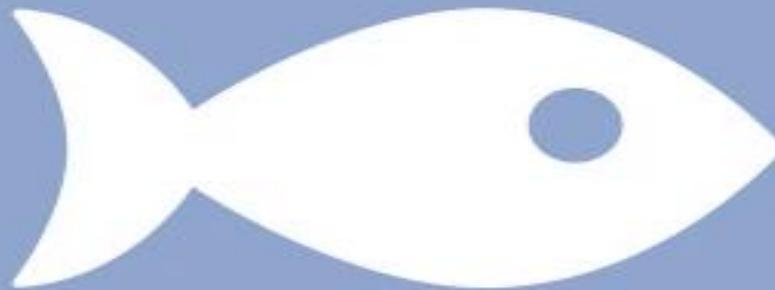


14

LIFE BELOW WATER



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FRESHMAN #14

TOPIC: PROTECTING CORAL REEFS



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Freshman #14 Life Below Water – Protecting Coral Reefs

Hi delegates! My name is Amelia Kitts and I will be your one of your co-chairs at SOCOMUN this year! I am a senior at SM and I have been involved in MUN for four years now. MUN has provided me with so many amazing opportunities including being a part of the leadership board, going to college conferences, and making great friends. In addition, it has helped me develop my public speaking, research, and debate skills. I specifically enjoy debating in security councils (catch me dueling with Elizabeth Bondy!) and becoming more aware of the current issues our world is facing. Besides MUN, I am captain of the varsity tennis team, a participant in National Honors Society, and part of the Ambassador program. I have also participated in Choir for four years and traveled to both Austria and the Netherlands for choir tours.

Hi, I am Andrea and I am currently a sophomore at Santa Margarita. I have been doing MUN since freshman year and I absolutely love it. I have travelled to Berkeley and this year I will be going to London for a conference. Can't wait to see you in committee!

Hello fellow chair, my name is Evan Dzierzynski. I am currently a freshman at SM and am looking forward to working with you in SOCOMUN. I do enjoy MUN and have had a very successful past in MUN. I have won three awards and am excited to experience working a conference, rather than participating in it. Hopefully our cooperation turns out a success and that SOCOMUN turns out well once again.

We are so excited for SOCOMUN this year, and hope this conference encourages you to continue with MUN! Since this is a learning conference, feel free to ask any questions you may have throughout committee. We will begin committee with speeches where all delegates will discuss their solutions and country policy. Delegates will also have the opportunity to motion for a caucus which will allow you to discuss your solutions in more depth with other delegates. This can be done in the form of a moderated caucus, short speeches, or in an unmoderated caucus, informal debate without speeches. I highly suggest researching your country policy, background, and solutions well. I also recommend printing out your resources so you can reference them throughout committee. If you have any other questions, please email me at socomunfresh14@gmail.com Best of luck, and we look forward to meeting all of you!



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Background:

Some of the most diverse ecosystems and species in the world are found in coral reefs. It is estimated that about 1 to 8 million undiscovered species exist within these reefs. These extensive underwater structures are built by a coral species known as hermatypic which construct durable exoskeletons by obtaining calcium carbonate from the seawater. Coral reefs gradually grow into large ecosystems over time as the exoskeletons of polyps, individual corals, are added one at a time. These reefs are found all over the world most often in shallow, warm waters where the sun can easily be utilized as a source of energy. Some of the most famous coral reefs include the Great Barrier Reef, the Tubbataha Reef, the Amazon Reef, and the Palancar Reef ranging in age from 5,000 to 10,000 years old. Coral reefs have become known as the “rainforests of the sea” due to their vast diversity of life. Numerous organisms find shelter and food in coral reefs as well as reproduce and develop their young. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration states that “about 25% of the ocean’s fish depend on healthy coral reefs” proving the absolute necessity in protecting our reefs. The benefits of coral reefs for both humans and marine life are numerous. Rachel Ross states that “coral reefs are a critical marine habitat on which many ocean species depend. Additionally, coral reefs provide an estimated \$30 billion annually in direct economic benefit to people worldwide through food, fisheries and tourism” (Livescience).

However, over the years increasingly dangerous threats have arisen resulting in a decrease in the health of coral reefs. Since the 1970s, the average living cover of coral reefs has declined to only 8% in the Caribbean reefs alone. Two of the most apparent causes of coral reef destruction include unethical exploitation of its resources and coastal improvement. Because coral reefs exist in shallow environments, they are particularly vulnerable to human activities which are present in the social and cultural frameworks of coastal regions. Expanding development on shorelines such as factories, desalination machinery, and hotels has increased erosion on the coastline resulting in sedimentation throughout the surrounding seas. This sedimentation generates a decrease in light availability for the coral seas which affects the ability of coral to photosynthesize. The irresponsibility of tourists and business operations has led to toxic discharge, habitat loss, increased turbidity, and a rising amount of sedimentation further contributing to reef degradation. The burning of fossil fuels has posed another threat to reefs as oceans consume increasing amounts of carbon dioxide hindering the ability of polyps to produce exoskeletons for shelter. In addition, water pollution from fertilizers, gasoline, sewage waste, oil, and pesticides have negatively affected the coral’s ability to prosper resulting in damage among relationships between coral, plants, and the surrounding marine life. Furthermore, because of rising temperatures around the world, coral bleaching (lack of zooxanthellae to provide corals with color resulting in only the white exoskeleton) is becoming more common. 16% of the world’s reefs suffered from the massive coral bleaching event in 1998 alone. Additionally, fishing practices such as cyanide fishing (stunning the fish with cyanide to make them more accessible), blast fishing, and overfishing have provoked many coral reefs to die off within minutes. Recent reports stated that already 27% of reef formations have been lost and scientists estimate that about 32% will be lost over the next 32 years if actions to increase protection are not taken. Local and global sources alike are threatening coral reefs and scientists predict the survival of coral reefs may be in risk if immediate actions are not taken to protect these beneficial and complex ecosystems.

The United Nations has taken various actions to improve the quality of life and health of coral reefs. In 2000 the Coral Reef Unit, also known as the CRU, was founded to direct the UN’s



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actions on Coral reefs. This unit collaborates with multiple institutions, such as Action Plans and Regional Seas Conventions, to create reef management methods based on affecting the coral reef ecosystems positively. In addition, UNEP is working to reverse reef degradation by advocating for international cooperation. Furthermore, the International Coral Reef Initiative was established to preserve the vitality and live within coral reefs. The ICRI recognizes the important role of coral reefs in maintaining aquatic biodiversity and the threats imposed on reefs by land, sea and climate, pressures. The ICRI “aims to contribute to the conservation of these ecosystems by collecting and disseminating best practices of conservation and management, as well as the sustainable use of these natural resources” (sustainabledevelopment.un.org).

Possible Solutions:

Several solutions will be discussed below to help guide you in your research. However, please keep in mind that all delegates should research their own solutions in addition to these. Your country policy on the issue should direct your research and your solutions and will help you create unique resolutions. The most successful solutions include both short-term and long-term ideas and are well developed. As you create your solutions try to answer the questions what? why? when? who? where? how? to develop detailed and original ideas. Your solutions should focus on the global coral reef issue not just your country. Just a reminder, all projects and ideas will be funded by the 5th committee general and the World Bank so money should not be a deciding factor in your solutions.

Coral reefs are some of the most diverse and important ecosystems in the world containing impressive marine life. These reefs benefit the world economically, socially, and environmentally, however, the degradation of coral reefs has been steadily rising in the past years. The Coral Reef Task Force, also known as the CRTF, closely monitors all reefs in the United States by mapping the ecosystems, collecting data on the marine life, recording causes of destruction, and researching solutions to protect the vitality of the coral reefs. The CRTF works with private, federal, and nongovernmental organizations to promote coral reef conservation efforts. The CRTF would create an even larger impact if it were converted into an international program to monitor coral reefs all over the world. Individual coral reef task forces should be established in all nations containing or near coral reefs. The Global Positioning Satellite can be used to monitor these reefs and provide detailed digital images and maps. In addition, an international meeting should be arranged between all countries involved or near coral reefs. At this meeting nations would discuss current solutions to preventing reef degradation. Both positive and negative data would be examined at these meetings.

Many reefs are suffering severely as a result of harmful tourism. It is necessary that tourists be educated and warned of the delicate nature of coral reefs. Tourists are able to be responsible by refraining from touching a coral reef, keeping their boats far away from reefs, being aware of the threats littering poses, snorkeling and diving with concern, and staying at hotels that promote environmentalism. These actions can be introduced in mobile education centers at major tourist locations. In addition, inspections should be carried out by the Coral Reef Task Force to ensure that tourist companies are not threatening coral reefs with their activities. Furthermore, ecotourism should be promoted. The primary concepts that ecotourism involves “are that the travel industry as a whole should adopt more environmentally friendly practices, protect the natural and cultural heritage of a destination, and support local communities” (greenglobaltravel.com). Lastly, countries should implement protected coral reef zones. These zones would protect the reefs from tourism and fishing and can be used as areas of research. To



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truly make an impact on the rising issue of coral reef degradation it is crucial that local, national, and international communities all come together to create solutions that will quickly protect this biologically rich ecosystems.

Questions to Consider:

Consider the following questions as you develop your solutions to further your comprehension of the topic. You are not required to answer these questions during committee, however they may provide some helpful guidelines during discussions.

1. What is your country's policy on the topic? How have they responded to this growing issue, if at all? Does your country value coral reefs?
2. In what ways can ecosystems be protected while still maintaining tourism in coastline regions?
3. How can you incentivize fishers to stop destructive fishing techniques such as overfishing, cyanide fishing, and blast fishing?
4. How could collaboration between the UN, NGOs, and individual nations be integrated together in order to quickly intensify efforts to improve the vitality of coral reefs?
5. Which NGO's combat coral reef degradation? Is your country able to provide aid to these organizations?
6. What steps can be taken to ensure that economic and urban development does not further effect coral reefs? What long-term solutions can be taken to protect these reefs?
7. How will you incentivize nations to prioritize aid to coral reefs over other issues?
8. Does your country agree with past UN resolutions? If not, how would you revise them?

Goal 14 Targets: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristic

14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation



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14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

14.A Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

14.B Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

14.C Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want

MUN Impact

We hope that you learn a lot about Model UN at our conference. We also hope that you learn about the world we live in and want to make that world a better place for everyone. Consider taking the next step and becoming a part of the MUN Impact Program <http://munimpact.org/>

To see what MUN Impact is doing related to SDG #14 look here <http://munimpact.org/sdg-14/>



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