

**United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) - Committee Guide**  
**London International Model United Nations (LIMUN 2012)**

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## **Message from the Committee Directors-**

### **Sarah Sarwar- Director**

First I would like to extend a warm welcome to the delegates of LIMUN: UNEP 2012. MUN is fantastic opportunity to debate pressing international issues in an environment that allows us to develop vital skills and gives us the chance to make wonderful new friends.

My own experience of MUN spans over 6 years of attending numerous conferences in the UK and overseas. I have been lucky enough to have served on various secretariats over the past 4 years in various capacities ranging from chairing to serving as Secretary General of the Global Classrooms London MUN conference. I'm a history and politics student studying at Queen Mary, and MUN plays a huge part in my life as a university student. I look forward to meeting you all, and am sure that our work together will yield excellent results for the UNEP committee.



### **Saiful Salihudin – Assistant Director**

Greetings Delegates! Let me first welcome you to UNEP Committee of LIMUN 2012. I'm Saiful Salihudin and I will serve the committee as the Assistant Director. I am currently pursuing a bachelor degree in Economics at The University of Nottingham, 14 295 km away (by Google map approximation) from my hometown of Kuantan, Malaysia.

I have never heard of MUN until I attended a British boarding school in Malaysia to do my a-levels. The amazing experience I went through during my first conference, THIMUN Singapore 2009, has led me to be fully committed to MUN activities throughout my high school years. I have, since then, attended plenty more conferences, locally and internationally. I am looking forward to work with all of you in making LIMUN 2012 (UNEP especially) an experience you will never forget. My best MUN experience will have to be at the Harvard MUN China 2010, where I was given the opportunity to chair the World Bank Committee, alongside an experienced Harvard



University MUN-er. It was such an honor to shoulder the name of such prestigious conference as a student officer. LIMUN 2012 will mark my 4<sup>th</sup> conference as a chair.

**Sophie Broom – Assistant Director**

Hello! I'm Sophie Broom and I will be one of the assistant directors for LIMUN'S 2012 UNEP committee. I am a third-year English Literature student at the University of Exeter where I hold the position of Vice-President of the Exeter Model United Nations Society.



I currently chair weekly sessions of debate at my university and act as a point of contact for other students. I cannot wait to chair stimulating debate and am keen to ensure that every delegate in the committee gets involved with the debate. My most recent chairing position was also for UNEP at OXIMUN 2011 so I'm really keen to further the cause and see delegates developing their ideas and responses to Environmental crises.

My enthusiasm for MUN is evident in both my interest in world politics, frequently engaging in the political nature of literature in my English degree, and a great respect for the workings of the United Nations as a body. When not doing MUN, I can be found writing for my student newspaper. I am a keen journalist, acting as a section editor for our news website and this given me a platform to comment on my political interests. Most importantly, I consider myself to be approachable and am eager to be an amenable point of contact before the conference for delegates in this committee!

## **Introduction to the Committee**

The United Nations Environment Programme is the designated authority of the United Nations in environmental issues.

Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. The mandate and objectives of UNEP emanate from United Nations General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and subsequent amendments adopted at UNCED in 1992, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council, and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration of 31 May 2000. (UNEP, n.d.)

The mission of the UNEP is “to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations” (UNEP, n.d.). Since its creation by the UN General Assembly in 1972, UNEP has set quite some milestones, including the 1987 Montreal Protocol on substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety adopted to address issue of genetically modified organisms in 2000 (UNEP, n.d.). In 1997, the Nairobi Declaration redefines and strengthens UNEP’s role and mandate was adopted. The following two sub-articles made it possible for UNEP to debate the topics to be discussed during this conference. Article 3d and article 3e:

d) To strengthen its role in the coordination of environmental activities in the United Nations system in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise;

e) To promote greater awareness and facilitate effective cooperation among all sectors of society and actors involved in the implementation of the international environmental agenda, and to serve as an effective link between the scientific community and policy makers at the national and international levels. (UNEP, n.d.)

UNEP work encompasses:

- Assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends
- Developing international and national environmental instruments
- Strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment
- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology for sustainable development
- Encouraging new partnerships and mind-sets within civil society and the private sector.

In order to accomplish all this, UNEP works in close cooperation with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

To ensure its global effectiveness UNEP supports six regional offices, plus a growing network of centres of excellence such as the Global Resource Information Database (GRID) centres and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). UNEP also has major offices in Geneva and Paris, where it's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics is situated. (UNEP, n.d.)

## Topic A: Post-Disaster Environmental Management in the Gaza Strip.

### Introduction

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of: the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption and environmental degradation. (UNISDR, 2007)

Since the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, the Gaza Strip has been the centre to one of the most prolonged humanitarian conflicts that has divided the world in terms of its support and opinions.

Israel remains in control of the Gaza Strip until today.

Through out the years of Israeli's occupation, the

Palestinians, led by HAMAS and other military group have time and again rise and fight against the occupation, leading to an ongoing military campaign in Gaza, forcing 1 million out of 1.6 million of its population to seek refuge in neighboring countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This conflict, other than claiming tens of thousands of lives of innocent people also has its fair share of its effects on the environment. Destroyed infrastructure and natural environment, displaced population, undermined human security and poverty are some of the impacts that are usually borne by the most vulnerable section of the society, i.e the poor, women, children and the elderly. As a victim or a driver of crisis, the environment can play a pivotal role in human security and well-being. In a war-torn land such as the Gaza Strip, poorly managed environment can put pressure on the natural resources needed for its population. This can lead to conflict over scarce resources such as dwindling water, food, fuel resources, or to increased vulnerability to natural hazards such as landslides, flash floods or even earthquake. Hence sustainable management of natural resources and the environment can help reduce disaster and conflict risk and provide a



foundation for recovery, development and peace.

### **History and Recent Developments**

The long military conflict in Gaza has seen series of violence that has led to serious damage to the environment and the infrastructures, imposing serious humanitarian crisis to the people of Gaza. Israeli-Egypt Peace Treaty 1979 has put Gaza Strip under the Israelis' control until 1994. The first Intifada (an uprising by Palestinian Arabs (in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank) against Israel in the late 1980s and again in 2000) has led to the signing of an Israeli-Palestinian treaty, known as the Oslo Accord (BBC News, 2008), which gives control of some part of the Gaza Strip, except for the settlement bloc and the military areas, to the Palestinian Authority led by Yaser Arafat. The transition government then chose Gaza City to be their first headquarter. In 1996, a second peace agreement gives control of some parts of the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority. (BBC News, Gaza Strip Conflict Timeline, 2009).

The violence between the Palestinian nationalists and the occupying Israelis army has brought a lot of destruction to the natural environment and infrastructure at Gaza strip. The second Intifada and the internal conflict between the Hamas and Fatah has caused extensive damaged to Gaza. The bombing and shelling caused extensive damage to civilian facilities. Also food supplies, fuel, and the provision of basic necessities and utilities such electricity, water and sanitation services are degrading, posing risk in health and the well-being of the people of Gaza. At the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2009, an assessment team was requested from the UNEP to undertake an independent assessment of the environmental impacts and make recommendations for reconstruction efforts. UN reports indicate that more than 500,000 Palestinians in Gaza remain without safe drinking water (*Environmental Assessment of the Gaza Strips following the escalation of hostilities in December 2008-January 2009*, UNEP, 2009). Sewage collection systems and treatment facilities have ceased functioning, resulting in sewage in the streets. Sewage contamination will lead to long-term consequences for both Palestinians and Israelis including the outbreak of infectious diseases and the loss of important groundwater sources through pollution. Small industries such as factories and cement works were destroyed during the conflict. This has created potentially contaminated sites within the city of Gaza. There has also been destruction on the agricultural land dwindling sustainability of food supply on the region. UNEP has previously undertaken two major studies within the Gaza Strip, the first

one resulted in the publication of the report entitled "The Environmental Situation in Occupied Palestinian Territories" published in February 2003. It involved site visits, interviews and desk-studies by a team of international and national experts within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and resulted in a comprehensive document with 136 recommendations. (*Desk Study on the Environment of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, UNEP,



2003) The second studies and report took place in 2005, following the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip, when UNEP was approached by the Palestinian Environment Quality Authority to conduct a Post Disengagement Environmental Assessment. UNEP deployed a team of staff members and international experts, using state of the art field monitoring and sampling equipment (UNEP News Press Release, 2009). The report, published in March 2006, details the findings from laboratory analysis of numerous soil, sediment, water and plant samples and field observations. The report, entitled “ Environmental Assessment of the Gaza Strip” (2009) has listed some of the environmental effects to the Gaza Strip following the 2008 Israel’s offensive operation in Gaza. It includes the demolition debris, hazardous waste, dead animals carcasses, damage to farmland and orchards, landfill management problem, water issues and hazardous healthcare waste (UNEP, 2009).

Technical solutions are available, but implementing them requires financial resources, materials, equipment and technical expertise that are currently not available in the Gaza Strip (Amnesty, 2009). These environmental issues, however, will not be resolved on their own, and will only grow more serious with further delay. The specific technical recommendations proposed here are based on the assumption that the necessary financial and other resources will be found, and that the security situation will allow work to proceed on the ground. (UNEP Report, 2009). Up to this date, no major recovery work can be done due the ongoing blockade on Gaza Strip.

The UN and many other international bodies and NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, raised their concern over Israel controls of Gaza's airspace and territorial waters, and its policy of restricted movement of goods in or out of Gaza. Similar to Israel, Egypt has also imposed restriction on goods to cross that border. This was done to control the movement of weaponry and any material that could be used in hostility against the Israel. However, this blockade has sparked humanitarian crisis as major amount of food and resources has also fail to pass through to the people of Gaza. This has a major impact on its economy and its ability to rebuild its infrastructure that has been damaged in the times of violence.

An 'Agreement on Movement and Access' between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was signed in November 2005 to improve Palestinian freedom of movement and economic activity in the Gaza Strip. Under its terms, the Rafah crossing with Egypt was to be reopened, with transits monitored by the Palestinian National Authority and the European Union. Only people with Palestinian ID, or foreign nationals, by exception, in certain categories, subject to Israeli oversight, were permitted to cross in and out. (Guide: Gaza Under Blockade, BBC News, 2010). However the filtration process at the border has proven to be ever so tight that many goods and humanitarian aids in the form of foods and building material are still held up at the border. This has led to the process of rebuilding of infrastructure in Gaza strip to be at halt as well, giving major impact on its population.

## **Policy Options**

We are, like other UN bodies, in no position to enforce any policy on any government of states, in all due respect to each member state's sovereignty. The Dias encourages delegates to consider the following:

- a) Issue of blockades that has been imposed upon Gaza strip. This has a severe impact on the movement of goods (i.e building materials) that are-needed in the process of rebuilding.
- b) Making sure that the recommendations made by the UNEP in the three previous reports (published in 2003, 2006 and 2009 respectively) in the interest of the people and the environment of the Gaza strip is followed as closely as possible in order to safeguard the environment and the well being of the people of Gaza. For this to be done, a lot of other issues that hinder the execution of the recommendation needed to be solved first. i.e political, borders, and international co-operations.
- c) The specific environmental issues that has been plaguing Gaza strip. Most of us

are probably not experts in environmental management but it is worth mentioning in your resolutions, the specific problem that needs to be solved directly.

- d) To include recovery mechanisms that is concrete, realistic and sustainable.
- e) Economic sanction imposed upon Gaza strip by Israel. This, like the blockade, has severely hindered recovering process. The issue of violence in Gaza strip. As has been mentioned above, UNEP mandate is to safeguard the environment in the interest of the people. Clearly, the ongoing violence in Gaza strip has been the primary source of the environmental degradation in that region.

### **Possible Bloc Position**

Delegates are expected to consider his/her country opinions on the issues of Palestinian-Israelis Conflict. As been mentioned above, this issue has been going on for a very long period of time and has certainly created divisions among different regions.

USA, Israel and European Union states usually take the stand that favour Israel. However, this has proven to not always be the case anymore. Recent development shows that Israel and USA has been losing their support in the issue of Palestine. Recently, UNESCO voted in favor of the recognition of Palestine as a member state of this UN Agency.

Having mentioned the above, delegates should not be too indulged in their country's stand on the whole issue of conflict between Israel and the people of Palestine. Delegates must also remember that the main issue here is not the conflict itself but rather tackling the environmental effect that it has on the Gaza strip.

### **Questions for Delegates**

To assist delegates to reach comprehensive solutions to the question at hand, here are some questions that delegates might want to include into their resolutions;

- a) Is the damaged to the environment known, recognized, and systematically recorded?
- b) Will the solutions tackle the problem in short, medium and long term? (Questions of immediate and sustainable solutions)

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## TOPIC B: Women at the front line of Climate Change: Gender risks and Hopes.

### Introduction to the topic

Women are often in the frontline in respect to the impacts of a changing climate. Globally the world is seeing increasingly frequent droughts and floods which are having economic but also profound social consequences. Women remain throughout history as the life source of villages and camps across the world and are respectively most heavily burdened with the impact of climate change on their everyday lives and the lives of those around them that they are responsible for. The women and people of Asia are currently at greatest risk



with over 100 million people affected in this region annually. (UNEP, 2011) However the situation is not limited merely to Asia, across the developing world millions of women are faced with the consequences of natural disasters and the impact of global warming.

Growing trends of development and the formation of settlements put those that are most vulnerable and poor at the greatest risk, with many being forced to settle wherever possible, even if that land is prone to flooding and mud slides. A report by UNEP shows that ‘women are disproportionately more likely to lose their lives in such events.’(UNEP, 1995) As a result of this basic inequality women are also then made more vulnerable to crime traffickers as a result of communities and families patterns being disrupted: a point underlines as a primary cause of human trafficking by INTERPOL .With more than half of South Asia’s cereal production taking place downstream from the Hindu Kush Himalayas, the impacts on food security will become ever more important with increasing climate change. Crucial sustainable adaptation must focus on gender and the role of women if it is to become successful. Women’s voices, responsibilities and knowledge on the environment and the challenges they face will need to be a central part of the adaptive response to a rapidly changing climate.

How people adapt their vulnerability and resilience to climate change is dependent on a range of various conditions. These can be their exposure and dependency of weather patterns for livelihoods and various patterns of adaptations that are controlled by gender, power, social status and economic poverty. In the Andes, Africa women are some of the worst affected by climate change and the profound impact it has on women that are an integral driving force in the maintenance of livelihoods. Women in these countries are hit hardest when climate change affects their expected daily patterns and are the ones that must adapt the fastest and in the best way possible to ensure survival against the changes of the environment, conversely they are also the first to be victimized by the socio-economic changes that can occur as a result of the dangerous consequences of climate change. For example in situations of drought and famine women are forced to travel further and further and often on perilous journeys to provide water for their families and local communities.



‘A key challenge in responding to climate change is the increasing number of events of too much and too little water. From 1999 to 2008, floods affected almost 1 billion people in Asia. The corresponding figures were about 4 million in Europe, 28 million in the Americas and 22 million in Africa. For instance, the 2010 flood in Pakistan affected more individuals than the combined impacts of the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), the Kashmir earthquake (2005) and the Haiti earthquake (2010). Flash floods in the Himalayas are estimated to cause the loss of at least 5,000 lives every year.’- (UNEP)

*Delegates should consider:*

### **Societal inequalities leading to women being the worst affected**

Women from the South are considered most at risk from these climatic disasters due to unequal power relations and inequitable cultural and social norms. In the same part of the world, these very women are integral to the development of sustainable living due to their roles in families and communities.

Worldwide, women are an estimated 43% of the work force in agriculture. In Asia and Africa, this proportion is higher, often above 50%, especially in mountain regions. (UN Women Watch, 2011)

Thus the role of women is vital in adaptation efforts, environmental sustainability and food security as the climate changes.

Various socio economic factors make this adaptation difficult for women. Spanning from a lack of access to formal education and economic poverty to food insecurity and exclusion from policy and decision making institutions as they suffer from social marginalization. In some contexts, women are often subject to gender based violence, harassment and psychological violence within the household. Some studies suggest that 95% of women and girls surveyed reported first-hand knowledge of violence with 77% by family members. Such



situations affect women in negative ways, and further impede women's ability to adapt to extreme events and changes in their environment.

When extreme events such as drought, floods and other climate related disasters occur women bear a disproportional brunt of disaster impacts. They are often the worst affected and the least likely to receive direct assistance. Cultural factors can also inhibit women from developing and learning coping strategies and life changing skills like swimming and climbing. Both factors put them at a disadvantage when floods hit. In some contexts women are housebound as they cannot evacuate their homes without consent from their husbands or the older men in their communities or families. Further even cultural codes that dictate the way they dress limit their ability to mobilize during crisis directly resulting in high disproportionate mortality. It is in these situations that women are most vulnerable when they are frequently subjected to intimidation, gender based violence and sexual harassment and rape.

### **Human Trafficking as a result of climate disasters**

Women and girls also face an even more serious risk with the onslaught of climate-induced disasters: organised trafficking.

Organised trafficking of women is emerging as a potentially serious risk associated with environmental problems. Climate-related disasters such as flood, drought or famine may disrupt local security safety nets, leaving women and children unaccompanied, separated or orphaned due to the erosion and breakdown of normal social controls and protections. This makes them especially vulnerable to the exploitation of human trafficking. After a natural disaster, economic and security challenges may lead women who are in charge of households

and livelihoods to seek temporary relief, shelter and amenable living conditions in acutely insecure contexts, making them potential targets for exploitation and human trafficking. Disasters that lead to increased physical, social and economic insecurity, and affect women and children, are among some of the push factors that give rise to trafficking. Therefore, insecure disaster regions must be considered as potential areas for such harmful activities.

**Particular country of interest: -**

*UNEP particularly highlights the situation in Nepal, where an estimated 12,000–20,000 women and children – including some boys – are abducted or deceived into forced labour (ca. 30%) and brothel-based sex work (ca. 70%) every year. Economically impoverished mountain families are particularly vulnerable to being deceived with false offers of remunerated work and education for girls, ensnaring them into a well established system of abuse, forced labour and sex work. Some of this trafficking occurs within national and regional spheres, but foreign destinations also include India, China and the Middle East. The negative impacts from disasters may be exacerbated by the probability of contracting HIV/AIDS. For instance, approximately 12–54% of women, boys and children trafficked under normal circumstances contract HIV/AIDS. They are aged typically from 7 years of age to 22 years and averaging 16 years. Delegates should consider the situation of Nepal and surrounding states affected to be of utmost importance. Asia and Africa are two of the worst affected continents in terms of human trafficking as a result of climate change, and the committee should remain aware of this*

**Possible Block positions**

Delegates are expected to consider his/her country opinions on the issues of climate change and women and how it specifically affects them. As been mentioned above, this issue has been going on for a very long period of time but there is a general consensus amongst the world community accepting that it is an issue worth considering.

States may choose to arrange themselves regionally in order to prioritise how climate change worst affects them. Thus states of sub Saharan Africa would naturally share similar priorities with regards to the impact of drought and famine on local communities where women are the lifeblood of villages.

Conversely states that have suffered similar affects of climate change such as flooding in Bangladesh and more recently China may share similar concerns with regards to post disaster management.

However all states must consider their individual positions and whilst the fight against climate change is generally united, states must stay aware of their own political disputes and fiscal limitations.

Women experience acute and differential impacts given the accelerated pace of climate change. These impacts exacerbate existing inequities in socially constructed gender roles, responsibilities, perceptions and skewed power relations that tend to disadvantage women. However, women also provide vital hope for successful adaptation through their critical knowledge, experience, agency and unique role in agriculture, food security, livelihoods, income generation, management of households and natural resources in diverse eco-systems, and participation in a variety of socio-cultural, political-economic and environmental institutions.

#### Key Questions:

- Does the world community have a unilateral responsibility towards those women affected by climate change, particularly now in the current economic climate?
- What is the best solution to resolving the issues of displaced families that have been victims of climate change?
- What are the key factors in relation to resolving the issues around human trafficking and how might they be resolved?
- What sort of long term solutions should be made available to states affected badly by climate change to facilitate for sustained adaptable growth?
- What sorts of new technologies may certain states be aware of that would aid in the fight against climate change?

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'UNEP, Women at the Front Line of Climate Change: Gender risks and Hopes' (Online) Available at: [http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub\\_details\\_search.asp?ID=6230](http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6230) Accessed on: 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011)

### **Further Reading- Essential for all delegates**

UNEP- 'Women at the Front Line of Climate Change: Gender risks and Hopes' (Online) Available at: [http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub\\_details\\_search.asp?ID=6230](http://www.unep.org/publications/contents/pub_details_search.asp?ID=6230) Accessed on: 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2011

UN -Women Watch- 'Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change' (Online) Available at : [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate\\_change/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/) (Accessed on: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011)

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