



United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

Plastic Pollution” and how the youth can intimate exercises into meeting the 12 and 13th Sustainable development goals (life underwater and life on land)

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SAIMUN 2019

A WELCOME FROM THE DIAS

Welcome to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)! It is with great delight and pleasure that we welcome you to the 3rd session of the Sub-Saharan Africa United Nations. The Dias overseeing your committee will consist of Raudhat Saddam, Aida Muthoni (Co-Chairs) & Grace Kalekye (committee secretary)

By opening this document, you are taking the first step towards being a participant. The purpose of this background guide is to introduce the committee and the topic. The topic and committees were chosen to reflect the problems that our world leaders face. The issues have to be dealt with. As a delegate, you will be stepping into the role of world leaders. You will take on perspectives different from your own, and you will push for what your country believes to be right.

SAIMUN and most especially UNEP will provide you an excellent opportunity and induce you to obtain broader views on complex international issues based on the environment. We hope that you will find this Background Guide useful in your preparation for the conference. You are also encouraged to do your own research to explore in-depth your own Member State's policies. Prior to the conference, please review our Rules of Procedure and Delegate Code of Conduct, both of which can also be found on our website. Each delegation is requested to submit a position paper, which reflects your research on the topics. We wish you all the best in your preparation and look forward to meeting you at SAIMUN 2019!

Introduction

Plastic is a material consisting of any of a wide range of synthetic or semi-synthetic organic compounds that are malleable and so can be molded into solid objects. Plastic Pollution can then be defined as the accumulation of objects of plastic material in the environment, that severely affects wildlife and their habitats, natural resources and humans.

As the world population grows, so does the amount of garbage that people produce. This garbage includes plastic.

Plastic however is an incredibly useful material, but it contains toxic compounds that are known to cause illness. People are not only exposed to these toxins through the manufacturing process, but also through any form of plastic packaging as the chemicals migrate from the plastic packaging to the foods they contain, which is eventually consumed. Examples of plastics contaminating food have been reported with most plastic types, including Styrene from polystyrene, plasticizers from PVC, antioxidants from polyethylene, and Acetaldehyde from PET.



History of the Topic

For over 50 years, global production and consumption of plastics have continued to rise. An estimated 299 million tons of plastics were produced in 2013, representing a 4 percent increase over 2012, and confirming an upward trend over the past years. (See: World Watch Institute – January 2015). In 2008, our global plastic consumption worldwide was also estimated at 260 million tons, and, according to a 2012 report by Global Industry Analysts, plastic consumption is to reach 297.5 million tons by the end of 2015.

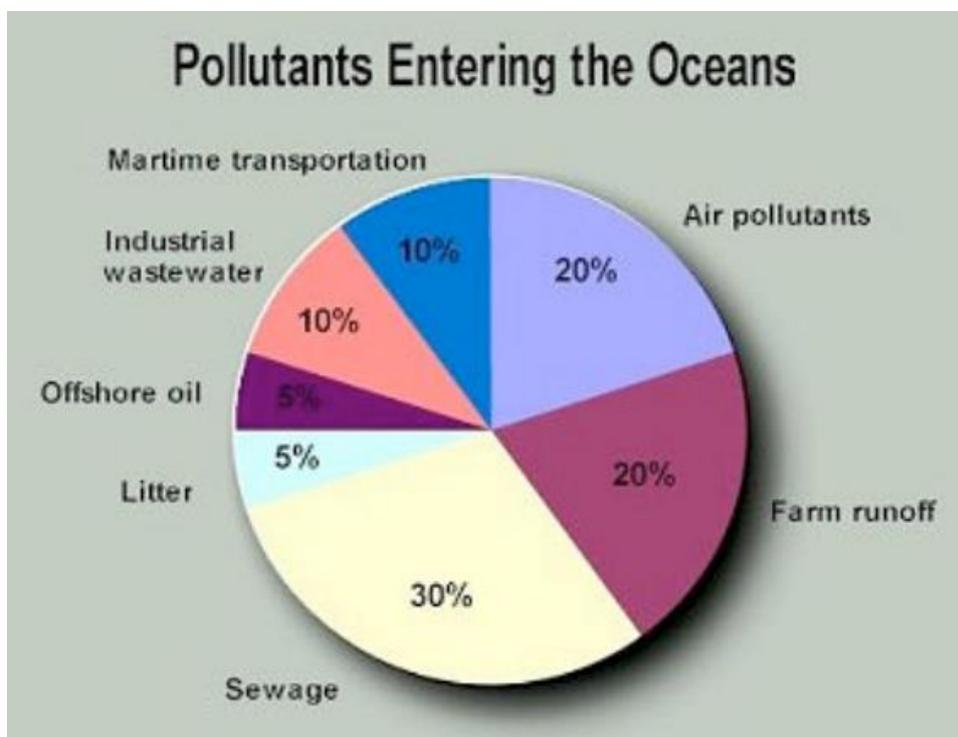
Another study estimates that humans had produced 6.3 metric tons of plastic waste, of that waste only 9% was recycled, 12% incinerated and 79% in landfills or the natural environment. According to this study roughly 12 billion metric tons of plastic waste will end up in landfills or the natural environment by 2050. It is alarming to note that the amount of plastic waste produced is less than that which was estimated from studying done before. Meaning that if action is not imminent then we will once again go above the expected amount of plastic waste by 2050. A shocking amount of plastic bottles cover the seafloor off Xiaoliuqui Island. Just one of the examples of the areas plastic pollution in the ocean has affected.



Discussion of the Topic

Statement of the Problem

Henderson is uninhabited and is too remote to get many visitors. So it's not a matter of littering: it's the currents. The Henderson plastic pollution is a challenge of a different magnitude – well beyond the capability of Pitcairn's 52 inhabitants. So the [Pew Charitable Trusts](#), which has a long-standing relationship with the Islands, was approached for help. With support from the Blue Belt programme, they have planned an expedition to Henderson, for later this year. The expedition will not clear Henderson of plastic. Nothing will. Plastic degrades and gets broken down into micro pieces, which form part of the sand on the islands beaches and are no doubt present in the sea, poisoning our sea life. marine plastic pollution is the new climate change



Current situation

An estimated 37.7 million pieces of plastic litter the island, with an average 671 items per square metre. There are about 17 to 268 new items that end up on that portion of the island on a day-to-day basis. Only 7 percent of the plastic items came from fishing supplies. The rest of the items were household items like used toothbrushes, plastic scoops for detergents and baby formula, and soiled diapers.

Crabs are found to be making use of things like empty cosmetic jars as new homes, dead sea turtles were found tangled in the rubbish. This is awful because it's our consumer habits that have created a huge part of this problem, but it's simultaneously hopeful because habits can be changed by embracing a zero-waste lifestyle.

International and Regional Framework

After global plastic production and pollution from ships increased and became an issue on the global agenda in the late 1960s, the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships* (MARPOL Convention) (1973) was adopted

Annually, Clean Up the World Weekend, World Water Day, and World Environment Day, cleanup activities take place where people collect trash on beaches and in other areas Annex V of the MARPOL Convention, which entered into force in 1988, the disposal of plastics at sea is prohibited and governments are obliged to install facilities for garbage at ports and terminals.

The Henderson Island Management Plan outlines a number of management goals with the principle of working with the Pitcairn Islanders to ensure on-site protection, and to review the legal status of the island with consideration for upgrading it to a Nature Reserve. Specific goals are to ensure that the biological, geological, and archaeological values are conserved

A number of international conventions relevant to nature conservation and environmental protection have been extended to the Pitcairn Islands. In short, these include the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; the CITES Convention on Endangered Species in International Trade; the World Heritage Convention; the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species; the Vienna Convention on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter; and the Convention for the Protection of the Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP).

Role of the International System

Henderson is of such environmental significance that it was declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 1988, with strict measures in place to preserve its unique fauna and flora. The Pitcairn Marine Protected Area, designated in 2016, is 834,000 square miles, and part of the UK [Blue Belt](#) around UK Overseas Territories therefore, the Pitcairners are committed to tackling the Henderson plastic. They already have their own recycling programme, recycling glass into art and road fill, and a new EU-funded recycling centre will open later this year. Even discarded marine buoys will find a new home

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will replace the Millennium Development Goals at the end of 2015, recognize the importance of the world's oceans for global sustainable development and call for focused actions to combat water pollution. SDG 14 seeks to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” and thus contains important implications for the future situation of plastic debris in the world's oceans

In general, many international conventions for the prevention of plastic debris exist; yet, not all states are parties to them, and the conventions lack enforcement mechanisms and adequate monitoring of their implementation. The head of the UN Environment's Pacific Office says protecting the oceans from plastic pollution is a high priority at a global meeting in Kenya.

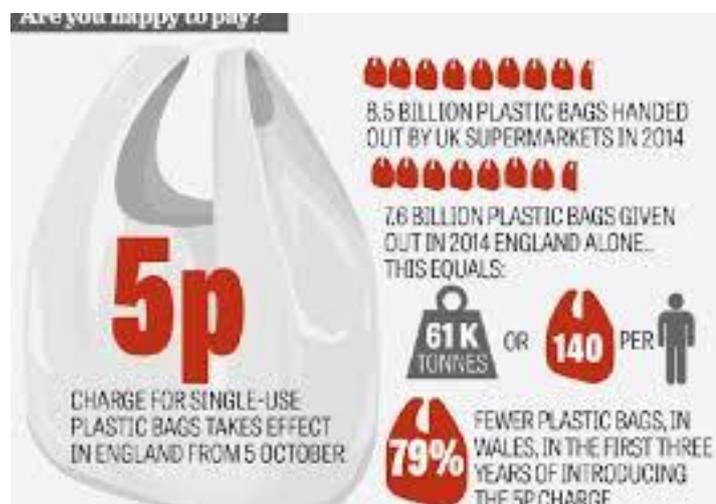
UNEP generally seeks to assess “current environmental trends,” develop “international and national environmental instruments,” strengthen “institutions which deal with the environment,” and raise “awareness of issues of concern.” It cooperates with other UN bodies, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to monitor and reduce the amount of plastic debris in the world's oceans. At its first session, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted resolution 1/6 of 27 June 2014 on “Marine plastic debris and micro plastics,” thereby strengthening UNEP's mandate to act

At the world oceans summit in early March, Indonesia pledged to put up to \$1bn a year towards reducing plastic and other waste products polluting its waters, setting a goal of a 70% reduction in marine waste within eight years. Norway has proposed a zero tolerance of plastic pollution and suggested a legal treaty banning plastic waste from entering the sea at the UN Environment Ministers' meeting

While UNEP and other UN programs concentrate on concrete actions to reduce the amount of plastic debris in the oceans, the GA focuses on the broader framework in which these actions are embedded, makes general statements on the current situation, evaluates ongoing efforts, and creates new bodies.³⁷⁸ The GA has devoted increasing attention to the issue of marine pollution, particularly with respect to the impact thereof on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the need for international cooperation to protect the world's oceans.³⁷⁹ GA resolution 60/30 of 29 November 2005, resolution 62/215 of 22 December 2007, and resolution 63/111 of 5 December 2008 emphasize the vulnerability of SIDS to the impact of marine pollution and ask for stronger cooperation concerning reducing and preventing pollution from ships and from land

A great number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Coastal Cleanup, and governmental organizations, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the United States, cooperate with UNEP to reduce the amount of plastic debris in the oceans

In recent years, to fulfill obligations pursuant to international agreements, many countries have adopted legislation on the prevention, control, and reduction of marine debris. Many policies have proved very effective; for example, plastic bag use in Wales dropped 70% after stores began charging consumers a minimum of £0.05 per plastic bag



QUESTIONS A WORKING PAPER/RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

1. How can you raise awareness about pollution, its causes, effects to the public?

2. What will we do with the already existing plastic that is clogging the oceans and laying in the land?

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