United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

DEFINING GREEN RECOVERY ADDRESSING COVID-19 FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

BACKGROUND GUIDE

SAIMUN 2022

Letter from the Chairs

In the beautiful words of Wendell Berry, the Earth is what we all have in common. Delegates, we salute you all and welcome you to the UNEP Committee of the 2022 edition of the Sub-Saharan International Model United Nations. We endeavor to bequeath you an amazing experience but more so to create a space that encourages a healthy, respectful, and transformative debate. You are leaders in your different spaces and my expectation and that of the dais members is that we hold ourselves with decorum.

You are being led by a very able team that includes Kajumbe Peter, Rachel Tungu and Jeremy Marimba.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

- The United Nations Environmental programme (UNEP) was formed on 5th June 1979 by Maurice Strong, who became its first director after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm.
- Its Mandate was and is to provide leadership, deliver science and develop solutions on a range of issues that include climate change, management of terrestrial ecosystems, and marine and green economic development.
- UNEP, as part of the United Nations, aims to help the world meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It also happens to be the only United Nations headquartered in Africa here in Nairobi, Kenya. It has 193 Member states and representatives from the civil society and businesses.

MANDATE

- The UNEP's work programme is divided into six well thought out areas in their efforts to achieving their goals in their results-based management. The idea to have this six areas of concentration formed were guided by scientific findings that indicated the need for there to be some form of oversight on the worlds environmental approach. Other contributing factors included the emergence of priorities from regional and global forums and the UNEP's initial mandate. The concentrations areas include.

i. **Climate change.** UNEP is tasked with strengthening the ability of nations to include climate change responses by leading in adaptation, mitigation, technology, and finance. The UNEP's goal is to improve the understanding of climate science, facilitation of the development of renewable energy and finally raising the awareness levels of the public

ii. **Post – conflict disaster management.** UNEP does an assessment in countries that have been in crisis and gives guidance on how to implement frameworks that will give room for sn improved environmental management.

iii. **Ecosystem management** is an area of concentration that allows for the facilitation of management and restoration of ecosystems in a style that will be in line with the sustainable development goals and that will promote the use of ecosystem services.

iv. **Environmental governance.** In this case, the UNEP gives its support to governments in the establishment, implementation and strengthening of the necessary processes, institutions, programs, laws and policies to drive towards achieving sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels.

v. **Harmful Substances.** It is the UNEP's mandate to work towards minimizing the there being of harmful substances and hazardous waste on human beings and the environment.

vi. **Resource Efficiency.** In this category, The UNEP drives towards having an environmentally friendly way producing, processing and consuming natural resources both regionally and globally.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Defining Green Recovery Addressing Covid-19

- Green recovery, put in simple terms, is the name given to a series of economic recovery actions taken to try and achieve long-time climatic change and objectives that are sustainable to make strides that are headed towards a sustainable and economic model for the planet, which is both more inclusive and resilient.
- UNEP has made huge investments into efforts of green recovery. Since the onset of the covid-19 Pandemic, the global economy has been on verge of tipping over. Despite many governments having invested significantly into reviving their economies, it is a green recovery that would put most countries in a position to rebuild and even become better while at the same time looking to move the economy forward and creating jobs for its people. The crisis caused by the Pandemic threatened the lives and livelihoods of most people by raising the levels of poverty and more so damaging economic growth prospects that had been built over some very long periods of time.
- The United Nations still strongly believes that green recovery despite the hard-hit is still very achievable and could lead to even higher returns for the economics and socio-benefits.

HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

A green economy is low on carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive. In this type of economy, growth in income and employment are driven by both public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions, enhance resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Green recovery aims to help fight the effects of the economic recession that is a result of COVID-19. The pandemic has greatly

induced economic impacts making it clear that complete recovery will be a work in progress for many years to come.

The burning of coal, oil and gas since the industrial revolution has led to global warming. By 2019, the rates of wildfires in The Amazon rainforest, Arctic Forest and Australia had increased. In a bid to reduce global carbon emissions, many countries signed policies as a form of commitment to limit global carbon emissions. UNEP's Emission's Gap Report found that a green recovery could cut 25% off 2030 emissions. Governments such as the UK Proposed ***"A green and resilient recovery"*** and others began implementing policies geared towards green recovery principles.

By mid-2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had forced countries to partially shut down their economies to prevent transmission and death. This required many businesses to suspend their work which meant less travel and loss of jobs. Through green recovery, governments can restructure critical sectors.

An estimated 225 million jobs have been lost since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Global unemployment has spiked by 30% leading to a drop of US $3.7 trillion in global income. As a result, global poverty rates have increased by 7.8% between 2020 and 2021 causing a loss of disposable income especially among women. The income gap between the rich and the poor has never been this large.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decrease of global emissions by 8% globally. The partial decline of transport services during the start of the pandemic has contributed to the reduction of global energy demand and use. This not only gives a

chance for the environment to recover but also provides a jump start for the green energy sector.

The plastics pandemic

During 2020, the lockdowns and decline in economic activity reduced overall plastics use by about 2% from 2019 levels, mostly for large-scale industrial sectors such as motor vehicles and construction. But overall, this reduction was substantially smaller than the decline in total economic activity.

At the same time, the use of medical and protective equipment as well as single-use plastics increased considerably during the pandemic, and exacerbated plastic littering, the build-up of which will continue for decades to come.

Relative to 2019, global plastics use increased by 0.3 Mt in 2020 in the health and social work sector, and by 0.2 Mt in the pharmaceuticals sector. Plastics use for face masks is estimated to represent 300 kilotonnes in 2020 linked to the production of some 126 billion masks. In other sectors like food services and retail, the shift towards take-away, food delivery and e-commerce all increased demand for plastic packaging.

Global plastics waste has doubled in the past two decades, soaring to 353 million tonnes (Mt) in 2019. Under normal circumstances, almost half of global annual plastics waste can be attributed to packaging (40%), and overall, nearly two-thirds of plastic waste comes from plastics with lifetimes of under five years. Furthermore, only 9% of plastic

waste is recycled, and in 2019, 22 Mt of plastic materials evaded waste management systems altogether, leaking into the environment.

Policies can help tackle the plastics pandemic. As the economy rebounds, the scope of green recovery measures could have a stronger focus on improving waste management and increasing recycling.

DISCUSSION OF THE TOPIC

The green economy in the post-COVID-19 world can be actioned by innovative fiscal and non-fiscal tools that encourage water conservation, promote resource efficiency in industrial processes, lower pollution in waterways, facilitate energy and water conservation in buildings, encourage the purchasing of environmentally friendly goods and services, create a resource-conscious society, and enable energy-savings and reduce carbon emissions in populated areas. A green recovery would enable countries to build back better while driving economic growth and job creation.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION TO THE TOPIC MUST ANSWER

1. Where is the world with regards to Green Recovery?
2. Why will Green Recovery be an impactful tool towards replenishing the economy?
3. What are the necessary steps to be taken towards building an environment habitable to Green Recovery measures?
4. How long will it take for the economies to start seeing a positive outcome from the efforts put?
5. Will change of model be considered in case some economies take longer to respond to the Green Recovery plans?
6. When does Green Recovery start and what marks the end of a recovery?
7. What can the governments do to contribute?
8. What defines a proper Green Recovery Roadmap?

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