

*Combatting the Decline of Biodiversity
Caused by Deforestation*

Committee Guide

*United Nations Environment Programme
Governing Council*



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1. Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates of the United Nations Environment Programme,
My name is Jonathan Röhr and it's my pleasure to welcome all of you to the OLMUN 2018!

I graduated from the Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg last year and have spent my time since then on my favorite hobbies: playing tennis, reading, traveling and studying.

This years Olmun is going to be my fifth and my first time as a Chair. At first, I participated as an Administrative Staff and after that three times as a Delegate.

The OLMUN is in my opinion one of the easiest and most effective ways to improve your debating skills and get to know a lot of new people.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all in June and hope you use the remaining time in a useful manner.

Yours sincerely
Jonathan Röhr



Honorable Delegates of this year's UNEP,
my name is Dennis Kirsch and currently I am a student at Graf-Anton-Günther-Schule here in Oldenburg.

Olmun 2018 is my eighth MUN. So far I have been a delegate five times and chaired a German MUN at my school twice. But this Olmun will be my first international one to chair.

In 2016/2017 I have lived abroad for a year and realized the importance of understanding each other around the world. MUNs are the greatest and best way in my opinion to broaden our minds and to get into touch with several different opinions and views. That's why I am so excited to be going along with you on this journey.

I can't wait for this conference, because I know you will make it a blast.

Yours delighted,
Dennis Kirsch



2. The United Nations Environment Programme

Before looking at the topic of the committee session, being informed about the committee itself is a must for successful debates and avoiding misunderstandings.

The United Nations Environment Programme was founded in 1972 as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Nairobi, Kenya. It was supposed to be the answer to an environment that had to suffer due to

many factors, e.g. the economic growth and the globalisation.

The UNEP has several different tasks, e.g.

- * To collect and assess data about the environment, globally as well as locally. Main topics here are climate change, drinking water, hazardous waste and biodiversity

- * To develop Environment protection contracts; most of today's international environment protection contracts were developed within the UNEP

- * Strengthening environmental-friendly organisations

- * strengthening the dialog between civil society and private companies in order to encourage both parties to participate in environment protection.

Some of the most important topics the UN deals with are climate change, disasters, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, environment under review and last, but not least ecosystem management.

Today, the President of the UNEP is the Swede Erik Solheim. The UNEP has 58 member states which are elected every three years, while the most important regions are always represented.

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."

3. Understanding the Topic

The topic of our conference will be "Combating the decline of biodiversity caused by deforestation". Thence it is important to understand what biodiversity and deforestation are and why they should be protected. Following this introduction of this committee guide will explain these terms. Please also consider while preparing for the conference by writing a policy statement and drafting a resolution that your country may have an other definition. Take this into account.

3.1 Biodiversity

In the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, biodiversity is defined as „the variability among living organisms from all sources including, i.a., terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.“¹

It is unknown how many creatures are living on earth, but experts assume ca. 15 Million different species. Known and described are only 1.8 Million. This biological diversity is spread unequally among earth. Approximately 70 percent of all species are found in the 17 **Megadiverse Countries**, which are located mostly within tropical and subtropical regions. These countries are the United States of America, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Madagascar, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, China, and Australia. Brazil for example hosts 56,000 superior floral species while in Germany there are only 2,700.

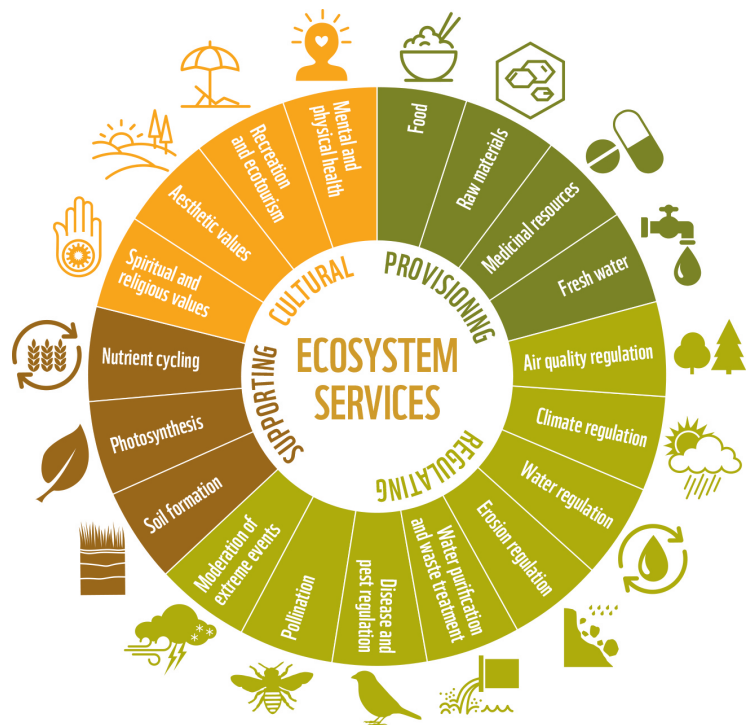
The biodiversity is endangered. Due to human beings making use of nature the rate of species extinction is 100 to 1000 times higher than the natural loss. Every 12 minutes a species extincts. Approximately 130 species vanish every day from earth. This rapid loss threatens ecosystems and the human development that depends on them.

The destruction of habitats is the main reason. These are caused by drastic changes of the environment due to climate change, pollution, overfertilization, overfishing, hunt, exploitation of resources, spreading of foreign species and of course deforestation.

Currently the **Red List** (Dec 2017) describes 25,821 of 91,523 studied animal and plant species as endangered.

Useful links:

CBD (very important): <https://www.cbd.int/convention/>



¹ <https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/default.shtml?a=cbd-02> (3.4.2018; 15:43)

Megadiverse countries: <http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/content/megadiverse-countries>

Red List (Dec 2017): http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/summarystats/2017-3_Summary_Stats_Page_Documents/2017_3_RL_Stats_Table_1.pdf

3.2 Deforestation

While forests are one of our greatest resources, they are threatened by deforestation. About half the world's tropical forests have already been cleared and about 36 football fields worth of trees are lost every minute.

Deforestation occurs around the world, though tropical rainforests are particularly targeted. Nasa predicts that if current deforestation levels proceed, the world's rainforests may be completely in as little as 100 years.



There are a lot of different reasons for deforestation, some of the most common are using the trees for fuel, paper or furniture and creating space for buildings or ranches.

Usually, deforestation takes place by

burning trees or clear cutting. Clear cutting is a phrase meaning "to cut down all trees in a huge area".

Both practices are widely controversial, as they dramatically change the global ecosystem in a short period of time. In addition, deforestation is seen as one of the driving factors for climate change. Furthermore, as 70% of all animals and plants are located in forests, deforestation is a big threat to our biodiversity as well. Because every species has a certain task within the ecosystem, the loss of biodiversity is so threatening for them. The species also are important for us human beings. They offer a huge genpool, we can use to develop new medicine. That is why the rainforest is also known as the largest pharmacy on earth.

There are two major ways to fight the negative results of deforestation;

1. reducing the speed, in which forests are deforested
2. reforestating the forests

While these both strategies do not solve every problem caused by deforestation, they are considered to be the two most effective.

The main part of destruction takes place in newly industrializing countries (e.g. Brazil). But also industrial nations are involved in this either directly by exploiting the natural resources of these countries or indirectly by buying the products which are made with these resources.

4. Given Treaties and Decisions

Convention on Biological Diversity: one of the three sustainable development conventions to emerge from the 1992 “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro. The Conventions’ objectives are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from commercial and other utilization of genetic resources. The agreement covers all ecosystems, species, and genetic resources. There have been 11 CBD Conference of the Parties. (<https://www.cbd.int/>)

European Union: Under the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy 2010-2020 all EU Member States committed to help stop global biodiversity loss. At the core of the EU’s biodiversity policy are the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. These crucial laws underpin the world’s first and largest international network of protected areas, Natura 2000. It covers about 1/5 of the EU’s land and 6% of its seas.

Former UN Resolutions and Decisions: including the

* Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

- Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources
- Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

* Outcome Document of Rio+20 “The Future We Want” (GA Resolution 66/288)²

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (COP 10 Decision X/2): This Plan provides an overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions, but for the entire United Nations system and all other partners engaged in biodiversity management and policy development (link to plan in footnote 4 and summary in footnote 3)³.

Other: Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS or Bonn Convention), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1975), International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2004), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

² <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/unga-resolutions-commitments-biodiversity-en.pdf#page7>

³ <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268>

(1971), World Heritage Convention (1972) (summary to these treaties can be found in footnote 3)

5. Practical Instructions for the Preparation of One's Country's Position

Dear delegates, please bear in mind that your personal convictions concerning this topic are, as usual, of neither value nor relevance for a MUN debate. It is essential to prepare specifically for the position, which you have been assigned to for this session.

Please take everything in this committee guide into account while preparing for the MUN. We would like you to know former treaties and decisions made on the topic of biodiversity in general and adopt those into your work. We also encourage you to make use of additional information concerning your country in particular. Usually, the appropriate ministry of the respective country provides information online. Please be also well equipped with introductory reading concerning the topic as a whole in order to be able to identify points within the larger topic that can be made subject of a more specific debate.

Every delegate is expected to submit a draft resolution trying to suggest solutions for the problem mentioned in our topic. We also would like you to submit a short policy statement of about 200 words, which a delegate might be asked to deliver at the beginning of the committee session (You will find information about how to write a draft resolution and a policy statement in the official Handbook on www.olmun.org). These have to be sent to use according to in an email mentioned dateline. Any delegate who sends in their resolution and policy statement to late or any at all will be punished.

In addition, we want to remind you to dress accordingly to the dress code. Male delegates are asked to wear a suit and tie and female delegates something similar, e.g. a formal blazer and a skirt. Those who do neglect this or any other rules will be punished as well! For further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the chairs by sending an email to: unep@olmun.org We are looking forward to see you at the conference!

Jonathan Röhr and Dennis Kirsch
Presidents of the UNEP