

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Standard Committee**



UNEP

Topic A

Chair | Joselinh Aaliyah Suarez

Houston Area Model United Nations 46

January 21-22, 2021

HAMUN 46

UNEP

Topic A: The Future Of Novel Entities In
The Environment



Committee Background

Through the United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, with a universal membership of all 193 Member States. Through their governance was the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme developed in order to help reach the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development goals. The Assembly typically meets biennially in Nairobi, Kenya, where the Secretariat gains a prime understanding of the environmental issues facing developing countries. These priorities help global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) leads a global environmental authority that sets to promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development. They serve an important role as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Their mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and people to improve the quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

The programme itself is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Through divisions as well as regional, liaison and out-posted offices can networking of excellence be achieved. Based on the sustainable development goals are there seven broad thematic areas: climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, and environment under review. In united work do we commit to united sustainability.

Within June 1972, the General Assembly recommended the establishment of UNEP at the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. On the 15th of December 1972 the General Assembly adopted resolution 299. This adoption established UNEP as the foremost environmental body of the United Nations. With this resolution, UNEP was mandated to promote international environmental cooperation, guide the creation of environmental policies, review reports of the Executive Director, monitor the global environment in order to highlight problems, transfer scientific knowledge where needed, assist developing countries with any further aid they require, and review and approve the annual program on the allocation of the Environment Fund, which is the main source of funding for UNEP.

Topic 1: The Future of Novel Entities

Topic Overview: Novel Entities are broadly defined as “The things created and introduced into the environment by human beings that could have positive or negative effects on the earth's system”. These include factors of synthetic organic pollutants, radioactive materials, genetically modified organisms, nanomaterials, microplastics, etc. Novel entities are to create new and innovative beneficial opportunities to attempt to better the planet, however need to also be mindful of the consequences and damages they may create. Alongside UNEP, there is also the Global Environment Facility (GEF). They aid in helping deliver action on behalf of the environment through strategic investments. Within various global issues do people rarely look at the geographic structure and how they are needed when making important decisions for a country. Currently UNEP and GEF are closely looking at the effects over the topics: Technology- critical elements (TCEs), Blockchain technology, Next generation nanotechnology, Gene editing, Cellular agriculture, and New engineered bio-based materials. However there have also been a broader range of novel entities identified that include: Horizon Scanning, Timing and impact analysis, Assessment of relevance to the GEF, and Strategic posture.

Background: Attached you will see a brief timeline regarding the historical importance and events of UNEP.

- **1968:** Early establishment and groundwork is documented as the UN Secretary General reports activities of the UN and programmes relevant to aiding the human environment.
- **1969:** A survey by the secretary general is released in reporting numerous negative effects of the human environment. He quotes “If current trends continue, life on Earth could be endangered.”
- **1972:** On June 5th of 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established after the first UN conference of the Human Environment.
- **1973:** On October 2nd, Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta established the headquarters of UNEP at Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Shortly after do the UN Members States adopt *The Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*. In this document do the parties agree to monitor, regulate, or ban trade in at risk-species.
- **1974:** UNEP launches the *Regional Seas Programme* to address accelerating degradation of the worldly bodies of water. The first World Environment Day is also celebrated under the theme of “Only One Earth’ on June 5th.

- **1975:** The *Mediterranean Action plan* is adopted. Here 16 countries across the Mediterranean have agreed to promote integrated coastal zone management.
- **1979:** The Bonn Convention of Migratory Species is established where 17 countries agreed to cooperate and develop research and support protections on at least 120 migratory species. The UN also establishes the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution being the first worldly legal binding instrument to address regional air quality.
- **1980:** UNEP Establishes the publication of the *World Conservation Strategy* with help of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Fund. This document defines the concept of sustainable development agenda.
- **1981:** The world is in unanimous agreement on the need to save and conserve water. Therefore the UN General Assembly designates the 1980s as the international drinking water supply and sanitation decade.
- **1982:** The UNEP Governing Council adopts the first Montevideo Programme. This document set the priorities for Global Environmental law making leading to Major agreement And establishing the support of 120 governments in developing and environmental legislation.
- **1987:** The World Commission on Environment and Development delivers the *Brundtland Report* to the general assembly highlighting the importance of a new approach to environmental action focused on the concept of sustainable development. The Governments of Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe adopt the Zambezi River Action plan to set new standards for transboundary water resources management.
- **1988:** UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization launch the Intergovernmental panel on climate change with the goal of providing government all levels of scientific information they can use to develop better climate policies
- **1989:** 183 countries adopt the Basel Convention to regulate the movement and disposal of hazardous waste.
- **1991:** The UN Member States establish the Global Environment Facility to finance over 4,000 environmental projects around the world. The convention on environmental impact assessment is established in order to create an essential framework for managing International environmental concerns.
- **1992:** The water convention is established as a victory for ecosystem research. Here parties agreed to the convention on the protection in use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The Earth Summit takes place establishing several major environmental agreements including the signing of treaties, such as

the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention of Biological Diversity

- **1996**: The UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Trust Forest enters force legally binding International agreement that links environment and development to sustainable land management.
- **1997**: The general assembly conveys a special session focused on the environment called Earth Summit + 5 in order to accelerate the implementation of the agenda 21 and launch new global partnership for sustainable development. UNEP Presents its first publication of the Global Environment Outlook Including a series of priorities placed on reflecting Regional perspectives/ realities and reports on the status of the global environment.
- **1998**: The UN launches the Rotterdam Convention in order to promote shared responsibilities in relation to the import of hazardous chemicals and pesticides.
- **1999**: UN Member States Adopt *The United Nations Global Impact* in order to encourage businesses required to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies as well as to report on their implementation.
- **2000**: 103 countries sign the *Cartagena protocol on Biosafety* to supplement the convention on biological diversity. The Millennium Declaration is established to outline the Millennium Development goals.
- **2001**: UN Member States adopt the *Stockholm Convention* to establish protection for human health and the environment from chemicals that persist for long periods in the environment.
- **2002**: The World Summit on Sustainable Development takes place, focusing on improving people's lives and conserving our natural resources in a world that has a growing population.
- **2005**: UNEP launches the Champions of the Earth UN flagship global environmental award. It aims to celebrate outstanding figures from the public and private sectors from civil society whose actions have had a transformative and positive impact on the environment.
- **2007**: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Their victory is due to their efforts of building and disseminating knowledge about human-made climate change. This laid the foundation for the measures that are needed to counteract change.
- **2008**: UN Member States launch the *UN-REDD Programme* to combat deforestation, forest degradation, and climate change. UNEP also becomes a climate-neutral organization.

- **2009**: Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon visits the polar ice rim to witness first hand impact of climate change on glaciers and icebergs. This visit was part of the UN chiefs campaign to convince member states to sign the agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference. The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference is held to raise climate change policy to the highest political level. Countries who attended agreed to the *Copenhagen Accord*. This document included the long-term goal of limiting the maximum global average temperature.
- **2010**: Ministers of environment and heads of delegations adopt the *Nusa Dua Declaration* at the eleventh special session of the UNEP Global Ministerial Environment Forum in order to underscore the vital importance of biodiversity.
- **2012**: The UN General Assembly establishes the universal membership of UNEP's governing body. This highlighted the new era of stronger international environmental governance during the UN conference on Sustainable Development. UNEP Member States launch the *Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*. This provided policymakers with reliable, independent, and credible information on the states of biodiversity in response to concerns about the lack of policy-relevant information.
- **2014**: The first UN Environment Assembly meets and shows evidence that the ozone layer is healing due to the *Montreal Protocol*. The Climate Summit 2014 meets and leaders discuss the action towards a low-carbon emission the world needs.
- **2015**: The UN Sustainable Development Summit leads the adoption of 17 of the sustainable goals on the new global agenda of sustainable development. The UN Climate Change Conference leads to the adoption of the first universal and legally binding global climate deal known as *The Paris Agreement*.
- **2016**: UNEP launches the Wild for Life campaign to protect endangered wildlife species. UNEP also launches the BreatheLife campaign to raise awareness on the impacts and solutions of air pollution.
- **2017**: The Minamata Convention on Mercury is established and comes into force with the objective of protecting human health and environment from anthropogenic emission and releases of mercury compounds.
- **2019**: The UN General Assembly declares 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to scale-up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visits the South Pacific to spotlight the issue of climate change as the climate action Summit approaches. The UN climate action Summit of 2019 takes place and goes over new pathways and practical actions to shift Global Response into higher gear.

Past UN actions and Resolutions:

The most impactful event of the UN Environmental Programme is the adoption of the 17 sustainable development goals. The goals helped create the new Global agenda on sustainable development focusing on the environment including Life Below water, life on land, climate action, clean water and sanitation and affordable and clean energy. This adoption created a landmark on climate change agreement in which 195 countries adopted what is the world's first Universal binding Global Climate deal.



Attached is a list of each important document signed within the UNEP timeline.

- Conventional of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>
- Regional Seas Programme
<https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/working-regional-seas#:~:text=The%20Regional%20Seas%20Programme%20implements,protect%20their%20common%20marine%20environment.>
- The Mediterranean Action Plan
<https://www.unenvironment.org/unepmap/>
- World Convention Strategy
<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/iucn-ed-world-conservation-strategy-living-resource-conservation-sustainable-development#:~:text=The%20World%20Conservation%20Strategy%20of,conservation%20rather%20than%20hinder%20it>

- Montevideo Programme
<https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/promoting-environmental-rule-law-1>
- Brundtland Report
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention of Biological Diversity
<https://www.cbd.int/doc/articles/2002-/A-00384.pdf>
- Global Environment Outlook
<https://www.unenvironment.org/global-environment-outlook>
- The United Nations Global Compact
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>
- Cartagena protocol on Biosafety
<http://bch.cbd.int/protocol>
- Stockholm Convention
<http://www.pops.int/TheConvention/Overview/tabid/3351/Default.aspx>
- UN-REDD Programme
<https://www.un-redd.org/>
- Copenhagen Accord
<https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/pastconferences/copenhagen-climate-change-conference-december-2009/statements-and-resources/information-provided-by-parties-to-the-convention-relating-to-the-copenhagen-accord>
- Nusa Dua Declaration
<http://sdg.iisd.org/news/unep%E2%80%99s-governing-councilglobal-ministerial-environment-forum-adopts-nusa-dua-declaration/>
- Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
<https://ipbes.net/>
- Montreal Protocol
<https://www.unenvironment.org/ozonaction/who-we-are/about-montreal-protocol>
- The Paris Agreement
https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/international/negotiations/paris_en#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Agreement%20is%20the,Parties%20to%20the%20Paris%20Agreement.

Current Situation:

Human beings have introduced many new substances (novel entities) into the earth's system as solutions to human needs, however some of these substances were later found to have unintended consequences. This includes emissions of toxic compounds such as synthetic organic pollutants and radioactive materials, but also genetically modified organisms, nanomaterials, and microplastics. These novel entities persist in the environment for years with negative irreversible effects.

Bloc Positions :

1. [Annex 1 \(Responsible for global emissions \)-](#) European Union, Japan, Australia, United States, and Russia

Discussion Questions:

1. What factor of novel entities has your country worked with?
2. What resolutions has your country made or been a part of with other countries?
3. How can your country deescalate the negative effects of novel entities?
4. Which factor should the U.N. focus on more?
5. How can we make more environmentally friendly inventions of UNEP products
6. What resources can your country provide?
7. What negative/ positive effects has your country brought and how can they improve?
8. How does COVID-19 affect novel entities?
9. How does your population and geographic structure affect one another in novel entities?
10. How do your geographic factors affect novel entities?
11. Are the dangers of novel entities irreversible now ?

Reference/Sources:

- Novel Entities STAP document-
<https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/STAP%20report%20on%20Novel%20Entities%20-%20web.pdf>
- Novel Entities and the GEF-
<https://www.thegef.org/publications/novel-entities-and-gef#:~:text=For%20the%20study%2C%20novel%20entities,modified%20organisms%2C%20nanomaterials%2C%20micro%2D>
- UNEP Global Environment Facility-
<https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/funding-and-partnerships/global-environment-facility>

- UN Environment and GEF- <https://www.unenvironment.org/gef/>
- Anthropocene- <http://www.anthropocene.info/pb2.php>
- International Environmental Law-making and Diplomacy Review-
<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/9986/International-Environmental-Law-review-2006.pdf?sequence=1>
- UNE(P) Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment-
<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30159/CPR%20directorynew.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- UNEP Social and Economics Committee Council-
<http://students.washington.edu/wasmun/topics/unep.html>