

FairGaze National Model United Nations (Inter-school)

Background Guide

Committee- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Agenda- Impact of Climate Change on World Heritage Sites



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was formed on 16 November 1945. UNESCO has 195 Members and 8 Associate Members. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of a culture of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. UNESCO works to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values. It is through this dialogue that the world can achieve global visions of sustainable development encompassing observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which are at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities.

Its aim is to-

- Foster cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace
- Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development
- Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication
- To apply science to ensure human development and the rational management of natural resources.

UNESCO's main objective is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting cooperation between nations through education, science, culture, and communication, to promote universal respect for justice, the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedoms affirmed for the peoples of the world, irrespective of race, sex, language or religion. UNESCO builds capacities of States Parties and other stakeholders to manage climate change impacts on World Heritage effectively and sustainably. The main aim of these efforts is to increase the capacity of these properties to continue to convey their Outstanding Universal Value and support sustainable development.

UNESCO's Culture Sector protects and manages world heritage in all its forms. UNESCO defines heritage in six categories: cultural and natural; tangible and intangible; and movable and immovable.

Introduction to the Agenda

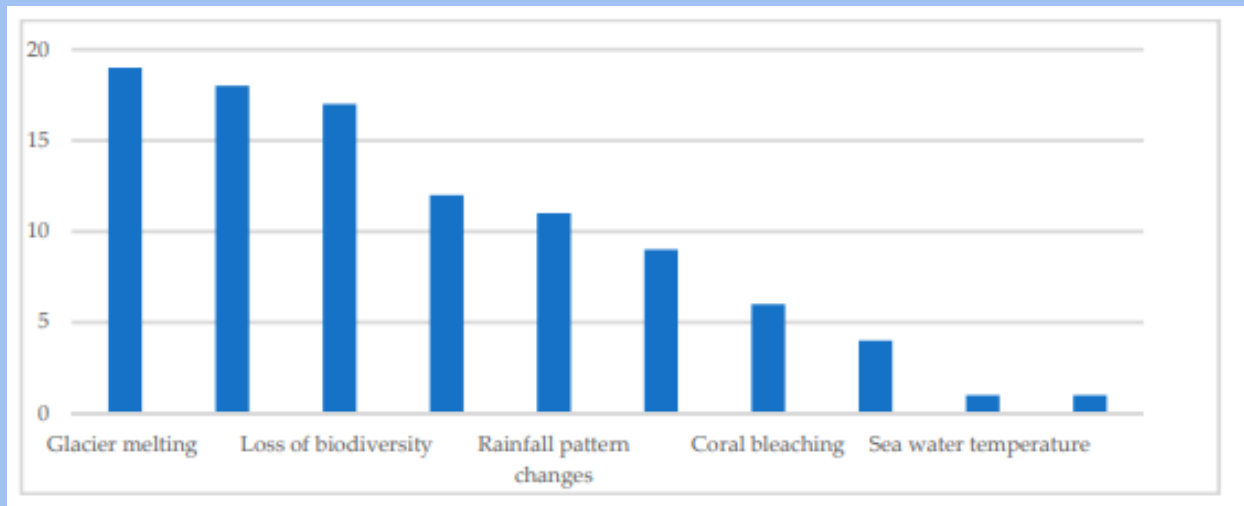
World Heritage represents natural and cultural resources so exceptional they should be conserved for all humankind forever. World Heritage sites and objects are the best of the best. Yet, many natural and cultural World Heritage sites are at risk from climate change. There is urgent need to understand the ways climate threatens various sites and artifacts, and to understand what adaptation strategies if any are appropriate for their conservation.

Nowadays, there is an increasing concern over climate change effects, and there is irrefutable evidence that suggests that humans might be directly responsible for the emergence of this phenomenon. A change in weather pattern would lead to destabilization of social and environmental conditions and these disruptions could threaten the sustainability of natural and socio-economic systems. Change in the weather pattern is primarily a threat that has physical impacts. It affects cultural heritage through temperature changes, soil erosion, flooding and storms as well as natural heritage through the melting of glaciers and habitat changes. Climate change itself is a new challenge for UNESCO, and the organizational solutions for the conservation of heritage sites are at an early step. Climate change is a severe threat to the long-term conservation of the values at the heritage sites. However, this threat must be considered as one of many issues. Heritage sites can be vulnerable to changes in weather patterns, not only restricted to direct impacts on the built structure, but also having very indirect consequences like fragmentations of populations, loss of intangible features.

The number of natural World Heritage sites threatened by climate change has grown from 35 to 62 in just three years, with climate change being the fastest growing threat they face, according to a report released today by IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature. The first ever scientific assessment of the amounts of greenhouse gas emitted from and absorbed by forests (2001-2020) in UNESCO World Heritage sites has found that forests in World Heritage sites play a vital role in mitigating climate change.

At the 29th session of the International Council on Monuments and Sites in 2005, The World Heritage Committee recognized climate change as an emerging threat to the conservation of many cultural and natural sites in the years ahead. The year 2006 marked the beginning of a new chapter in cultural heritage conservation

when a report on ‘Predicting and managing the effects of climate change on world heritage’ and a ‘Strategy to assist states parties to implement appropriate management responses’ was presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 30th session in Lithuania.



The following graph report highlights the main factors of climate change, affecting the World Heritage Sites.

In 2005, a study was conducted by the World Heritage Centre among all State Parties to assess the impacts of change in weather pattern on World Heritage sites. The collected responses reveal that climate change had an impact on 72% of the natural and cultural heritage sites in the sampled countries. Forty-six countries out of 83, mentioned that they were beginning specific procedures to manage the issue, although most of these actions were limited to the monitoring of the impacts. Climate change threats on 46 Cultural World Heritage sites were reported. Almost all cultural sites mentioned were “human-built structures”, like archaeological ruins, churches, mosque or temples, and only four sites referred to cultural landscape.

UNESCO’s World Heritage Center is committed to working closely with all stakeholders including the States Parties to the 1972 Convention, other international conventions and organizations, the civil society and the scientific community to address the multiple challenges posed by climate change to the precious and fragile cultural and natural heritage of the world.

Current State of Affairs

A 33% of natural World Heritage sites are threatened by climate change, including the world's largest coral reef, the Great Barrier Reef, assessed as having a “critical” outlook for the first time. In recent months and years, the world has witnessed cultural and natural heritage sites threatened by wildfires, floods, storms and mass-bleaching events. UNESCO’s report, World Heritage forests: Carbon sinks under pressure, reveals that a staggering 60 percent of World Heritage forests are threatened by climate change-related events. As the world reflects on the 50th anniversary of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, building knowledge on World Heritage and climate change can inform a future roadmap for the next half century

On 18 April 2022, UNESCO underscored its commitment to fully integrating World Heritage monuments and sites into climate action and strategies. They are a shared global asset that needs to be safeguarded from the effects of climate change as well as a transversal tool for climate change mitigation and adaptation for current and future generations to come. The World Heritage and Tourism highlighted in a report of climate impacts including increasing temperatures, melting glaciers, rising seas, intensifying weather events, worsening droughts and longer wildfire seasons, at iconic tourism sites such as Venice, Stonehenge and the Galapagos Islands. It also covers other World Heritage sites such as South Africa’s Cape Floral Kingdom; the port city of Cartagena, Colombia; and Shiretoko National Park in Japan.

Proof/Evidence in Council

(Credibility of Sources)

Research is one of the most vital factors that determines your success in a Model United Nations. Many beginners struggle a lot in doing the research as there is a substantial amount of information on the internet (*we have shared a research guide in the end to help you out!*). The trickiest part here is that not every information available on the internet is reliable. The delegates need to be really vigilant about the sources they quote and present in the committee. You are free to look at all types of sources for your reference or preparation and understand the agenda better. However, it is advised that you verify your research from a credible source, which are listed below for your reference-

1. **Reuters** – It is one of the world's most trusted providers of answers. It is an independent private news agency, which mostly covers international events of importance.
(<http://www.reuters.com/>)
2. **State operated News Agencies** – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are listed as follows-
 - a. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/>
 - b. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>
 - c. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>
3. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that the Executive Board as credible information can still accept a report that is being denied by a certain country. Some examples are,
 - a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>)
 - b. or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (<http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>)

- c. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) or People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>).

4. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations

The documents from individual country websites also serve as a source for finding official statements by that country on various agendas. The nature of websites varies a lot from country to country.

Link- www.un.org/en/members/

5. Other Multilateral or Inter-Governmental Organizations

These are international organizations which are not a part of the United Nations. Usually one may find these organizations based around a specific region like South Asia, and with a specific purpose such as trade, security or cooperation. Documents from the same can be deemed credible; most certainly for the countries which are a part of that organization.

For example,

- a. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Website: www.saarc-sec.org

- b. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Website: www.nato.int/cps/en

6. United Nations and Affiliated Bodies

- a. All reports or documents from the United Nations, its organs or affiliated bodies may be considered as a credible source of information. Website: www.un.org

Organs such as,

- i. **UN Security Council**

www.un.org/Docs/sc/ ii. **UNGA** www.un.org/

[en/ga/](http://www.un.org/en/ga/)

b. UN Affiliated bodies such as,

i. **The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** www.iaea.org

ii. **The World Bank (WB)** www.worldbank.org

7. **Documents from Treaty Based Bodies**

These are bodies which are strictly formed for looking after the implementation of an international treaty or agreement. For example,

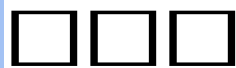
a. **The Antarctic Treaty System**

www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm

b. **The International Criminal Court**

www.icc-cpi.int

Scroll Down for The Research Guide!



Get Started!

Here are a few things that you prepare for The MUN:

1. The Agenda item
2. The country that you are representing
3. Your Committee

The Agenda Item

The agenda item is basically what you and other delegates will be discussing throughout the entire conference. The agenda item/ the topic is described in the Background guide that is given before the start of the conference.

1. The keywords of the agenda item/ the topic

When you receive the agenda/ the topic, you should be well-aware of the keywords or the focus of your agenda/ topic. (The words help in framing deciding sub-categories/topics to raise motions also!)

2. The reason why the agenda is item an issue of worldwide concern

The agenda item is discussed by delegates during the conference because it is a global issue, and involves a lot of countries and policies. You have to find the relevant data or statistics regarding the issue and bring them up in the conference as that other delegates will be aware of the need to take actions towards this particular issue.

3. Countries that are involved, stakeholders of the agenda item

As mentioned, the agenda item discussed usually involves a lot of countries and stakeholders, and that's why you have to understand and be aware of the stakeholders' stances of the agenda.

4. The timeline and development of the agenda

Knowing the timeline and the development of the agenda could help you a lot with research. Getting to know the development of the topic can help you understand the relationships between countries and have a more thorough understanding of their stances.

The Country That You Are Representing

Before the conference, you must have received an allocation regarding the country that you will be a delegate for, here are a few things that you should research for before the conference starts.

1. The membership status of your country in the committee

There are a few types of membership status in the United Nations, including observers, permanent members, members, intergovernmental and other organizations, etc.

2. The stance of your country

Different countries can hold different stances on a particular topic. For instance, Bitcoin is illegal in South Africa, while it is illegal in Egypt. It is very important to know the stance of your country so that you will know what countries to form allies with during the conference.

3. Past actions/ taken by your country regarding the agenda and relevant documents

In the conference, you will talk about the actions that have been taken by your country and bear in mind that the actions that are taken by your country can be possible solutions for the issue. It would be useful if you can write down the name and important content of the documents and mention them in the conference speeches.

4. Your allies and your enemies

The stance and the actions taken by each country can be very diverse, countries may also have major clashes in between. For example, abortion is illegal in Ecuador under normal circumstances while it is legal in the UK. It is important to note the similarities and clashes between each country, and make sure not to form allies with your enemies if there are major clashes in between when drafting the resolution.

Your Committee

The mission of each committee can be very different. Before the conference, you should have a thorough understanding of your committee, and here are a few things that you should research for (some are already there in the background guide but you can always research more!)

1. The mission/ objectives of your committee

When you want to reach a consensus or merge blocks together, you can mention the goal of the committee to remind other delegates that we are all here to find the best possible solutions for a particular group of people or to achieve a certain goal. For example, the goal of UNHRC is to work towards human rights and ensure that no one's left behind. When there is a big argument between delegates, you can simply mention the goal and bring them together.

2. *Past actions taken by your committee and relevant documents

To perform well in Model United Nations, you must know the content of the documents and past actions taken by your committee. You can always find the past resolutions, meeting records, treaties, etc on the United Nations website. (The title of the relevant documents will often be mentioned in your study guides.

[\)\(https://www.un.org/en/sections/general/documents/\)](https://www.un.org/en/sections/general/documents/)

3. NGOs and private sectors that are relevant to your committee

The mechanisms of the United Nations often have close relationships with other NGOs and private sectors. Make sure you know which NGOs and private sectors are in relations with your committee.

*Here are a few websites that could help with your research and MUN journey!!!

Model UN Research- best delegate

<https://bestdelegate.com/research/>

How to research for a MUN- Munki

<http://munkiconference.weebly.com/how-to-research-for-a-mun.html>

How to research for MUN

<https://www.wisemee.com/mun-research-guide/>

☐ ALL THE BEST DELEGATES ☐