



UN ENVIRONMENT ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE



MAKE THE WORLD YOURS

**HEIDELBERG NATIONAL
MODEL UNITED NATIONS
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STUDY GUIDE**

Table of Contents

Welcome to Heidelberg National MUN 2013!	3
Welcome to the UN Environment Organization!.....	4
Introduction to the Problem.....	5
Historical Background	6
Current Situation	7
Visions for the Future	8
Block Positions	9
Questions a Resolution should answer	11
Further Reading.....	12
Research Suggestions.....	12
References	13



Welcome to Heidelberg National MUN 2013!

We are honored to welcome you to Heidelberg National Model United Nations 2013. Two days of intense negotiations and high quality debates are waiting for you, in which you will seize your chance for change by taking a deep dive into a nation's perspectives in global context. Not only will you learn the skills to negotiate your way through highly entangled issues, but you will also join your peers in going beyond the modeling of the United Nations through the confrontation with real world issues.

The University of Heidelberg has a rich history with regard to Model United Nations, beginning with the first participation of a delegation in Harvard WorldMUN 1999. Since then, the student initiative WorldMUN Heidelberg has sent a delegation to every single Harvard WorldMUN conference, as well as to some editions of NationalMUN in New York.

The expertise to host a MUN conference in Heidelberg dates back to Harvard WorldMUN in 2003, which was proudly organized and held in Heidelberg. In 2011, the first Heidelberg National MUN conference was held, aiming to make the MUN spirit and the associated learning opportunities accessible to more students in Heidelberg and beyond, and to provide a platform for the national and international MUN community to gather and prepare for the international conferences at the venerable University of Heidelberg, all while sharing the experiences and the knowledge of one of Germany's most well established MUN initiatives.

After the second edition of Heidelberg National MUN in 2012, this third run of the conference was designed both to match previous delegates' hopes for a two-day event, as well as to feature a small sized single delegate and a large sized double delegate committee for a conference experience tailored to each delegate's preferences.

Heidelberg National MUN 2013 also encourages all delegates to go beyond the committee work. Not only do we encourage you to meet and stay in touch with your Co-Delegates, for example through taking a deep dive into the "Carnival of Cultures", an evening event celebrating the colorful spectrum of cultures that nations represented in the United Nations contribute to the world community, we also encourage you to transform your theoretical consideration from the committee room into real-world impact. In supporting our social initiative ShareHealth!, aiming to improve the dental health of children in Ukraine and Ecuador, you can take a first step towards making your own impact. Our honorable guest speaker, Dr. Ashis Brahma (Apeldoorn, Netherlands) will share with you his experiences as a refugee camp manager and hospital director in Chad, encouraging you further to take your chance for change.

We are looking forward to sharing lively debates with you during the conference days, to stress-free conversations in the breaks, and to breathtaking performances during the Carnival of Cultures.

Your Heidelberg National MUN team,
Rima-Maria Rahal, Tobias Henz & Lutz Mager

Welcome to the UN Environment Organization!

Dear Delegates,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to both Heidelberg National MUN 2013 and the United Nations Environment Organization. During our two days of debate in January, we will both discuss a topic of paramount importance to the future of our planet and be visionaries with regard to the committee we will nest our debate in.

When researching possible topics for this year's large size committee, I came across the United Nations Environment Programme's strive to implement a sense of Environmental Governance within its member states. Impressed by the great concept on the one hand, but startled by the limited powers and opportunities of a United Nations Programme on the other hand, I decided to bring both sides of the issue to the table at the Heidelberg National MUN conference 2013. That is how the idea of debating Environmental Governance in the proposed, but to date nonexistent United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO, sometimes also dubbed World Environment Organization, WEO) came to life.

Hence, I firmly believe that we can produce results on two levels. Firstly, there is the level of the topic, Environmental Governance, and with that the challenge of identifying and implementing elements and measures needed to achieve sustainability within the community of states the United Nations is, taking into account not only the member state's governments, but also their individual as well as the worldwide economy and civil society. Secondly, we are in a position to simulate how such a discussion would evolve in a United Nations Organization, learning about both the challenges and the chances of the widened competences of the body – this should be regarded as crucial with reference to the final result of our committee work, the resolution to be passed.

Once in committee session, I firmly believe that thoroughly seeking for a definition of both the aims and competences of the UNEO itself as well as paying attention to what every single delegation means by the term "Environmental Governance" will be crucial for progress.

When it came to writing this study guide, I was particularly lucky to receive help from Patricia Wiley and Klára Hošková, both members of the delegation of the University of Heidelberg to Harvard WorldMUN 2012. Klára will also serve as your Co-Chair for the weekend.

Best,

Tobias Henz

Committee Chair UNEO

Introduction to the Problem

“Governing our planet’s rich and diverse natural resources is an increasingly complex challenge. In our globalised world of interconnected nations, economies and people, managing environmental threats, particularly those that cross political borders such as air pollution and biodiversity loss, will require new global, regional, national and local responses involving a wide range of stakeholders.”¹

In light of the world’s population having reached the seven-billion mark in early 2011, environmental challenges have become more daunting than ever and solving them becomes more and more pressing by the hour. In what has been named The Age of Man², or Anthropocene at the turn of the millennium, the depletion of natural resources, the extinction of species and loss of biodiversity as well as global warming, the acidity of oceans and the destructive force of natural disasters are concerns that call for international cooperation across the boundaries of nations and agencies alike.

Hereby, it is the character of the natural resources that need to be managed to tackle environmental challenges that calls for a more integrated, a holistic, approach. In general, natural resources are both non-rivalrous, as resource acquired by one person can still be acquired and utilized by another person, and non-excludable, as it is impossible to keep someone from using a natural resource. However, in the same way that multiple parties can benefit from them, the consequences of the failure to preserve the resource will at the same time harm all these parties. Thus, if one aims to administer goods (for natural resources, the notion of a public good is introduced in economics) or resources of this variety, one needs to find an approach that is neither competitive nor plundering.

This is how the idea of using governance to tackle environmental issues came into play as a way of connecting ends in three dimensions: actors, scales and methods. Considering the different actors involved, environmental governance seeks to integrate all three of politics, economy and the civil society to significantly increase the impact of classical environmental policy exclusively carried out in the first group of actors. With that, environmental governance also connects local initiatives with global decision making, thus bringing together scales that might otherwise never meet.

Lastly, environmental governance connects methods used in traditional policy making with the managerial approaches applied in business, thereby opening up exhilarating new possibilities to manage our planet’s resources for the common good of all it’s inhabitants.

Consequently, Environmental governance is about policy, rules and norms, institutions, procedures and financing mechanisms. It addresses who makes decisions, how decisions



Usage of the term “environmental governance” in English language books.
Source: Google Books

are made and carried out, the scientific information needed for decision-making, how the public and major stakeholders can participate in the decision-making, the kind of information that should be available and how processes and systems are reviewed. As such, a debate on environmental governance needs to address a multitude of vibrant current issues, not necessarily limited to the traditional scope of an environment agency, and is likely to touch of the main lines of conflicts of interest between industrialized and developing nations that include but are not limited to the questions of ecological debt and environmental justice.

Historical Background

The international community has repeatedly pledged to commit to the protection of the environment and its conservation for future generations, such as during the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. Yet, the latest UNEP GEO-5 (Global Environmental Outreach) report, published in the context of the follow-up summit Rio +20, revealed that not only have many of the internationally agreed upon goals not been met, but also that the destruction of the planet has accelerated. This is affecting the international community in numerous ways, including but not limited to each nation's economy, political stability and general well-being.

This discrepancy is paralleled by unrealized commitments in the field of environmental governance, a problem that has been emphasized at various instances in the past, such as by the Nairobi Declaration of 1997, the Malmö Declaration of 2000, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and the management review of environmental governance of 2008³. In this context, it has been found that the terms sustainability and environmental governance are closely intertwined and that the former should be considered as a goal of multilateral action and cooperation at all times.

In the context of the Rio +20 Summit in June 2012, which was the third international summit on sustainable development, the failure to meet these goals has become particularly apparent.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of 2012, also often referred to as Rio +20, was held to evaluate the progress in sustainable and environmentally conscious development and to discuss ways to renew the worldwide commitment to these matters both with regard to previous agreements and to emerging challenges. Although the ten-day conference called for the participation of the heads of state or government of all 192 UN member states to discuss a framework for the international collaboration on sustainable development and a roadmap for a green development worldwide, including a sustainable way for growth for developing nations, the great potential to reach a comprehensive agreement was not utilized. The enormous organizational efforts proved to be somewhat in vain, since the leaders of key actors and G20 states such as the USA, Germany and the UK chose not to attend the conference. The result of the conference, a non-binding agreement largely re-affirming previous efforts to environmental sustainability, fell short of the expectations.

Environmental Governance is one of the six key areas of action of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). However, it can also be considered the culminating point of a variety of precious measures taken, as the worldwide coordination of policies with the goal of achieving environmental sustainability lies at the very heart of the idea of Environmental Governance. Hence, agreeing on international guidelines for Environmental Governance is of paramount importance for a series of key areas of conflict in environmental policy making, including avoiding and dealing with environmental disasters, possibly leading to threats such as oil spills or nuclear fallouts, as well as ongoing debates in resource management, for instance between industrialized nations and emerging economies.

The United Nations Environment Organization

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and its current Executive Director is Achim Steiner, formerly head of the non-governmental organization International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The UNEP was established at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm, Sweden.

Even though the idea of Environmental Governance is traditionally discussed in the UNEP, having the formal status of a Programme rather than an Agency has caused much trouble in implementing results achieved⁴⁵. Thus, in 2007, a proposal was made by members of the European Union to transform the UNEP into a United Nations Organization, interchangeably referred to as the UNEO (United Nations Environment Organization) or the WEO (World Environment Organization). This new organization will assume the status of a Specialized Agency, making it very similar to the existing WHO (World Health Organization).

Most recently, on December 21, 2012, parts of the “The Future We Want” declaration originating in the Rio +20 summit were made reality and a major step towards greater responsibility and potentials for the UNEP was taken by a membership upgrade, allowing all UN member states to hold seats in the next governing council. Simultaneously, regular funding from UN’s budget for the UNEP was enlarged and member states urged to increase their voluntary contributions.⁶

Current Situation

Looking back on four decades of commitment to environmental questions, six sub-programmes have become the core of the UNEP’s activities: Climate Change, Disasters & Conflicts, Ecosystem Management, Environmental Governance, Harmful Substances and Resource Efficiency.

Out of these, Environmental Governance focuses on four vital areas: establishing a well-developed scientific foundation that allows for informed decision-making, increasing the

focus on cooperation between states and stakeholders as well as supporting both the development of sustainability policies and the necessary infrastructure at a national level. These efforts are outlined in the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013⁷.

Among the main supportive pillars to the UNEP are the GEO reports, five of which have been published since. The latest report, GEO-5 was published in the context of the Rio +20 Summit in the summer of 2012⁸.

Additionally, the UNEP has established a task force, the Environment Management Group (EMG), which is primarily concerned with establishing cooperative national, regional and global management strategies based on sound scientific data. Third-party actors such as Earthwatch, founded in 1971, support such initiatives for extended data collection and long-term research as well as for environmental education and awareness and thus support the UNEP's efforts to establish a sound scientific base that supports efficient policies and initiatives.

To achieve their environmental commitments and goals, states need effective legislative and political foundations. The legal framework for the UNEP's activities is provided by the Montevideo Programmes, I-IV, which have been introduced and redesigned by the UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC) every ten years since the introduction of the first programme, Montevideo I, in 1982.

Visions for the Future

"The planet requires us to act. Geo-5 is one way in which we can sharpen our focus on where we should act first, how we can act and where others who have acted have been successful."

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP and
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations⁹.

The GEO reports will remain one of the pillars in assessing the status quo of the environment on a global scale and in providing outlooks on international development. While the environmental challenges that the world community faces seem to be approaching a point of no return in numerous cases, they also represent opportunities for interest groups to collaborate in devising strategies of sustainable development and bringing about technological advances to rise above these challenges and preserve the planet for future generations.

Multilateral cooperation in fisheries management and marine protected areas, as well as with regard to the recycling of hazardous waste is one of the building blocks of a sustainable future. The gap between such large scale cooperations and small-scale

community-based conservation policies, improved farming strategies and the regionally focused restoring of degraded land needs to be closed.

Moreover, there is a cornucopia of initiatives and programs¹⁰ in the process of being implemented or running around the globe that touch the questions of resource management and sustainability. However, the fraction of those that are truly integrative on all three dimensions mentioned earlier are close to negligible and remain a challenge for the UNEP to implement and this committee to envision.

Block Positions

While economic concerns are an issue of a global scale, various stakeholders and interest groups call attention to distinct issues that should be addressed foremost. Overall, somewhat of a north-south discrepancy in environmental governance can be observed: northern states, who have already achieved a high level of development and have been leading in the efforts to act environmentally consciously are focusing predominantly on the challenge on integrating all stakeholders in the process of environmental governance. Southern states, however, are concerned that increased environmental efforts will slow down their rate of economic and social development. To address this north-south distinction in more detail, Asia Pacific and Africa as areas of the 'southern block', and the pan-European region as well as North America will be considered.

The Asia Pacific region, home to 60% of the global population and accounting for about 40% of the global economy, is booming, with both population and economies growing rapidly. In combination with a wide gap between those profiting from the boom and the 70% of the world's poor residing in the region who are struggling to keep up, the exhilarating growth of Asia Pacific is putting considerable strain on the environment. In the race for growth, environmentally conscious policies, and the implementation of an effective, parsimonious and clean use of natural resource might be considered as obstacles hindering industrial development. The process of drafting and enforcing environmental policies appears slow and often ineffectual, and the regional cooperation is limited. However, following natural disasters and subsequent industrial crises the Asian Pacific region is becoming increasingly weary of risks to the environment and thus to humankind, rendering the region more willing to act to protect the environment without slowing down its economic development. Moreover, Asia Pacific aims to combine its environmental efforts with sustainable poverty reduction, and to further scientific research of environmental matters.

Africa shares many of the Asian Pacific concerns, and in fact fears even greater inhibitions in social and economic development. With regard to environmental issues, Africa's forward looking focus as outlined in the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (ACMEN) of 2008 is on climate change and its impact on the stability and security as well as the health in African regions. Especially Sub-Sahara Africa has been immensely impacted by the effects of climate change and global warming, particularly by droughts in

the past few years. In the summer of 2011, the worst drought in the past 60 years and a resulting famine forced thousands of Somali citizens to leave their home country and to seek refuge in the coastal city of Mogadishu as well as neighboring countries like Djibouti and Yemen. The majority of people thronged to the northern Kenyan refugee camp Dadaab, making it the largest camp in the world¹¹. This brought about a humanitarian crisis, with 12 Million people at the verge of starvation, and prompted the call for international attention to the detrimental effects of global warming and climate change on food security and nomadic culture in East Africa. The situation is further complicated by unstable governments in the region, which face challenges beyond establishing effective measures of environmental governance. A resolution that addresses efforts of environmental governance in the Sub-Saharan African region will have to focus on increasing the effectiveness of cooperation across borders, on relieving countries of the stress of receiving large numbers of refugees and thus preventing a destabilizing domino effect and of finally on creating more efficient response mechanisms to humanitarian crises on unprecedented scales. It will also take into account that the degradation of land is particularly severe in the Sub-Saharan and Eastern African region, which calls for capacity-building efforts as well as scientific advances tackling dry-land challenges and the linkage of poverty and environment in national and regional policy-making.

In the pan-European region, the development of environmental policies varies greatly, in accordance with the variance not only in the natural preconditions that can be found in the region, but also in the level of overall development. One key area of pan-European interest is managing water; with most of pan-European rivers being transboundary and many pan-Europeans still lacking safe supply with clean drinking water and plumbing. Europe also focuses on the development of sustainable sources of power. Western Europe has become somewhat of the 'watchdog' of environmental efforts worldwide, urging the international community to increase the contribution to environmental governance, and leading the process as an exemplar. Round tables and approved committees create innovative approaches, and the direct advisory interaction of stakeholders with legislative and executive bodies is facilitated in many places.

North America, as a relatively homogenous and highly developed region, could contribute with high levels of environmental efforts. As a main source of funding of environmental programs, the North American positive impact on the advances in environmental policy and governance could be enormous. However, with the power to both implement and influence programs and initiatives, the North American nations seem to be predominantly focused on advancing their own interests rather than becoming a world leader in environmentally conscious action.

Questions a Resolution should answer

1. Which additional competences should the new UNEO be equipped with in order to meet current and future challenges?
2. Is there a need to adapt the current architecture of UN bodies to meet the needs for immediate and effective action more adequately and if yes, how should this adaptation look in greater detail?
3. Since environmental governance touches issues traditionally discussed in other UN bodies (e.g. WTO, WHO, WBG), what are the interdependences?
4. Should the private sector be integrated into the inter-governmental and non-profit efforts that already exist and if so, what should a commitment entail?
5. Why are questions concerning the environment traditionally debated and tackled differently from, for instance, international trade agreements or finance programs. Is a reform in order? If yes, how?

Further Reading

- <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/>
- Environmental Governance by the UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, 2009
- Management Review of Environmental Governance of 2008
- United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013
- [The Future We Want](#) Resolution from Rio+20
- [Global Environmental Governance: A Reform Agenda](#)
- [The global environment : A program to avoid appalling deterioration](#) (The New York Times)
- Park, Conca, Finger: The Crisis of Global Environmental Governance
- Biermann, Pattberg: Global Environmental Governance Reconsidered
- International Environmental Governance: Moving Forward with developing a Set of Options
- [Global Environmental Governance: Review Article](#)
- Kouchner: [International environmental governance and the United Nations Environment Organization \(UNEO\) project](#)
- Focus No 3/05: Global Conventions and Environmental Governance
- Ivanova: UNEP in Global Environmental Governance: Design, Leadership, Location
- Biermann: Global Environmental Governance: Conceptualization and Examples

Research Suggestions

- Agenda 21
- The Grenelle Environment
- Global Environmental Governance Project
- UNEP GEO-5 Report
- Stockholm Conference of 1972
- Nairobi Declaration of 1997
- Malmö Declaration of 2000
- 2005 World Summit Outcome
- Montevideo Programme IV
- Background Documents of the Rio+20 conference (<http://www.uncsd2012.org>)

References

- ¹ "UNEP and Environmental Governance at a Glance". <<http://www.unep.org/pdf/brochures/EnvironmentalGovernance.pdf>>
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- ³ Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. 12 November 2008. "International environmental governance - Report by the Executive Director." United Nations Environment Programme. <<http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-x/download.asp?ID=900>>
- ⁴ Assessing UNEP as Anchor Institution for the Global Environment: Lessons for the UNEO Debate. <<http://www.yale.edu/gegproject/uneo-wp.pdf>>
- ⁵ Options for Broader Reform of the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD): Structural, Legal, and Financial Aspects. <<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/322IFSD%20FIVE%20OPTIONS%20REPORT%20-%20FINAL%20VERSION%201%20NOV%20for%20posting.pdf>>
- ⁶ <<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2700&ArticleID=9363&l=en>>
- ⁷ UNEP. 2010. "United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013." United Nations Environment Programme.
- ⁸ UNEP. 2012. "Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5)." United Nations Environment Programme. <<http://www.unep.org/GEO/geo5.asp>>
- ⁹ UNEP Executive Director. May 2009. "International Environmental Governance: Moving Forward with developing a Set of Options." United Nations Environment Programme.
- ¹⁰ See for instance "Further Reading" Section
- ¹¹ Friedman, Lisa. Aug 22, 2011. "African Drought Victims Create World's Largest Refugee Camp." New York Times Magazine. <<http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2011/08/22/22climawire-african-drought-victims-create-worlds-largest-97673.html>>