbon dioxide is the major contributor to global warming due to its great abundance in human emissions.⁴ Atmospheric CO₂ levels have risen by 40% from 1750 to 2011, and in 2013, the atmospheric CO₂ concentration went over “400 million ppm for the first time in human history.”⁴ As such, most climate-saving technologies focus on reducing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere

³ <https://climate.nasa.gov/faq/>

⁴ <https://www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/science-and-impacts/science/CO2-and-global-warming-faq.html#.W-5Co-hKhPY>

6. Emission-Reduction Technology:

Technology that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This can be through providing alternatives to emission-producing processes (e.g. renewable energy) or decreasing emissions from processes (e.g. scrubbers).

7. Carbon-Removal Technology:

Technology that aims to remove carbon dioxide that is already in the atmosphere, resulting in negative-emissions processes.⁵

8. Adaptation:

Efforts to adjust to changes in climate due to global warming, including changes in infrastructure, technology, lifestyle, etc.²

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)

The United Nations Environmental Programme is the branch of the United Nations tasked with tackling global environmental issues. It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and focuses on 7 major issues: “climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, and environment under review”.⁶ UNEP provides leadership on environmental issues and fosters global partnerships for environmental protection and sustainable development.

History

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_dioxide_removal#Methods

⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter>

Climate change has been an area of global discourse, with technology being an important part of the solution to combating it. However, despite much discussion and some improvements in emissions from certain areas, climate change remains an important, and even increasingly urgent issue. According to the UNEP, “Even with the pledges made under the Paris Agreement, global temperatures could still rise by up to 3.4°C this century, forcing people to adapt to extreme new weather patterns.”⁶ As such, it is essential to quickly implement technologies and increase investment in the development of solutions. Technology can enable faster and more effective approaches to reducing greenhouse gas concentrations.

1988	IPCC Established	UNEP & WMO establish IPCC to assess scientific basis of environmental policy. ⁷
1992	Rio Earth Summit	Countries meet to sign United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. ⁷
1997	Kyoto Protocol	First treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is adopted. ⁷
2010	Green Climate Fund Formed	194 countries in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) set up the Green Climate Fund to help developing countries limit their emissions. ¹⁶
2015	Paris Climate Agreement	195 nations sign agreement to counteract and prevent climate change. ⁷
2018	IPCC Report	IPCC releases report analyzing severe consequences of global warming at 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius. ¹

Key Issues

⁷ <http://unfccc.int/timeline/>

1. What Technology Deserves More Investment?

Three major types of technologies can be implemented in relation to climate change. These include technology for: emission-reducing, carbon-removal, and adaptation. Among those three, emission-reducing and carbon-removal technologies aid in combating climate change, while technologies for adaptation aid in decreasing the harmful effects of climate change on society. Adaptation is currently important, and is likely to become even more important in the future as global warming continues. Adaptation efforts have already been implemented in some areas (including flood prevention and decreased development in high-risk areas), as the world is currently experiencing the effects of 1-degree Celsius warming.² However, this meeting will mainly focus on the two categories of technologies aiming to prevent further global warming: decreasing emissions and carbon removal.

Ideally, great investment should be made in implementation and research and development (R&D) of all types of climate-saving technologies. However, the reality is that there are limited resources. Thus, discussions about what types of technologies should receive the bulk of investment remain relevant. Many scientists, including some at the United States National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, now advocate for increased investment in and implementation of carbon-removal technologies, believing that the world has already progressed too far in emissions that even a sudden and complete shift to clean energy would not be enough to prevent significant warming.⁸ According to Pacala, a Princeton climate scientist, “To meet the climate goals laid out under the Paris Agreement, humanity may have to start removing around 10 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the air each year by midcentury, in addition to reducing industrial emissions.”⁸ This marks a major shift in scientific

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/climate/global-warming-carbon-removal.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fclimate&action=click&contentCollection=climate®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront>

opinion, as previous experts generally advised that shifting to clean energy and emissions-reducing technology would be enough to prevent significant global warming. However, carbon-removal technology remains controversial, as many fear that there is a “moral hazard” involved, where countries and people would feel a reduced need and urgency to reduce emissions due to development of technologies to remove greenhouse gases that have already been emitted.⁹ Some are concerned that increasing focus on carbon-removal will even encourage more greenhouse gas emissions. A further area of concern is that as of now, carbon-removal technologies are less developed than emissions-reducing technology. Thus, discussion on whether there should be increased investment in carbon-removal technologies is advisable.

2. How Should Nations Increase Implementation of and Investment in Climate-Saving Technologies?

A lingering problem with investment in and implementation of climate-saving technologies is the absence of a strong economic incentive. It generally costs companies nothing to emit carbon dioxide, but investment in emissions-reducing technology requires investments that may reduce profits. This problem is further amplified in the case of carbon-removal technology, as there is no economic incentive to pull carbon out of the atmosphere. These problems need to be addressed by governments and other institutions, either by providing economic incentives to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations (e.g. carbon tax, tax breaks for renewable energy, etc.) or creating legislation that prohibits emissions. Another important area of discussion is direct government investment in implementation and R&D of climate-saving technologies.

⁹ https://e360.yale.edu/features/how_far_can_technology_go_to_stave_off_climate_change

3. Global Cooperation

Due to the enormous amounts of investment needed to implement and develop these climate-saving technologies, global cooperation is essential. Sharing of technological innovations and improvements can increase the rate of technological advancement. Furthermore, nations have uneven resources available to invest in implementation of these technologies. It thus becomes important for nations with the means to develop and implement these technologies to aid those with lesser means. This is especially important, as many of the areas most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are the ones without the means to implement these technologies.¹⁰ Furthermore, less-developed nations often do not have the means to continue developing in a sustainable, environmentally-friendly way. Conversations about what types of global partnerships should be fostered are thus essential.

Technology Overview

1. Emission Reduction Technology
 - a. Alternative Energy Sources: Renewable Energy and Nuclear Power
 - b. Technology to Increase Energy Efficiency¹¹
 - c. Energy Storage
 - d. Scrubber systems
 - e. Others^{12 14}

¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/07/climate/ipcc-report-half-degree.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fclimate&action=click&contentCollection=climate®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=6&pgtype=sectionfront>

¹¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/emission-reduction>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_Innovation_for_Climate_Change_Mitigation

2. Carbon Removal Technology

- a. BECCS (Bioenergy with CO₂ Capture and Storage)¹³
- b. Direct Air Capture¹⁴
- c. Genetic Engineering¹⁵
- d. Enhanced Weathering
- e. Direct Air Capture
- f. Others^{5 12}

Major Parties Involved

1. Parties in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC is a treaty signed by 194 countries to reach a global response to climate change to further prevent it.¹⁶ Many parties of the UNFCCC subsequently adopted the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Climate Agreement.^{17 18} The UNFCCC also set up the Green Climate Fund to promote emission reduction technology in the developing world.

2. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The international organization in charge of organizing and analyzing the science behind climate change. The IPCC synthesizes the opinions and work of climate scientists from around 150 countries.¹⁷

3. United States of America

¹³ https://e360.yale.edu/features/how_far_can_technology_go_to_stave_off_climate_change

¹⁴ <https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/using-technology-for-climate-change-mitigation>

¹⁵ <https://www.inverse.com/article/26296-bunzl-genetically-modified-plants-geoengineering-climate-change>

¹⁶ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/who-we-are/about-the-fund>

¹⁷ <https://www.sej.org/initiatives/international-agencies/international-agencies>

¹⁸ <https://unfccc.int/about-us/about-the-secretariat>

The U.S. is the world's largest economy, and a leading technological innovator.¹⁹ ²⁴ It is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases and the second largest investor in solar energy.²⁰

²³ The U.S. is also among the countries with the seemingly lowest concerns about climate change. Notably, the U.S. was the only country that rejected the Paris Climate Agreement.²¹

4. People's Republic of China

China is the world's second largest economy and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases.¹⁴ However, it is also the world's largest investor in solar energy²². China's government has recently been taking a strong stance against air pollution and emissions.¹⁴

5. India

As an emerging economy, India has increasing energy demands. However, it is focused on investing in renewable energy to allow for the economy to grow while preventing emissions growth.²² India is set to become the world's third largest investor in solar energy²³ ¹⁴.

6. Denmark

Denmark is considered one of the leading countries in fighting climate change due to its effective carbon emissions reduction and renewable energy promoting policies. "Denmark is on the path to be completely independent of fossil fuels by 2050."²²

7. France

¹⁹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/the-worlds-biggest-economies-in-2018/>

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change_opinion_by_country

²¹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/11/syria-is-joining-the-paris-agreement-now-what/545261/>

²² <https://singularityhub.com/2017/08/07/tackling-climate-change-countries-leading-the-way/#sm.00000eeuh51rpaczv866aleyqvo1>

²³ <https://cleantechnica.com/2017/04/12/india-will-become-worlds-third-largest-solar-market-year/>

France is one of the “global leaders in climate change policy.”²² The country is also technologically advanced, and the government has implemented ambitious plans to support climate change research.^{24 22}

8. Africa

African nations are increasingly worried about the effects of climate change. This region includes some of the areas most vulnerable to the effects of climate change that often require aid in implementing and developing climate-saving technologies. Africa is one of the areas the Green Climate Fund places more focus on.¹⁶

9. Latin America

Latin America includes the first nations to develop transparency plans to support the Paris Climate Agreement.²⁵ Many Latin American nations face challenges relating to lacking technologies for preventing/mitigating climate change.²⁵ However, these nations generally have great concern about climate change, albeit with certain contrasts.²⁰ Costa Rica, a country in Central America, generates 99% of its electricity from renewable resources. With the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, however, many worry that his statements on the lack of priority of conserving the Amazon rainforest will lead to further belittlement of the environment.

Conclusion

Technology is one of the most important aspects of the global fight against climate change. Thus, investment in technological advances is essential for prevention of further global warming that

²⁴ <https://www.41studio.com/blog/2018/15-countries-with-higest-technology-in-the-world/>

²⁵ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/news/latin-american-countries-push-climate-action-transparency>

would result in devastating consequences across the world. In order to come up with working plans to implement and develop climate-saving technologies, it is important to consider the different types of climate-saving technologies, understand the role of economics and politics, and foster global partnerships.

Recommended Readings

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018 Report

(the Press Release and FAQ sections are particularly helpful)

<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

2. Paris Climate Agreement: Article 10

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

3. Overview of Some Climate-Saving Technologies

<https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/using-technology-for-climate-change-mitigation>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

4. Carbon Removal: Importance and Possible Limitations

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/climate/global-warming-carbon-removal.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fclimate&action=click&contentCollection=climate®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=1&pgt=1&type=sectionfront>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_dioxide_removal#Methods

5. Background on UNEP and Climate Change

<https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/climate-change>

Partnerships Between Developing Countries and Superpowers to construct Sustainable Infrastructure

Background

The Sustainable Development Goals, formally referred to as the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, were agreed upon by member states in 2015. It contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals which are to be achieved by 2030 through global collaborative actions. The main objective of these is to allocate the necessary resources and skills in developing countries to satisfy their present needs without sacrificing their ability to do it in the future. The end goal is to eradicate poverty throughout the world. Although most countries agree on the importance of working towards better environmental quality, it is harder to agree on the best way to achieve this. Some plans, such as the Addis Ababa Action Agreement have been put forward, which address big-picture considerations such as financing of these projects. Nevertheless, it is also important to address specific projects that can be carried out, along with where and how to obtain the resources. In this committee, we will focus on sustainable infrastructure in developing countries and what the best way to finance and execute these projects is.²⁶

Key Terms

²⁶ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

Sustainability

Sustainability is the use of resources that fulfills the needs of present users without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable practices support ecological, human, and economic health and vitality. Sustainability presumes that resources are finite and should be used conservatively and wisely with a view to long-term priorities and consequences of the ways in which resources are used. Therefore, a sustainable use of resources optimistically implies that resources are used up at a slower rate than they are replaced by the environment.²⁷

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is defined as the balance between meeting human development goals and minimizing the effect this has on the way resources are naturally provided to us as to not deplete them²⁸. Within the scope of the UN, sustainable development also refers to building a society that is inclusive and sustainable for both its people and its environment. Three main considerations that cannot be forgotten when seeking ways to achieve these goals are: economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion²⁹.

Sustainable Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the set of manmade structures that aid in the function of daily life in a populated space. The development of infrastructure is central to the direction of a country given that it can improve efficiency by improving mobility, and therefore also increase the population's

²⁷ <https://www.sustain.ucla.edu/about-us/what-is-sustainability/>

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development

²⁹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

satisfaction with their lives. More specifically, sustainable infrastructure can involve energy, transportation, housing, work space, and other factors of day-to-day life.³⁰.

Key Issues

Financing Sustainability Projects

Many resources will be needed to carefully plan and complete important sustainability projects in developing countries. Most of these resources are readily available throughout the world, mostly allocated in large developed countries. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges will be finding the best way to finance this development in countries that usually do not have the economic stability or prowess necessary to carry out these megaprojects. They are contrasting sources of funding that can be considered. For example, there is debate surrounding national investment versus foreign investment and public investment versus private investment. More importantly, it is essential to analyze the nuances that come with each source of funding. Investors may have ulterior motives, and there may develop power dynamics among parties involved in funding agreements. The short or long-term commitment of an agreement may also affect its feasibility and acceptance.

Sustainable Transport

Transport has been recognized as a major factor towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda by the UN Secretary-General. Transport addresses multiple sustainable development goals, such as those related to infrastructure, health, economic growth and energy.³¹ This makes sense given that new transport systems could improve social inclusion by providing underprivileged communities with new

³⁰ <https://www.crcresearch.org/sustainable-infrastructure/use-transportation>

³¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabletransport>

opportunities that may have been previously restricted by physical obstacles. Furthermore, investment in public transport can lead to more efficient settlements where people are more encouraged to collaborate and coexist. Regarding more direct environmental impact, the implementation of new, clean-energy technologies, especially pushing towards mass transport, instead of individual methods such as cars, would help reduce carbon emissions and save energy.

US Support

After leaving the Paris Agreement in 2017, the United States exhibited a negative attitude towards the concept of climate change, and thus the concept of sustainability in general. Given that many resources are to be found in this country, one of the richest in the world, it would be beneficial to have its resources available to developing countries looking for sustainable development.

Partnerships with Superpowers

One way that developing countries could obtain the necessary resources and sometimes plans to build sustainable infrastructure is creating “win-win” partnerships with superpowers like China or France. An example of this would be a potential partnership between China and various African countries which could, according to a UN official, could have a great impact on their ability to fulfill the 2030 agenda. The most controversial aspect of these relationships, which will be a central discussion topic in this committee, is the geopolitical impact they could have. For example, different blocs of powerful countries could see this as an opportunity to gain influence in the developing world. Furthermore, many of these countries have natural resources that are of interest to these MEDCs and thus

maintaining equality and respect in these relationships would be essential³². Finally, many developing countries have been victims of colonialism in the past or have seen some negative effects of foreign intervention in their neighboring countries. Therefore, there is an added social and cultural factor that cannot be ignored when bringing foreign funds and ideas into many of these countries. The main focus has to be on finding a way to monitor these relationships and a criterion to use when deciding whether an agreement aligns with the vision of the UN or not.

Major Parties Involved

UNDP:

The United Nations Development Programme pushes for the ultimate eradication of poverty through sustainable development. As an entity, it helps developing countries maintain stable democracies, have new, resilient infrastructure and pushes for social inclusion. It approaches these challenges with “Six Signature Solutions”: Keeping people out of poverty, Governance, Crisis Prevention/Resilience, Nature-based solutions, Clean, affordable energy and Gender Equality.³³

SDGC Africa:

The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa is an international organization whose goal is to facilitate the completion of the 2030 Agenda by providing comprehensive resources to African nations. It was established shortly after the signing of the historical 2015 document by African leaders who saw the need to take immediate action. It is a prime example of regional solutions to work towards

³² <https://www.herald.co.zw/china-africa-partnership-bolsters-sustainable-development-says-un-official/>

³³ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/our-focus.html>

sustainable development, where developing countries group together to find solutions and help each other.³⁴

United States of America:

Although its leaving the Paris Agreement signaled a strong message of non-support for environmental policies and sustainability, the United States remains a major player due to its economic prowess, abundant intellectual capital in research institutions and private companies, and its strong geopolitical influence.

European Union:

France and Denmark, among other countries, have been pushing for big changes to be made regarding environmental policy and the containment of global warming. Therefore, these countries, some of which also have a great sphere of influence, could push for important decisions and act as good mediators.³⁵

China, Russia and Allies

Formerly communist countries have had a more recent economic development. Therefore, potential partnerships such as those that can come out of the SDGs could give them a stronger position in the global stage. These countries also have an advantage that they are often seen as having experienced a more similar path to development as the countries they would be helping. Nevertheless, neither

³⁴ <https://sdgcafica.org/about/overview/>

³⁵ <https://singularityhub.com/2017/08/07/tackling-climate-change-countries-leading-the-way/#sm.00000eeuh51rpaczv866aleyqvo1>

country has showed a strong commitment to sustainability and preventing climate change, having made weak emission pledges.³⁶

Latin American Countries

Here we have a bloc of countries and territories that could collaborate regionally instead of having superpowers fund their sustainable development. This connects to the fact that many countries in this pluricultural region were affected by both Spanish colonialism and US political intervention. Therefore, collaboration between these countries and those in other less-developed regions can be a possible solution. Furthermore, countries like Uruguay and Costa Rica have already pushed laws regarding clean energy and other environmental factors that could strengthen their role within the committee.³⁷

Middle East

Many countries in this region have undergone very recent development, with many relying on fossil fuels. This is partly due to their vast oil reserves, but also due to the environmental conditions which make it difficult to harness many forms of sustainable energy to satisfy the demands of their cities. Nevertheless, countries like the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait have started to invest greatly in sustainable innovation. Their booming economies could also make them a good source of investment.³⁸

Past Advancements/Conclusion

³⁶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change-temperature-paris-agreement-environment-china-russia-report-a8637546.html>

³⁷ <https://eyeonlatinamerica.com/2016/02/05/epi-2016-greenest-countries-latin-america/>

³⁸ <https://www.ecomena.org/sustainability-middle-east/>

Not much has been done regarding this as a global issue given that the concept of sustainable infrastructure is a relatively recent idea. Furthermore, logistical, monetary and social complications make it difficult quick advancement of sustainable infrastructure. The most important past UN resolutions to be taken into account are the 17 SDGs in the 2030 Sustainability Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agreement. These demonstrate the framework that has been laid out so far to work with the general issue. Delegates will need to find more feasible solutions to deal with the specific issue of sustainable infrastructure, how to fund its planning and construction, and how it factors into international relations. More precisely, delegates should focus on three main relationships:

1. Collaboration between developing countries
2. Superpowers and developing countries: How to avoid the exploitation of disadvantaged countries and how to defend individual national interests
3. Potential tensions between superpowers with conflicting interests in these different developing countries. As an strong example, we suggest looking into China's One Belt, One Road initiative.

Recommended Readings

- Background on UNEP: <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals>
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Addis-Ababa-Action-Agenda-Draft-Outcome-Document-7-July-2015.pdf>
- 17 Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

- SGDC Africa Reports: <https://sdgcafrica.org/reports/>