

Topic: The Global Transition to a Circular Economy and Waste Management

General Overview:

In a world where the consumption of natural resources has reached unsustainable rates, it is important that we make vital changes to address the environmental challenges we are facing. This topic tackles the transition to a circular economy, and the potential of this shift to transform global sustainability. A circular economy follows the production model, reuse, repair, refurbish, and recycle materials and products, rather than the traditional model of production in a linear economy which prioritizes the cycle take, make, dispose. This approach preserves resources while also reducing environmental pollution and waste production. The reintegration of waste into the production process is a central factor in a circular economy, which is why waste management is a necessity. Implementing effective waste management strategies, such as recycling, upcycling, and composting, is a key step in transitioning into a circular economy. It is important to identify the main sources of waste production and find solutions that both minimize waste and the use of scarce natural resources. For these practices to evolve and develop, new infrastructure, policies, and technology are required. Transitioning to a circular economy presents significant challenges. Governments must establish assisting mechanisms, while businesses and consumers must adapt to new consumption and production patterns and incorporate extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Sub-topic 1: International Regulations on Fast Fashion:

'Fast fashion' is cheap clothing that is mass-produced by retailers to appeal to the demands and tastes of the fashion community. The fast fashion industry is responsible for a large amount of carbon emissions, water waste, and textile waste. Incorrect disposal of overproduced and overconsumed cheap material fills landfills quickly and leads to environmental degradation. Delegates will investigate how to align the fashion industry with a circle economy by enforcing regulations that promote more sustainable materials, eco-friendly production processes, and extended producer responsibility (EPR). Talks will discuss how incentivizing the recycling and upcycling of garments along with the implementation of stricter guidelines regarding manufacturing processes will lead to minimized waste.

Sub-topic 2: E-Waste Management:

This sub-topic examines the risks posed by e-waste and the need for waste management processes and policies. Electronic waste has become one of the greatest waste streams in the world due to the ongoing technological advancements, which means that e-waste management is crucial. The debate will cover how incorrect disposal leads to millions of tons of e-waste ending up in landfills or places where recycling management is poor, such as LEDCs. This is an issue since e-waste contains many hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium, which can contaminate soil, air, and water. Talks will consider how the contamination of such resources poses serious risks on the health of people and animals, as well as the preservation of ecosystems. Delegates will consider the importance that efforts are made by companies and government bodies to apply policies to minimize and recycle e-waste.

Sub-topic 3: Single-use plastic and plastic waste:

Plastic pollution caused by single-use plastics are one of the most visible and harmful sources of pollution in a linear economy. Plastic waste harms wildlife and contaminates ecosystems by small micro-plastics entering the food chain which causes long-term environmental damage. Despite continuous efforts to raise awareness, plastic production and pollution continues to increase, and efforts of recycling remain minimal in many countries. Delegates will discuss implementing mandatory global plastic recycling systems, investing in recycling infrastructure and developing new recycling techniques and technologies. Holding manufacturers accountable for incorrect disposal of waste by expanding extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies would also push the use of more biodegradable and environmentally friendly materials and processes. It is important that solutions are found to both minimize the production of single-use plastics and incorrect disposal of them, for the sake of our ecosystems and communities.

Topic: The Global Impact of the Paris Agreement on Environmental Mitigation Efforts

General Overview:

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty that was drafted in December 2015 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference near Paris, France. The treaty was then signed in

2016, April by 196 parties. The goal of the treaty is to limit global warming levels well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The treaty continues to target a more ambitious goal of reaching 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, in hopes of decreasing global warming rates across nations. The topic will discuss the economic and social developments required to be made, to be able to implement the Paris Agreement, while also taking the different circumstances of each country into account. A key feature of the Paris Agreement is its emphasis on nationally determined contributions (NDCs). This means that countries can submit climate action plans which outline their commitments to reducing emissions and other climate related impacts. Discussions on ensuring full implementation of the treaty as well as investing in sustainable technologies that ensure a low-carbon future will take place. The Paris Agreement has had an outstanding global impact on climate change and environmental mitigation efforts. It has led to many policy changes globally, the development of advanced renewable energy technologies and raised public awareness on the urgency of the issue at hand. However, the road to a clean and sustainable future is still a long way ahead, and requires coordinated action by governments, industries, and communities.

Sub-topic 1: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are a central component of the Paris Agreement, as they represent a country's individual contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reaching global climate goals. Each participating country is required to re-submit their NDC every 5 years, with the target of increasing ambition with every period, to meet the climate goal of limiting temperature rise to well below 2°C. This sub-topic will highlight how MEDCs are expected to take the lead in emission reduction, while LEDCs are given more flexible targets along with financial aid and technology assistance to support their efforts. Delegates will debate whether allowing countries to freely submit NDCs has had a positive impact on the treaty, due to criticism on some countries for submitting insufficiently ambitious targets or not following the goals they have set.

Sub-topic 2: International Trade:

International trade plays an important role when it comes to strengthening and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. The climate impacts of the flow of goods, influenced by trade

agreements, can significantly influence global emissions. Delegates will discuss whether international trade agreements promote sustainability or worsen environmental degradation, and how to align trade policies with climate goals. Ensuring that trade agreements are designed to promote green technologies, sustainable development, and climate conscious production to decrease carbon emissions and encourage placing regulations on exported goods. Talks on the importance of key carbon contributors in the trade industry, such as the energy, agriculture, and manufacturing fields, to make efforts to find more sustainable practices and decrease overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Sub-topic 3: Climate Resilience in Vulnerable Regions:

This sub-topic recognizes that some countries and/or populations are affected differently by the impacts of climate change and highlights the importance of protecting these vulnerable regions. These regions include small island states, least developed countries (LDCs), and climate sensitive areas such as drought-facing regions and low-lying coastal regions. These regions often face the most detrimental impacts of climate change, even though they are responsible for the smallest contribution. Such areas suffer consequences such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, crop failure, and water scarcity. Delegates will discuss the importance of supporting these regions by providing financial aid as well as strengthening adaptation strategies. The Green Climate Fund which was created under the Paris Agreement aims to assist developing nations when it comes to this issue, however, there are concerns regarding several funding gaps and insufficient support.

Topic: Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture and Food Security

General Overview:

Climate change has posed a significant threat on global agriculture, with rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and increased extreme weather events which impact crops, livestock, and food production systems. Agriculture is highly dependent on weather conditions, and changes or disruptions in climate has led to a decline in agricultural productivity, heavily impacting regions already struggling with food insecurity and malnutrition. Developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and small island nations are at a great risk, as

they rely on agriculture as a main source of income and sustenance. This is one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century, as the world's population continues to grow, intensifying the demand for food and increasing the difficulty of production. To address the impacts of climate change on agriculture, a multifaceted approach is required, that includes both adaptation and mitigation approaches. Mitigation strategies focus on reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by agricultural practices by transitioning to sustainable farming or improving land management. On the other hand, adaptation efforts aim to build climate resilience in vulnerable areas to protect agriculture by improving water management or early warning signals in the case of extreme weather events.

Sub-topic 1: Farmer Safety and Health Risks:

Climate change not only impacts crop yields and livestock, but also the conditions of farmers, which risks putting both their safety and health at risk. The working conditions in agriculture are already demanding and dangerous, and when this is paired with heatwaves, floods, or droughts caused by climate change, it can become extremely hazardous. This puts farmers at risk of dehydration, exhaustion, and heat stress which can lead to many health problems. Delegates will discuss safety protocols and policies to ensure that farmers and the condition of the working area is protected. As climate change intensifies, it becomes increasingly important to consider the health and safety of the conditions in which agriculture workers are in, to ensure that food production remains safe and efficient.

Sub-topic 2: Wildlife Disruption:

The impact that climate change is having on agriculture and food security is having a significant effect on biodiversity and wildlife. Agricultural areas are the habitat to many different species, which are being increasingly threatened due to the changing and intensifying weather conditions. Warming temperatures in these areas have been welcoming a range of different pests and diseases, which not only affects the crop yield, but also livestock and wildlife health. Shifts in multiple species behavior due to climate change has led to wildlife seeking shelter and food in agricultural areas, which disrupts crop growth. It is important to find active solutions that both

protect wildlife in agricultural areas and protect crops from unnatural migration patterns and pests.

Sub-topic 3: Water Scarcity:

As the planet becomes increasingly warmer, freshwater supplies are diminishing due to change in precipitation patterns, drought, and reduced snowmelt. This is having significant consequences on agriculture, as it is heavily reliant on a stable water source. Climate change is putting a heavy load on water stress in countries and regions where water sources are already low. Without sufficient water source, many countries might face food insecurity. Delegates will examine the importance of water management and discuss the complicated negotiations of sharing water across countries. Addressing water scarcity requires strategies that ensure water is conserved and meets the growing demands in agriculture for food production.