

15 LIFE ON LAND



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

SOCOMUN XXVIII

FRESHMAN #15

TOPIC: DEFORESTATION



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Freshman #15 Life on Land: Deforestation

Hello, delegates! My name is Matt Trueman and I'm excited to be your chair for this coming SOCOMUN 2019! This will be my fourth year in MUN as a senior and I am just as excited as ever to have yet another chance to chair at our conference. With three and now four years to be under my belt for MUN, I can accurately say the Model United Nations program has been an immense help across the board helping with public speaking, collaboration skills, and overall confidence in a crowded environment. As a sophomore, I had the chance to travel to BMUN 66 at the University of California Berkeley with my delegation and again, as a junior, to London for the Croydon Conference at the Royal Russel School in England. Both of these experiences have allowed me to develop further from the international friends we made, the closer relationships with my fellow delegates, and the involvement of an international conference. MUN has provided me the skills to go further and travel abroad and for incoming freshmen as yourselves, I urge you all to find the fun and success in MUN for its benefits will be forever helpful! Besides my MUN experience, I am involved in a wide range of groups here at SM. I have participated in Track and Field in the long jump as well as being a member of the Operation Help A Hero, Peers in MUN, and LaunchX clubs.

Hello, my name is Jillian Surdilla, and I am junior here at SMCHS. This will be my third year of participating in MUN. My favorite aspect of MUN is being able to thoroughly research relevant issues that affect the world today and create unique solutions to combat them. Alongside MUN, I am a part of track and field and the wind ensemble, in which I play the oboe. I also love literature, history, and cats! As your vice chair, I hope that you enjoy this conference, for this experience will help deepen your knowledge of the MUN program and its many different topics. Good luck, delegates!

Hello, I am Yueshan Gu, a current sophomore who has been in MUN two years. Through MUN, I get the chance to practice writing papers and to integrate my writing skills with public speaking. This teaches me to organize my thoughts and communicate more clearly. Additionally, I have learned teamwork and cooperation, persuasive argument strategies, and problem solving with the resolutions we write as a committee.

For this conference, our bureau will be proctoring a committee with the standard typically found at most California conferences. Our committee time will consist of two main types of caucusing we will be exercising: informal and formal with no separation between general and substantive debate. Once in committee, delegates will give their speeches down a list with a number of informal caucuses breaking the monotony. Informal caucus will give delegates an opportunity to get up out of their seats and move around the room to organize groups with other delegates. Over the span of such informal caucuses, you will begin to author a resolution with your fellow resolution group members consisting of various solutions from all delegates. Once committee begins to near its end, we will entertain a formal caucus in which the groups will present their resolutions for voting. If any of you have questions about the committee, your country's policy, or another inquiry, you can reach me at socomunfresh15@gmail.com I wish all delegates good luck and hope you all have an amazing committee!



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Background:

As our world continues to modernize, the increase of industrial cities has grown exponentially as a result. Thanks to a growing global population, the demand for housing and food production has skyrocketed leading to the subsequent necessity of land. Much of this land is eventually grabbed from forests which undergo the destructive process of deforestation. According to 2019 statistics, only 30% of our world is still covered by forests yet their expanse is decreasing at an alarming rate. In a span of only 26 years, from 1990 to 2016, “the world lost 502,000 square miles of forest” which is equivocal to larger the landmass of South Africa (National Geographic). Since the modernization of deforestation, humanity has claimed 46% of trees across the world with the Amazonian rainforest taking a devastating hit of 17% over the last 50 years.

The reasons behind deforestation can be found in the origins of humanity seeing that trees and their resources have been used for firewood, housing, hunting, sailing, and more. However, in more modern history, these resources have been used proportionally less when compared to population size thanks to more modern materials, yet deforestation seems to increase nonetheless at a shocking pace. At its core is a combination of land and trade that fuels the global economy. As aforementioned, with an increasing need of land for both housing and farming, many forests have been removed artificially to make such space available. Loggers are typically sent to such regions to begin the clearing process which utilizes various techniques to clear the land. The two main umbrella terms for deforestation are the concepts of slash-and-burn and logging. Slash-and-burn techniques pertain to the practice where a logging agency or any form of local group, cuts down a large region of forest then initiates a controlled burn in the same area. In effect, the trees, now laying on the ground, are burned to form ash rich with nutrients for farming. However, since forest soil is relatively barren to begin with, besides the very thin layer of nutrient-rich top soil, once the farmer uses all the nutrients created from the slash-and-burn technique, the soil beneath remains completely barren. As a result, farmers must develop yet another patch of farmland which leads to more slash-and-burnings. The later term, logging, is the general removal of logs for other uses ranging from paper to construction. Such a technique simply relies on the cutting-down of a region followed by a removal of such lumber. The now-cleared ground is prime for either housing development or livestock ranching. Yet, both, much like the farming techniques seen above, although they hold good intentions, always inflict more damage than previously estimated. In terms of housing, although the land for a house’s square footage may be cleared, human preference seems to always ask for the removal of more trees around the house for a more aesthetic neighborhood. Thus, when such a project it begun, the area deforested becomes nearly double than what is necessary for actual living. For livestock ranching, the same issue as the earlier provided trouble of greatly unenriched soil resurfaces as a prime problem. Thanks to the constant grazing of livestock, the land is greatly destroyed as all grass and roots are wiped from the pasture. As a result, again following the prior example, more forest is needed to supply another pasture leading to more deforestation.

Other than the physical land affiliated problems associated with deforestation, our atmosphere and general welfare are greatly affected as well. All living things are involved in a symbiotic relationship in which animals take in oxygen and give off carbon



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dioxide and plants take in such carbon dioxide and give off oxygen for animals to take in. It is only a simple connection to make between what would happen if less plants existed for more humans. With less plants producing oxygen, the efficiency of such a symbiotic cycle would be severely affected. In addition, this lack of oxygen production combined with the severe carbon emissions caused by the burning of forests, global warming is only increasing.

With over 1.6 billion inhabitants here on earth, the near total amount of our population relies on forests for goods, produce, livestock, and more in addition to housing, farmland, and pastures. To manage this massive demand the subsequent deforestation, the United Nations has presented their own efforts to help quell deforestation and its effects. By incorporating UN organizations such as UNREDD+ and the UN Forum on Forests, for example, into stopping deforestation, the global collaboration has increased greatly since their initiations in the past decades.

Possible Solutions:

With such a delicate topic ranging across the globe, it is imperative that the proper solutions be found to combat such dangers. Two examples of such solutions can be found in the use of NGOs and a focus-based effort to fight deforestation.

Since deforestation occurs in many nations across the world, it is not necessarily accurate to offer one solution for the global issue. Thanks to the variety of nations, their politics and styles of government have followed suit leaving a wide array of complex legislature and bureaucratic complications. When these problems are combined with a global topic such as deforestation, it is impossible to assume that one solution will be agreed upon by all of the world's governments. As a result, it would be best to utilize NGOs, or non-government organizations, to bridge the gap between governments. Since NGOs aren't controlled or operated by any government, they are able to enter and solve problems that prove difficult for two nations to agree upon.

In addition to using a non-governmental view on deforestation, it is crucial to acknowledge that deforestation, although a global issue, is not an issue that pertains to all regions. As a result, when creating solutions, be keen to observe deforestation hotspots, or regions with increased amounts of deforestation, to better assess and respond to a scenario. If a regional solution is concluded upon, nations and NGOs would be able to decide upon which region is of the highest priority and which may be of lower priority. By initiating such a method, the bigger dangers to forests can be thwarted leading to a larger contribution to stopping deforestation as a whole.

Questions to consider:

The following are some questions that should be contemplated in order to further your comprehension and abilities within this committee. By no means is it necessary to explicitly answer any the following questions during committee. They are simply here to offer an additional prospect on the topic of deforestation.

1. How can natives and indigenous people from forests around the world be protected from deforestation?



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2. How can your nation be considerate of other nation's methods to stop deforestation? Do you agree? Do you disagree? Why?
3. How can nations be encouraged to aid in deforestation?
4. In what other ways can the UN respond to SDG 15 and deforestation as a whole?
5. What is your country policy on the subject? Have you contributed to the problem? Have you already created solutions for the problem?
6. With various climate deals around the world being remodeled, how can your nation persuade others to stand together?
7. How has your nation responded to other nations that have had great success in helping end deforestation?
8. How could the UN be reinforced with its organizations and affiliates to better combat deforestation?
9. How closely should the international community work together?

Goal 15 Targets. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world

15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development

15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities



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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 #15 look here <http://munimpact.org/sdg-15/>



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Works Cited

“Deforestation and Forest Degradation.” *WWF*, World Wildlife Fund,
www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation-and-forest-degradation

This article provides background knowledge of deforestation and how it impacts the entire society. Not only that, it also explains the causes of deforestation and possible solutions that this organization “WWF” is doing on helping to solve the problem. A gradual understanding of the issue is presented as it starts with the topic background and ends with reasonable solutions. The article is supportive regards the background part of the topic synopsis because examples are listed for each section. For example, one of the causes of deforestation is fire and one of the powerful impacts of deforestation is the increasing of soil erosion.

“New Plantations Map Sheds Light on Complexities of Deforestation.” *Global Forest Watch Blog*, 26 Mar. 2019,
blog.globalforestwatch.org/data/new-plantations-map-sheds-light-on-complexities-of-deforestation.

This article helps people to distinguish between the naturally tree loss and human-planted tree loss. Before, data collected showed every tree cut down without identifying if it was naturally occurring or human-planted. To have a better visual understanding of what truly contributes to deforestation, referring to naturally occurring trees, the website provides interactive maps which allow you to filter specific trees in specific regions. The article is useful because it gives an accurate reporting of the current state of deforestation around the world as it deals with specific trees.

Nunez, Christina. “Deforestation and Its Effect on the Planet.” *Facts, Information, and Effects* / *National Geographic*, 25 July 2017,
www.nationalgeographic.com/environment//global-warming/deforestation//

The main focus of this site is that humans are predominantly the cause of rampant deforestation. As a result, the primary argument states that since such destruction has been caused by mankind, it is up to mankind to resolve it. Therefore, if this deforestation deeply harms a nation socially or economically, it is the responsibility of both the government and the citizens to resolve it. Due to the direction of its information, this article is successful at making the reader more aware of their potential impact on the environment.



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“Ten Reasons to Reduce Tropical Deforestation.” *Union of Concerned Scientists*, UCSUSA, www.ucsusa.org/global-warming/solutions/stop-deforestation/protecting-trees-protecting.html#.WsOwZkxFy56

Rather than explaining the detrimental factors of deforestation on the site, this article primarily focuses on providing methods people could possibly do to help stop the issue of deforestation from gaining momentum. Additionally, the suggestions listed are well within the common person’s capabilities. Additionally, this site strongly recommends providing financial support to organizations that specifically tackle the issue of deforestation. This makes the reader more aware of the opportunities or ideas they could take on in order to solve this topic.

“Tropical Deforestation: Feature Articles.” *NASA*, NASA, earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Deforestation/

This site gives a visual representation of the rainforests around the globe, mostly by providing annual mappings and graphs. Such imagery gives the visitor of the website a clear insight as to which countries are prominent deforesters. Additionally, this article provides a lot of factual information regarding the harmful effects of deforestation, which could potentially aid a delegate in creating the “background” section of their position paper. This information also gives many clues about this topic that could be further developed into solutions by the delegate.

“United Nations Forum on Forests » UNFF » IDF 2019 Highlights Forests' Role in Education for Sustainable Development.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/esa/forests/news/2019/03/idf-2019-theme/index.html

This article discusses on the positive effects of the International Day of Forests and how the UN cooperates with this event to highlight the importance of protecting the forests. The UN cooperates with the International Day of Forests by creating a special event to celebrate this holiday and advocates the significance of forests. This article contributes certainly in writing the topic synopsis because it shows UN’s actions regards protecting the forests through specific example.

“United Nations Forum on Forests.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/esa/forests/

This article introduces an organization called the United Nations Forum on Forests, which provides information on the UN’s involvement used in the topic synopsis. It



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focuses only on forests and certain actions relating to deforestation. The article is helpful because it lists out specific plans such as current GA Resolutions, Pre-HLPF Forests events, and the VNCs repository that this UN organization has taken dealing with the issue of deforestation. It is important to know the current state. To make things clearer, it also sorts into different categories, for example, like forum, documents, events, CPF, and etc. These insights help to outline the UN's current involvement and struggles in dealing with the topic.

“Why Is Deforestation a Bad Thing?” *Reference*, IAC Publishing,
www.reference.com/science/deforestation-bad-thing-4cb5ff62d90a22eb

This primarily gives facts and statistics as to why deforestation has caused global harm, and why it is such a pressing issue to this day. Particularly, the reading focuses on the roles of farmers, as they mostly deforest in order to obtain more land. However, this practice is especially detrimental for wildlife as well as the soil that crops would be potentially planted in. As a result, a habitat has been destroyed with more harm being done than good. This website makes a reader more aware of how agriculture plays a major role in this topic, and how they could have potential ties to the issue as well.

Wu, Andrew. “From Tree-Planting Drones to Shade-Grown Tea: Businesses Are Making Money by Reforesting the Planet.” *World Resources Institute*, WRI, 18 Jan. 2018,
www.wri.org/our-work/topics/forests

This website specifically describes the relationship humans share with rainforests around the globe. Along with positive parts of the relationship, it also emphasizes the damage and destruction humans have done to the forests. Also, there are many statistics provided that show how many species have been decimated. This article would greatly aid a delegate in terms of creating solutions, so they can become creative with their ideas by using this work as a starting base. Additionally, it gives the reader a greater knowledge of the history of mankind's role in the environment.