

# Committee Guide

*United Nations Environmental Programme  
Governing Council*

## *Reducing the Overfishing of the Oceans*

*„If you're overfishing at the top of the food chain, and acidifying the ocean at the bottom, you're creating a squeeze that could conceivably collapse the whole system.“*

*~ Carl Safina*

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## 1. Personal Introduction

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the OLMUN 2022. My name is Louis, I am 19 years old and I am from Oldenburg. I am a student at the Cäcilienschule Oldenburg and am currently in 13<sup>th</sup> grade. This is my second time participating in the OLMUN and the first time chairing a committee.

I first participated in OLMUN in 2019 as a Tech-Staff and IC-Member.

For me, OLMUN is all about gaining new experiences, getting to know other people from around the world, and having fun of course.

I am looking forward to many interesting debates. I wish you all the best in your preparation for the conference. See you in June.

Louis Sachse

Dear delegates,

My name is Janna Hinrichs and I am honored to welcome you to this year's OLMUN. I am 18 years old and have just finished my last A-level exams at the Cäcilienschule Oldenburg. This year's MUN will be my fourth, but my first time as a Chair. Just last year I represented Canada in the UNEP committee and had a great time. As I have been very active in environmental work in the last five to six years, I am especially delighted to be a part of the United Nations Environmental Programme again.

I hope we can have many lively discussions about measures to reduce the overfishing of our oceans and also have a great time meeting so many new people.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask Louis and me.

I am really looking forward to meeting you soon! Yours, Janna

## 2. Committee Introduction

This guide shall give you, dear delegates, first impressions and ideas about this year's topic "Reducing the Overfishing of the Oceans". But before tackling this particular issue, general knowledge about the committee itself is needed to clear out misunderstandings and to provide successful debates.

In June 1972, at the end of the United Nations Conference in Stockholm, the United Nations Environment Programme was established. The UNEP was supposed to become an organization with the mission of providing leadership and encouraging partnerships in caring for the environment. The main goal of UNEP is to enable nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations by inspiring and informing.

The United Nations Environment Programme is charged with several tasks, such as:

- Collecting and evaluating data concerning global and local environmental developments. Thus, the UNEP focuses on e.g. air pollution, climate change, desertification as well as species extinction.
- Creating platforms where most of today's valid international contracts concerning our environment have been signed.
- Advising and strengthening organizations and institutions interested in acting ecofriendly. This also implies sharing technology and knowledge, which is essential for sustainable development.
- Encouraging more in-depth conversation between private companies and civil society in order to strengthen both parties' cooperation when it comes to environmental protection.
- Because of these farreaching tasks the UNEP can be seen as the leading global environmental authority. The council has 58 member states being reelected every three years, whereby the most important ones remain in the committee permanently. At the moment, the UNEP is chaired by executive director Inger Andersen.

By developing international environmental agreements, supporting environmental science and aiding national governments with their own environmental goals, UNEP is active all around the globe on its quest for an environmentally-friendly and sustainable world.

The council debating these issues consists of 58 members in total, which are being elected for a timespan of three years each.

### 3. Topic Explanation

Overfishing is the removal of e.g., fish, at a greater rate than that the species can replenish its population.

Results of overfishing:

- Collapse of the food chain

A great example is the overfishing of sharks. Sharks are apex predators and sit on the top of the food chain. They eat the fish directly below them. As soon as sharks become underpopulated fish below them become overpopulated. This is leading to a lack of food for them and ends in extinction. The sharks will become extinct because of the underpopulation and not being able to find other sharks to mate. This goes on till the bottom layer of the food chain becomes extinct.

This is called critical depensation where a species is no longer able to sustain itself.

- Direct effects on humans

Slavery in the fishing industry is often observed. Especially in the poorer parts of the world e.g. in south-east-asian countries like Thailand. Slaves are used on land in aquacultures and on boats. The governments often look aside as fishing is very important for their economy and survival of their people. But the world's wealthiest countries also play a large role in the survivability of the world's poorest. Overfishing led countries like China or Japan to go fish in other regions of the world where indigenous people live from fishing alone. The leaders of the world are taking away the ground to live, forcing them to go further out to sea where farms are more dangerous.

- Trash in the oceans

Fishing nets make up the biggest part of waste in the oceans. Garbage from fishing accounts for 30% up to 50% of the world's plastic debris of the oceans.

- True lung of the world

The oceans are the true lungs of the earth and take up 70% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub>, due to a decimated biomass in the seas this is no longer possible, which only further fuels climate change.

- China

China started fishing in other nations' national territories, like Argentinas, because their waters are out of fish. This behavior forces the Argentinian Navy to sink a Chinese fishing vessel.

#### 4. Possible Solutions

- Creating more marine protected areas
- International fishing regulations
- Worldwide catch shares
- Reducing subsidies
- Labels for consumers (MSC)
- Responsible farming
- Stop trawling (trawler drags huge nets through the ocean that scoop up every animal and destroys the ecosystem in its pathway, huge bycatch)
- Overfishing education
- Protecting essential predator species like sharks and tuna

#### 5. Helpful Sources

Here are some helpful sources but keep in mind that you are welcome to use other sources to inform yourself about our topic.

MSC: <https://www.msc.org/en-au/media-centre-anz/news-views/news/2019/05/30/six-practical-solutions-to-tackle-overfishing>

Thünen Institute: <https://www.thuenen.de/en/topics/fisheries/>

WWF: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/overfishing>

FAO: <https://www.fao.org/3/ca9229en/ca9229en.pdf>

National

Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/critical-issues-overfishing>

Greenpeace: <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/oceans/issues/overfishing-destructive-fishing/>

(Netflix documentary: Seaspiracy)