



**Mission Viejo High School MUN**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
*Vox Populi*



**UNEP: The Honeybee Crisis**

Hello delegates! I am Alexis Triepke, and I am vice chairing the UNEP committee. I am currently a junior at Mission Viejo High School and this is my first year in MUN. So far, I am enjoying my time being a delegate at conferences, and I'm looking forward to chairing this committee at MVHS' annual conference. Outside of MUN, I am on Varsity Cheer and have been in the school's spring musical my freshman and sophomore year. I am also apart of CSF where I get to bond with my classmates while assisting the community. This committee will be a both fun and productive as long as all delegates are polite to each other. Email any questions and your position papers to [mvhsmununep@gmail.com](mailto:mvhsmununep@gmail.com). Can't wait to see you all in January!

**I. Background**

The recently surfacing collapse of honeybee colonies, scientists working for the United Nations have revealed, is becoming a global phenomenon. The declines in managed bee colonies, seen increasingly in Europe and the US over the past decade, are also now being observed in countries of Asia such as China and Japan. Also, according to the report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), there are the first signs of African collapses from Egypt. Some of the world's leading honeybee experts, issue an urgent warning about the extreme loss of bees, which are keystone species around the globe as crop pollinators. Without quick and serious changes to the way human beings disrespect the planet leads to decline in pollinators needed to feed a growing global population and this crisis is only growing. The researchers warn that many factors may now be contributing to hit bee colonies around the world. Ranging from decrease in flowering plants and the use of damaging chemicals in our environment, to the spread worldwide of pests and air pollution.

**II. Past UN Involvement**

"The way humanity manages or mismanaged its nature-based assets, including pollinators, will in part define our collective future in the 21st century," said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director.

The UNEP report does not observe honeybees in isolation, but as one of the most important animals that globally contributes by pollinating crops. Together it concludes there is insufficient data to demonstrate a happening worldwide pollinator crisis. Yet it points to a potential crisis unless we reverse the loss of habitat and flowers that are threatening wild pollinators. Pollinators such as bumblebees and solitary bees and rightly call for farmers who plant wild flower margins and set-aside sufficient land to restore habitats and food for pollinators to be financially, especially for long term, rewarded. Possibly the advocates are misguided in their belief that one way to avert a crisis is by conserving populations of wild bees, and even managing them where possible, to reimburse for the chronicle losses of managed honeybees. The wild bees that we expose to pesticide-sprayed fields, monoculture crops, and management by humans could all suffer the same fate as our immune-suppressed honeybee. Bumble bees that managed to, for example, pollinate tomatoes might suffer from diseases that have spread to these



wild bumble bees. Until UNEP have tackled and then eliminated the underlying causes of honeybee deaths, replacing one failing pollinator for another will not be a simple remedy.

### III. Possible Solutions

The advocates call for farmers and landowners to be offered incentives to restore pollinator-friendly habitats, including key flowering plants near crop-producing fields and stress that more care needs to be taken in the choice, timing and application of insecticides and other chemicals. While managed hives can be moved out of harm's way, many of them are vulnerable. Air pollution, which may be interfering with the ability of bees to find flowering plants and therefore food scents that could travel more than 800 meters in the 1800s now reach less than 200 meters from a plant. Exploring ways to fix this problem would increase honeybee population and honeybee bi-products. Also, modern industrial farming shows instances where problems of growing resistance of pests and weeds, decreased soil fertility and water retention, contamination of ground waters, high energy input and CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions, as well as reduced resilience and increased vulnerability to climate change. Lastly, under this standard of farmers, they become increasingly dependent upon seeds and chemical products from multinational companies. Allowing more access to this life source is a clear and efficient solution. Work for the best possible solution for yours and other countries to avoid conflict.

### IV. Country Bloc Positions

**African:** Little to no awareness of the problem but recently noticing more bee population collapse. More focused on human population stability.

**Asian:** Aware of decrease in population numbers and are working to revive keystone species.

**Western:** Fully aware of crisis for over a decade and have many researchers, scientists, and environmentalist working for a population increase, starting with habitat improvement.

**Latin:** Making advancements to accommodate the honey bees ecosystems while increasing agriculture.

**Middle Eastern:** Little to no focus on honey bees currently.

### V. Questions to Consider

1. What view does your country have on the crisis, and what actions are they taking?
2. How will the decrease in population increase my country's economy?
3. What solutions will your country be able to place into action? Limitations?
4. Will your country's actions possibly cause conflict with other countries? e.i. Using natural resources



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**VI. Works Cited**

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