

CERRITOS CONFERENCE 2021



UNEP

TOPIC:
OCEANIC POLLUTION

DIRECTOR: IRENE KIM

October 9th, 2021

To Delegates of CHSMUN Novice 2021

Dear Delegates,
Welcome to CHSMUN Novice 2021!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2021 novice conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host this conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although there will be a few changes to our conference due to Covid-19, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2021, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. With this strong circuit consisting of over 500 delegates, CHSMUN Novice 2021 will provide a quality experience for beginner delegates to enhance their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Novice 2021!

Sincerely,

Anushka Panjwani & Naima Dellawar

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Secretary-Generals

A Note From the Director

Delegates,

Hello, my name is Irene Kim and it is my absolute pleasure to chair for the Cerritos High School UNEP Committee this year. This is my 5th year in MUN and I am so thrilled to see the delegates of the UNEP committee to share their creative and unique solutions in the upcoming conference. MUN has truly shaped the person I am today with the amazing teachers and people I have met along the way and this is coming from someone who was the most introverted person in middle school. I am especially looking forward to chairing the UNEP committee as although there are many different problems in the world, pollution affecting marine life has been a topic that has been around for centuries. With this, throughout the committee, make sure to be engaged and have a good knowledge about all of your solutions.

To get to know me outside of MUN, you can find me binge watching anime, drinking thai tea (with boba), or playing Minecraft and Valorant. I am currently ASB Executive Treasurer at Cerritos High School, and am involved in the Cerritos High School christian club. After high school, I wish to be a veterinarian and study biology and veterinary medicine in college.

I hope everyone works hard on researching and preparing for the conference, and feel free to email me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the topic or Model UN in general. I am so excited to get to know you and how the committee will run. Best of luck!

Sincerely,
Irene Kim
Director, UNEP
Committee Email: UNEP.CHSMUN@gmail.com

Committee Introduction:

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was created in June 1972 at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment to address the growing urgency of environmental challenges. Its principal goal is to put in place environmental protection measures. UNEP tackles a wide range of environmental issues, from climate change to environmental legislation to hazardous waste, in order to advocate for better environmental treatment. The UNEP promotes renewable energy research and the development of climate change mitigation strategies such as climate finance and REDD+ programs. The UNEP examines collateral damage to the environment in post-conflict areas and provides case-by-case resources to support future conservation efforts. In addition, the UNEP focuses on the environmental impact of hazardous materials, as well as energy consumption and production, in order to find strategies to reduce these risks and promote sustainability. The UNEP's goal is to identify environmental challenges, inspire international collaboration, and promote long-term environmental reform in this way.

Topic A: Oceanic Pollution

Background:

The ocean is home to 50-80 percent of all life on Earth and includes 99 percent of the planet's living space. Ocean pollution has been enhanced by a mixture of human activities and an influx of natural disasters over the last three centuries. This has resulted in a greater number of negative consequences, ranging from issues with oceanic biodiversity to issues with international markets. When waste or other materials is disposed of at sea, the health and productivity of marine habitats are jeopardized. Ocean dumping happens when wastes and materials are dumped into the ocean on purpose using planes, boats, or platforms, causing harm and degradation to aquatic ecosystems. Alarmingly, the proliferation of microplastics, microbeads, and single-use plastics in the last 20 years has exacerbated the problem. Every year, around 20 billion tonnes of trash wind up in the world's oceans, frequently without being treated or processed. Furthermore, each year, over 1.4 billion tons of rubbish is poured into the ocean, with eight million tons consisting only of plastic. Each year, nearly 100 million marine species are killed by plastic garbage. Microplastics, minute bits of plastic that can act as a vector for concentrating other chemical contaminants, are becoming an increasing source of worry. Eutrophication frequently occurs in tandem with ocean acidification, resulting in vast dead zones. Dead zones are locations where there is a lack of oxygen, leading most marine life to die or flee. Ocean contamination is becoming more complicated as the effects of carbon emissions and climate change worsen. Ocean acidification occurs when oceans absorb carbon and grow more acidic, which can break down the bodies of marine organisms and deoxygenate the water. Sea-level rise, melting ice caps that discharge toxins into the ocean, and extreme storm patterns that can relocate undersea animals are all examples of how climate change impacts marine ecosystems. Oil spill cleanup can inflict just as much damage to the water as the spill itself. Dispersants, which break up oil slicks into droplets, are one type of cleanup approach employed. The water column then dilutes the droplets. This method may appear to be efficient, but it actually pushes all of the oil to the ocean's bottom, where it continues to destroy marine life. By releasing damaging oil break-down products into the water, dispersants create a poisonous habitat for fish. According to multiple laboratory studies that evaluated a range of species, dispersed oil is hazardous to fish at all life stages, from eggs to larval fish to adults.

United Nations Involvement:

Water pollution is recognized by the United Nations as having catastrophic consequences for the global community. As a result, the United Nations has taken a number of steps to raise awareness and reduce water pollution. The "Water for Life" Decade for Action, which ran from 2005 to 2015, is an example of this. The "Water for Life" campaign, led by UN Water, aimed to raise global awareness of water contamination. The Decade for Action was able to establish a

UN Water Task Force on wastewater management and a Thematic Priority Area on Water Quality by working alongside the United Nations Millennium Development Goal 7. In addition to campaigning, the UN has joined with non-governmental organizations such as Greenpeace to spearhead global research programs on ocean pollution. These research projects include a wealth of information on various forms of debris as well as where and how much debris is present in a given location. In December 2017, the UNEA addressed this relationship between the environment and human health in UNEP/EA.3/Res.4. The resolution recognizes the adverse health effects of pollution and acknowledges the "strong interlinkages between environment and health." Recognizing and raising awareness about the human health risks posed by our damaging activities against marine life can be an effective method to encourage ocean pollution reduction and sea life protection. The London Convention is the most notable international treaty, which has subsequently become outdated and requires rejuvenation with contemporary research. There is also the UNEP-sponsored Basel Convention, which focuses on "controlling transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal" and has the primary objectives of reducing the generation of hazardous waste, promoting environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous waste when created, restricting the transportation of hazardous waste in oceans, and regulating this movement when permissible. It was first adopted in March 1989, however it is reviewed every two years to establish a "work plan" that improves the convention's current implementation and compliance. The convention's 2020-2021 work program aims to improve national reporting of countries' compliance with the regulations, prevent illegal maritime traffic with hazardous waste, encourage countries to review their own hazardous waste control legislation, and encourage countries to find ways to improve the convention's implementation.

Case Study: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch:

Our oceans have five offshore plastic accumulation zones across the world. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is believed to occupy 1.6 million square kilometers, is the largest of these five. This patch accumulates marine debris from the West Coast of North America to Japan in the North Pacific Ocean. The Indian, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and South Pacific oceans are home to the other garbage patches. In 2015, the Ocean Cleanup Foundation conducted the most extensive research on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, traversing the patch with 18 vessels and discovering an estimated 1.8 trillion plastic fragments weighing 80,000 tonnes floating in the vortex's center. According to the Ocean Cleanup Foundation, the "vast majority of plastics rescued were constructed of inflexible or hard polyethylene (PE) or polypropylene (PP), or derelict fishing gear," especially nets and ropes. Ghost fishing materials—abandoned nets and ropes that are discarded primarily due to adverse weather and illicit fishing—accounted for 46% of the rubbish. Furthermore, big bits of plastic detected in the patch degrade into microplastics, which are more difficult to identify yet hazardous to marine life. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch's marine life is under grave danger as a result of the pollution. Researchers discovered that 180 times more plastic floats on the top of the water than food, and that animals will eat it and pass it on to their progeny. Many birds and turtles graze at the water's surface in this area in

particular. Plastic makes up around 74 percent of the food of sea turtles in the area, according to study.

Bloc Positions:

Western Bloc: The worst oil disaster in Western history occurred in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Despite the fact that the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded over seven years ago, dead marine life continues to wash up on beaches. It's also vital to remember that Western bloc countries are losing topsoil at a ten-fold faster rate than they can replace it, with much of it being poured into the ocean.

Latin America and Caribbean Bloc: Many Latin American countries participate in committees such as the Our Oceans Conference in Chile. With five of the world's top twenty-five fishing countries located in Latin America, the bloc must establish clear norms to prevent pollution. Over 70 million tons of oil pass through the Panama Canal in the Caribbean, resulting in roughly 250 minor and significant oil disasters. In the Caribbean region over 70 million tons of oil pass through the Panama Canal, approximately 250 minor and major oil spills will occur in the Caribbean.

African Bloc: Extreme dumping on beaches is a problem in African countries, which is harmful not only to ocean biodiversity but also to inhabitants' health. Plastic bags are frequently filled with rainfall and then thrown away, attracting malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Various agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), collaborate with numerous African countries to conduct pollution cleanup and enforcement programs.

Asia-Pacific Bloc: Wet seasons are common in Asian countries, with rain pouring down on rice fields and banana leaves, forcing rivers and irrigation systems to overflow. With the plant life being swept away the water also collects trash in bulk such as wrappers, plastic bags, bottles, and cans. Due to the massive influx of tourists in Indonesia, garbage production and consumption have increased dramatically, resulting in Indonesia discarding 3.2 million tons of rubbish into the ocean.

Eastern European Bloc: Europe is also the world's greatest importer of oil, with some of the oil potentially ending up in the seas. In Poland, half of the country lacks wastewater treatment systems, and just half of the sewage in Warsaw is processed. The remaining half of the untreated water systems is thrown directly into the Vistula River, which eventually flows towards the Baltic Sea. Even after disinfection, the water is still far too contaminated for people to consume.

Basic Solutions:

With such a broad topic, there are numerous short and long-term options available to address the problem. Short-term solutions are those that try to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place and are implemented right away. Ocean cleanups or improved irrigation systems are two examples of short-term solutions for this issue. Long-term solutions are implemented to repair the damage that has already occurred. For instance, the restoration of damaged marine life ecosystems or the stricter enforcement of trash disposal rules are examples of this.

Take into account all aspects of oceanic contaminants, including their impact on sewage systems, transportation, the global economy, marine life, and human life. It is critical to remember your country's policy when tackling the issue of ocean pollution.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the different forms of pollution frequently found near your country?
2. What are the most pollutants which are in the seawater, in addition to oil, plastic and microplastic pollution?
3. What programs has your country funded or taken part in to help decrease pollution?
4. What long term effects does oceanic pollution have the potential to create for your country economically?
5. What guidelines should be set in place to ensure that on the regional, national, and international level, pollution decreases?
6. Which modern technologies, methods and approaches are being used to tackle/control pollution?
7. What are the short, medium and long-term impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on ocean sustainability?

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