



United Nations Environment Programme

Hello, Delegates! My name is Cynthia Leong and I am your head chair for the upcoming 35th Annual MVHS MUN Conference. I am currently a senior and this is my second year participating in the MUN program. In school, I am on the board of CSF and a part of Key Club, NHS, Science Olympiad, and many more but it would be too boring to read the whole list so I'll just stop there. Outside of school, however, I truly appreciate any extra nap time I can get, and if I'm not sleeping, you can catch me hanging out with my friends at the beach or cramming in last minute volunteer hours and homework. I love the color blue, or any color for that matter, and enjoy going to Denny's in the middle of the night because there's no bad time to get pancakes. Anyways, I really hope your experience at our conference will be a great one! I am looking forwards to meeting all of you very soon.

Hello delegates, my name is Arianne Braswell and I'll be your vice chair for the MVHS MUN 2018 conference. This is my third year in MUN. I'm involved in numerous clubs and activities here at Mission, including CSF, SHH, HOP, No one gets me Club, Serve it Up, and the IB program. I have played two years of high school softball and I plan on competing in shot put and in my free time I love to cook. I can't wait to spend this weekend with you and have an amazing committee session.

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at mvhsmunep@gmail.com

Position papers are due December 15th, 2017.

I. Background

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, there are currently 7,597 species of both plants and animals that are endangered around the world, meaning they are categorized as likely to become extinct. There are many factors that are considered when assessing the status of a species including the current number in the population remaining, the overall rate of birth/mortality population over time, limited factors, and most influential, the amount of human activity impacting a species' and its habitat. For example, a main cause of the endangered status is over hunting or over harvesting, which decreases the chance of breeding. Pollution also destroys habitats and effects animals in both a direct and indirect manner. Additionally, the introduction of invasive species, a foreign species that takes over the native species' habitat, can cause the endangerment of native species which face the threat of being outcompeted for resources.



Furthermore, many of the animals that become endangered, and even extinct, are top predators in food chains, and keystone species. As a result, removing just one of these animals could destroy the whole food web of an ecosystem. For example, in the Greater Yellowstone region, wolves are responsible for maintaining a balanced prey population, specifically deer, by keeping them from growing exponentially and destroying all vegetation. Smaller species also play important roles in their ecosystems. For example, mussels are key species because they purify water, benefiting the rest of the species in the ecosystem.

Nonetheless, though the ecological preservation of all species is a major one, the economical benefit of maintaining biodiversity also directly affects nations across the international community. Mankind's need for raw materials and resources require that all species are protected in order to preserve the world we live in for us, and them. Clearly, the issue spans across state boundaries, and affects each nation in a different, but adverse manner. Therefore, it is clear that the protection of endangered species and their environments should be treated as a key priority on the agenda of the international community.

II. United Nations Involvement

The United Nations Environmental Programme is currently working with a variety of partners in order to put in place the essential infrastructure needed to “guarantee the long-term health and functioning of ecosystems and equip future professionals and decision-makers with the know-how to deliver human well-being in harmony with nature”. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) is the leading department working on issues related to forest crimes, which created the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime in 2010, with the purpose of addressing crimes such as extreme deforestation, poaching animals, and other actions that could harm animals and plants to the point of threatening extinction. The UN General Assembly has also created high-level projects such as the Tackling Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking program in Africa in 2013, in order to defend the status of animals and prevent further cases of endangered species. Additionally, CITES (Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international treaty that was created in an effort to ensure that the survival of species is not threatened in international trade. It has been signed by 183 nations. All in all, although there have been a plethora of acts passed, and groups created through the UN, the endangered species list continues to grow, efforts must continue to be strengthened, as the protection of endangered species and actions taken against creating more, is crucial to the well-being of life around the globe.

III. Possible Solutions

Overall, delegates are encouraged to develop creative and insightful resolutions specific to their countries. There is no blanket solution to this issue, and new and unique methods of protection and preventing endangered species, are necessary in order to facilitate meaningful and



productive discussion. For example, although many species have become extinct over time, the endangerment of other species can still be prevented. Since human impacts on the environment are one of the biggest causes of species going extinct, we must our efforts into reversing the adverse effects human activity has caused, and work on minimizing mankind's destruction of the environment in the future. For example, illegal poaching, trafficking, and deforestation will continue to occur without being caught, so it is important to replenish the population as needed through legislation, mandates, and even through the education and raising of public awareness to the impact being caused. In addition, even though the regulation of wildlife crimes need to be maintained, countries should also focus their efforts on keeping the species populations at sustainable numbers. One of the ways to increase the numbers of a species is through captive breeding. Countries can set up wildlife reserves in order to allow a large territory for species to mate and breed. Allowing species to increase their numbers will ensure that there will be enough animals to pass on their genes to future generations. In addition to wildlife reserves, zoos can also be established to breed species and grow the population size. Additionally, private farming can play an important role in making sure that species don't go extinct. For animals that are hard to keep in a wildlife preserve, such as sea animals like turtles, private farming can be a great solution to keeping species out of the endangered list.

IV: Country Bloc Positions

Western: These nations have already established national parks and wildlife conservation centers, but have problems with pollution that is destroying the environment.

Latin: Latin American is rich in wildlife, from rainforests, to vast oceans. As a result, tourism in these countries may become a large problem if it begins to affect ecosystems negatively.

Asian/Pacific: Many animals in this block are wanted for economic profit, and are on the endangered species list as a result. These countries may need extra efforts put in place to prevent illegal activities to plants and animals in these environments.

African: Similar to the Asian bloc, many large animals at the top of the food chain are threatened, predominantly as a result of human behavior such as poaching. These countries are in favor of UN intervention, but may have trouble finding a sustainable way of protecting species because of the climate as well as the economy.

V. Questions to Consider

1. Are there any governmental restrictions that would hinder efforts to sustain plants and animals?
2. Does the nation have certain beliefs, whether cultural or religious, that would prevent plants and animals from being bred in captivity?
3. Do any of the inhabitants hold jobs that pose a negative impact on species?
4. Can the endangered species in the country be managed easily? (Too big, can fly, etc.)



5. Can the country afford to protect plants and animals along with protecting its people?

VI. Works Cited

“Endangered Species.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 22 Oct. 2017

“Preserving Our Ecosystems.” *Preserving OUR Ecosystems*

“How Does the United Nations Respond to Illegal Wildlife Poaching and Trafficking? - Ask DAG!” *United Nations*, United Nations, 25 Oct. 2017

“The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.” *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, 2016

“Environmental Threats.” *WWF*, World Wildlife Fund.

“What Is CITES?” What Is CITES? | CITES

Topic 2: Effects of Genetically Modified Organisms

I. Background:

Genetically Modified Organisms are organisms with artificially altered DNA. There are several different reasons why GMOs are added to crops, including but not limited to, insect resistance, drought tolerance, herbicide tolerance, disease resistance, enhanced nutritional content, reduced food waste, and improved manufacturing process. However, with these desired traits comes equally adverse affects on the environment. For example, according to GMO companies, “Crops from GMO seeds are studied extensively around the world to make sure they are safe for the environment before they reach human consumption”. In the U.S., up to three government agencies review genetically modified plants for food and environmental safety. These include the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Therefore, even though the FDA and all the other major industries approve GMOs they can still be toxic. In other countries, similar implementations of programs created in order to regulate GMOs have been created. The main issue with the use of GMOs is the ideological argument based off of the fact that GMOs are relatively new and therefore have not had the time to be thoroughly researched. It is also important to note that the topic of GMOs is both a social and an economic issue. GMOs have the potential of revitalizing agricultural markets, especially in developing nations which can harvest cheaper, more efficient, and even more nutritious products with the use of genetic modifications. Genetically altered food such as “golden rice,” could serve as a staple in countries which are in need of economically feasible food sources to sustain a growing population. In these cases, GMOs can be used to help nations progress in their development.



II. United Nation Involvement

The United Nations Environmental Programme was established after the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment. It was held in Stockholm (Sweden) after a proposal for a creation of global body to act as the environmental conscience of the UN system. The United Nations Environmental Programme encourages decision makers in government, industry and business to develop and adopt environmentally sound policies, strategies, practices and technologies. The United Nations Environmental Programme are working with a variety of partners in order to put in place strict rule on GMOs in everyday farming corporations. The UNEP and WHO have worked together to develop a plan so that there are health assessments to prevent risks with humans and the environment. This includes the 2005 report released by the UN addressing the issue on GMOs. The UN believes that GMOs can be beneficial in regard to crop yield, food quality and the type of foods that can be grown in a given area. With these factors the UN believes that as long as there are general assessments then GMOs are okay. The CBD and the UNEP are working together to help with biosafety and GMOs to help countries in Africa and Europe.

III. Possible Solutions

While critics and environmental advocates argue not to let GMOs into our environment, let alone our bodies, due to unforeseen and possible adverse future effects, others believe that along with the obvious practicality of using GMOs in developing countries, GMOs have the potential to be used in order to contribute to a stable and more profitable economy. Therefore, although there are many different viewpoints on the value of GMOs, there are compromises that can be made in order to benefit mankind and sustain the environment simultaneously. For example, solutions may include the periodic evaluation of producers who are utilizing GMOs, in order to create a more transparent process. Continued research, data collection, and tests should also be carried out in order to stay up to date with scientific discoveries regarding the safety of GMOs. In this committee, delegates are encouraged to develop creative and insightful solutions that go further than simply the education and raising of awareness for endangered species. Though this is a critical step in the protection of endangered species, the chair would highly smile upon solutions which deal with direct actions which could be taken in order to eradicate the issue.

IV. Country Bloc Positions

Western: Countries in the Western bloc that for the most part, GMOs cause no harm and are beneficial to the people and the environment. These areas have done greater research on the effects of GMOs, and have concluded that their benefit outweighs the unknown effects they may, or may not, cause in the future because given the current scientific standpoint, GMOs pose no such formidable threat. Nonetheless, there are groups of people within their populations who avidly protest against the use of GMOs



Latin: These countries believe heavily in the production of GMOs foods since they rely on them in order to sustain a productive economy and food supply.

Asian/Pacific: These countries believe that GMOs are valuable in order to boost the economy, however the public in many of these states are hesitant.

African: These countries have taken the lead in in developing guidance towards GMOs. They recognize the potential that GMOs could have on their developing status as a region, and as individual states.

V. Question to Consider

1. Do GMOs have an effect on wildlife?
2. Would plants and animals become extinct if this were to continue?
3. Is this act costly on the common people?
4. What would be an alternative to GMOs?

VI. Works Cited:

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“The Environmental Impact of GMOs” *One Green Planet*, One Green Planet, 2 August 2013

“Genetically modified food can boost health but risk assessment must continue – UN” *UN News Centre*, UN News Centre, 25 June 2005