



SPRIMUN

SCIENCES PO RENNES INTERNATIONAL
MODEL UNITED NATIONS

STUDY GUIDE

UN ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY

FOREWORDS

Distinguished delegates,

The 2020 SPRIMUN team is very honored to welcome you in Rennes for the conference. We are very excited to meet you and to witness this week of enriching debates. We also hope to make you discover more about Rennes, whether you come from here or a little farther.

During this adventure, you will be guided by your two wonderful chairs, Léna Noël and Pierre Salmon, who have made the most to prepare you for negotiations. Your committee, the UN Environment Assembly, is of crucial importance, as it deals with topics that affect people everywhere around the world and even future generations. Take opportunity of these three days to think about how to make a better world for all of us, and find solutions to live in harmony with nature.

The two topics that will be discussed within your committee address our increasing vulnerability to risks caused by climate change around the world and evoke the possibility of changing our economic model to make it more sustainable. These questions are difficult to answer, but these three days promise to be very interesting by the diversity of point of views you will hear while trying to solve them, and by the stimulating ideas you will find. Take advantage to listen the diversity of voices and countries around the table, and to speak up also! The final resolution will reflect your work at the end conference.

Léna and Pierre have done an important work on this study guide, which is the perfect tool for you to become an expert on your topics. Within the following pages, you will find information about history, existing legislation on the matter, and the main issues at stake for the two topics. It will orient your research for the writing of your position paper, which will be your guideline during the conference.

To make the most of your experience and be a perfect delegate (and maybe win awards!) we advise you to take time to prepare. Resort to this study guide to get all the information you need on the topics. During the simulations, represent your country's position, while at the same time trying to discuss with other countries and to find agreements to eventually achieve the writing of a common resolution bringing progress. Please keep in mind that it is strictly forbidden to bring already written draft resolutions to the conference, as all the working papers and draft resolutions should be only developed during SPRIMUN, not before.

If you have any question that comes to your mind during your preparation, or if you need any help, please ask us. We are here to help you and to make sure you have the most amazing experience during SPRIMUN. We are looking forward to meeting you.

Good luck in your preparation.

Best regards,

Adèle Billon and Nolwenn Le Meaux
SPRIMUN 2020 Committees and Delegates Managers

Distinguished delegates,

My name is Pierre Salmon, and I am currently in second year in Sciences Po Rennes. I am honored to chair this year in the Un Environmental assembly with my co-chair Lena Noel. This will be my first-time chairing, even if I already participated to Prague Mun last year, representing Egypt. Lena and I are really concerned about environmental issues and we hope that you find the topics as interesting as we did. Besides, this study will help you to apprehend and know more about your country's position. I strongly encourage you to use this document to have an overview of the stakes inherent to these topics. Do not hesitate to use the links provided and do additional research.

Best wishes,

Pierre

Dear Delegates,

My name is Léna, I am currently a second year student at Sciences Po Rennes. I had the chance to participate twice in PragueMUN and also in last year edition of the SPRIMUN. I am very honored to be co-chairing with Pierre, especially since this will be my first experience as a chair. Moreover, I am really glad to welcome you to the Environment Assembly, I hope this experience will be unforgettable for each one of you ! I will do my best to help you during your preparation for the conference but also during sessions. You will find in this study guide informations concerning the two topics in order to help you with you position paper. I look forward to meet you and I wish you the best for SPRIMUN 2020.

Best regards,

Léna

How to use this study guide:

This document is not an exhaustive guide of the issues that will be raised regarding your Committee's topics. The study guide provides guidelines and references to help the delegates in doing their own research on the issues.

UN ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW

The UN Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making regarding environmental issues and policies. The EA meets each two years to set priorities concerning global environmental policies and to develop international environmental law.

Founded in June 2012, the United Nations Environment Assembly is now composed of 193 members states and deal with problems placing the environment at the center of the international stakes, including peace, poverty, health and security. It adopts some resolutions on major issues such as air quality, financing the Green economy and above all the sustainable development goals as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Last year, the fourth environment assembly took place in Nairobi, Kenya on the theme "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production".

Moreover, resolutions are truly made on the principle of cooperation between States, which is crucial in international organizations.

TOPIC A:

ENHANCING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND PREVENTION

First of all, it is important to point out the fact that disaster risks concern all of us, even if all countries do not suffer from the same issues, there is always a question of responsibility and a necessity to react globally. Indeed, there is always a way you can contribute and/or prevent something serious to happen, no matter the country you live in.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

The notion of **Disaster Risk Reduction** (DRR) can be defined as « the conceptual framework of elements, considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout a society, to avoid or to limit the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development » according to UNISDR (UN agency), 2004.

It has been strongly influenced by the amount of research on vulnerability that has appeared in print since the mid-1970s.

Disaster research deals with conducting field and survey research on group, organizational and community preparation for, response to, and recovery from natural and technological disasters and other community-wide crises. Related fields such as anthropology study human populations, environments, and events that create utter chaos. Also, they research long-lasting effects on multiple areas of society including: social organization, political organization and empowerment, economic consequences, environmental degradation, human and environmental adaptation and interactions, oral history, traditional knowledge, psychological consequences, public health and the broader historical record of the affected region.

What is very important to understand is that no single group or organization can address every aspect of DRR. DRR thinking sees disasters as complex problems requiring a collective and global response. Coordination even in conventional emergency management is difficult, for many, organizations may converge on a disaster area to assist.

We can also define Prevention as the act of stopping something from happening or of stopping someone from doing something (Cambridge dictionary).

Furthermore, only 4% of the estimated \$10 billion in annual humanitarian assistance is devoted to prevention (according to Charter for Change), and yet every dollar spent on risk reduction saves between \$5 and \$10 in economic losses from disasters.

Above all, it is in 1999 that UN States Members agreed with the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, which reflected a change from the traditional position on disaster answer to disaster prevention, which led to what we can call a « culture of prevention » .

It is also really important to talk about **Climate change**:

Concretely, nowadays societies have to face many issues : in fact global temperatures are rising, we can also talk about warming oceans, shrinking ice sheets, glacial retreat, decreased snow cover, sea level rise, declining arctic sea ice, extreme events' ocean acidification according to the NASA.

Climate change is the major use of our time. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase risk of disaster flooding, the impact of climate change is global. We need to take drastic action because it will be more difficult and costly to take them later according to the United Nations.

On the other hand, we need to focus on urban areas: indeed, estimates suggest that by 2050, the urban population exposed to cyclones will increase from 310 million to 680 million while exposure to major earthquake risks will increase from 370 million to 870 million. In front of that, we have to empower local authorities through regulatory and financial means to work and coordinate with civil society, communities to see how each city in each part of the world can contribute to reducing risks.

Inequalities:

Regarding disaster risk prevention and reduction, the notion of inequality is essential, whether it is between countries or between different socio-professional groups.

It has been proven that the impact of disasters is very serious for development both for developed and less developed countries. However, it is acknowledged that less developed countries are most vulnerable to disaster risk and have more resources to prevent and reduce them. With climate change, in 2030, 325 million of people might be in situation of poverty and could be exposed to the full range of natural hazards and climate extremes particularly, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Concerning the inequalities in the impact of disasters according to different socio-professional groups, we can focus on the case of women. Annals of the Association of American Geographers (Neumayer and Plümper) note that women are more concerned by the consequences of natural disaster. For example, following the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, 62% of people who died in India were women. More broadly, the UNISDR showed that more than 100 million of women and girls are affected by the impacts of disasters every year due to gender inequalities associated with socio-economic and cultural traditions as well as their limited access to information. This highlights the necessity to

prevent risk disaster by adapting the measures taken according to the vulnerability of individuals.

TREATIES, CONFERENCES & CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

One of the most famous treaties on disaster risk reduction and prevention is surely the Kyoto protocol in 1997 which commits state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, based on the scientific consensus that global warming is occurring and it is extremely likely that man-made CO₂ emissions are the main cause of it.

Many other solutions followed the Kyoto protocol as the Hyogo Framework valid from 2005 to 2015 which was implemented during the UN's World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe. Participants pointed out the need to strengthen the resilience of nations and communities to disasters by a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities and risks to hazards.

The Sendai Framework was created in 2015 for a period of 15 years to replace the Hyogo Framework. It highlights four priorities: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk reduction, investing in disaster risk reduction and enhancing disaster preparation for effective answer. Moreover, it recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but the responsibility should be shared with other stakeholder including local government, the private sector and others stakeholders. In addition, the Sendai Framework works hand in hand with the other 2030 Agenda agreements such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Regular conferences took place on the topic of disaster risk prevention and reduction such as the annual conference of the International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS) or the annual international disaster and risk conferences (IDRC).

Regarding concrete solutions, the importance of cooperation between states must be emphasized. As an example, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) creates the biennial global platform for disaster risk reduction in order to review progress, share knowledge, and discuss the latest developments and trends in reducing disaster risk.

More symbolic solutions are debated such as the international day for disaster reduction, October 13, designated by the UN General Assembly to encourage every citizen and government to take part in the project of building more disaster-resilient communities and nations.

PRINCIPAL POSITIONS

First, we can say that the perception of disasters differs in temperate/tropical countries such as in Asia, where typhoons and cyclones occur frequently, and Europe or North America, where natural disasters are relatively rare.

Europe mainly experiences floods and forest fires, and the scale of destruction affecting the infrastructure is significantly minimal in comparison with large earthquakes and typhoons that can damage vast areas several times a year.

Besides, regarding its experience with frequent, diverse natural disasters, Japan can understand the viewpoint of disaster-prone developing countries.

For example, while Southeast Asia is often affected by tropical cyclones, Africa is more often hit by droughts than by water-related disasters.

This differentiation between continents shows how planning appropriate projects using the knowledge of each region is necessary to improve the disaster risk reduction capacity of each country. Besides, Japan has earned the world's trust for their assistance with international disaster risk reduction efforts. Japan indeed applies its accumulated knowledge in cooperation with developing countries to help train personnel and develop research in this area. It will ultimately lead to spread a culture of disaster risk reduction and economic growth in the affected countries.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is global cooperation crucial regarding the prevention and the reduction of risk ?
- To what extent is it easier for developed countries to prevent themselves from risks ?
- How can we finance concrete solutions to fight against risk ?
- Is climate change redefining the approach concerning risk reduction and prevention ?
- Why is it necessary to focus on risk prevention rather than disaster management ?

LINKS AND USEFUL SOURCES

UN Office for disaster risk reduction's website : <https://www.undrr.org>

« Dare to prepare : taking risk seriously » Overseas Development institute, video,
[https:// www.odi.org/publications/7955-dare-prepare-taking-risk-seriously](https://www.odi.org/publications/7955-dare-prepare-taking-risk-seriously)

The UN environment assembly's website :

<http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/theme-fourth-session-un-environment-assembly>

The intergovernmental Planet on Climate Change (IPCC)'s website (United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change) : <https://www.ipcc.ch>

Building a foundation for our future, experience of post disasters in Asia:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/j-world/c8h0vm0000bws0t4-att/1801.pdf>

Enhancing disaster risk reduction through new technologies, a crucial asset:
<https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/50508>

Another link concerning technology and its assets for DRR:

<https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

Figures and facts to overview disasters impacts:

<https://charter4change.org/2016/12/16/as-local-as-possible-as-international-as-necessary-humanitarian-aid-internationals-position-on-localisation/>

TOPIC B:

PROMOTING A GLOBAL ECONOMIC MODEL RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

First of all, sustainability is defined as the ability to exist constantly while respecting the viability of the following interconnected pillars: an environment one, an economic one and a social one. According to a UN General Assembly report of 1987, sustainable development answers “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

However, our current economic model generates problems regarding the possibility to achieve sustainable development. First, the fragile state of major developed market economies, persistent global imbalances and soaring oil and non-oil commodity prices are slowing the growth of the global economy. Second, rising food and energy prices are hitting hard on the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people which leads to a twin crisis in the food and energy markets. Third, we are facing the profound threat of climate change and the deterioration of our natural environment. If the international community does not react quickly it could lead to the destroying of all our development efforts with major impacts on the lives of future generations. Also, problems related to globalization are gaining prominence, with the fact that it is leaving behind the vulnerable and poorest communities.

Regarding solutions, there is a distinction between on one hand, short-term ones such as bringing producers and consumers together at the highest level to find a solution to the challenge of rising fuel prices, and on the other hand, long-term solutions of encouraging a more sustainable mode of production. Long-term solutions could translate into the use of efficient and clean sources of energy, more fuel efficient modern technologies, and changes in overall production and consumption patterns.

Herman Daly, an American economist and environmentalist, underlines three criteria contributing to environmental sustainability: renewable resources must provide a sustainable yield, they have to represent an equivalent power as the one generated by nonrenewable energies. Finally, waste production should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment.

In the long run, global trade depends on transportation and communications costs, income growth, changes in preferences, sectoral comparative advantages in the production of goods and services, trade policies and trade agreements. This reveals the aspects that

need to be changed in order to create a global economic model respecting environment sustainability.

Transportation and energy :

First of all, the regional changes in comparative advantages are driven by complex interactions in the economic system. All sectors in all regions are intricately tied together, interacting through transport networks. On top of that, climate change damages affect all parts of the global economy, as for example the energy sector. Countries that have larger domestic markets and more diversified trade patterns can absorb climate shocks better than countries that are more specialized, for example those related to international trade through more imports than exports.

Some climate change impacts, such as higher frequency of catastrophes or rising sea levels, will have direct impacts on trade. They will affect transport and distribution chains. Indeed, direct effects encompass the effects of climate change on trade-relevant supply, transport and distribution chains, which could become manifest in damages to trade infrastructures, with ports being increasingly exposed extreme weather events or rising sea level. However, other impacts such as the retreat of polar ice under warmer temperatures can lead to the opening up of new trade routes in the Arctic.

World population feeding :

When evoking a Global Economic Model, it is essential to take into account the world population feeding. Feeding more than seven billion human bodies have a negative impact on the Earth's resources. If everyone adopted the average diet of the one followed by inhabitants of developed countries, all the habitable lands would need to be dedicated to agriculture, and we would still be 38 percent short. We have to link this stake to lands capacities.

Land management :

Natural capital is progressively transformed into a man-made capital through agriculture. Alterations in the relative proportions of land dedicated to urbanization, agriculture, forest, woodland, grassland and pasture have a major effect on the global water, carbon and nitrogen biogeochemical cycles. This can impact negatively both natural and human systems. A new economical and global system should be able to resolve these two related challenges while facing demographic pressure.

TREATIES, CONFERENCES AND CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

First and foremost, The Sustainable Development Goals are a part of the 2030 Agenda. More precisely, The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to eradicate poverty, to protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A 15-years plan to achieve the Goals was set out.

Today, progress is being made in many places, but, overall, action to meet the Goals is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required. 2020 needs to usher in a decade of ambitious actions to deliver the Goals by 2030.

Other important concrete projects like San Antonio's Mission Verde have to be mentioned. In January 2009, San Antonio undertook what can be seen as a second generation of sustainability plans when it launched Mission Verde. Mission Verde focuses on the economic opportunities inherent to the transition from a carbon-intensive economy to a sustainable economy.

Hence, some ambitious projects are currently being set up. For example, according to the 2009 Index, California's increased energy efficiency over the last 35 years has saved consumers over \$56 billion, creating 1.5 million full time jobs and \$45 billion in payroll. The 2009 Index shows that green jobs created in this area are increasing more rapidly than other jobs, with total jobs increasing by 1% statewide, while green jobs have increased by 10% since 2005. California's energy productivity - Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per unit of energy - is 68% greater than the rest of the nation. In 2006, energy consumption per capita in California was 18% lower than 1970 levels, while energy consumption per capita in the rest of the country remained at 1970 levels.

Finally, we can take inspiration by looking at other economic models promoted or actions/steps made. For example, economic mutations towards a more sustainable mode of production have emerged, with the development of organic goods production, the increase of Fair Trade labelling and the growing accessibility of circular economy services or education programs enabling people to become aware of ecological contemporary issues.

PRINCIPAL POSITIONS

Some regions are more impacted than others by the economic consequences of climate change such as Africa and Asia where high economic growth rates are combined with increased trade dependency and large damages from climate change. Moreover, some economic sectors are more affected by climate change than others like trade in agricultural commodities.

Also, there is a significant opposition between developed and less developed countries. Indeed, there are inequalities regarding access to a global economic model respecting environmental sustainability because it demands a lot of resources.

However, the establishment of such an economic model is not only a question of resources or funding.

For example, in 2019, two weeks before the European parliament elections, the World Wide Fund for Nature stated that the European Union, which is rather developed compared to other regions in the world, was not sustainable enough in its current mode of life and economy. The World Wide Fund asked it to fix it up by implementing a “shift to sustainable consumption and food systems, make Europe climate neutral by 2040, restore our Nature, protect the Ocean, invest in a sustainable future”.

In addition, the opposition between developed and less developed countries tends to decrease. Indeed, over the next half century, the world’s GDP is projected to grow on average around 2.5 % per year, with declining rates in many countries in the last 20 years of the period. The GDP growth trend for the OECD is projected at about 1.8 % annually until 2060, and growth in emerging economies will continue to outpace the OECD.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Why is the current capitalist economic model inadequate regarding contemporary issues?
- How can the traditional economic model be replaced by new ones?
- Is it necessary to combine/coordinate both local and international level body decisions, and more globally different scales of decision making?
- To which extent is it necessary to redesign international transport network regarding climate change?
- In front of demographic growth and limited lands capacities, how can we build a global economy in order to respond the feeding issue?

LINKS AND USEFUL SOURCES

“Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Development Cooperation, Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council”, United Nations, New York, 2008, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination,
https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/pdfs/fina_08-45773.pdf

“International trade consequences of climate change”, OECD Library,
https://www.oecdilibrary.org/trade/international-trade-consequences-of-climate-change_9f446180en;jsessionid=qK067pUOKeeafV5NGFddsLQu.ip-10-240-5-167

“Le double impact climat du transport maritime international”, Tribune de Myrto Tripathi, 13 décembre 2017, Les Echos,
<https://www.lesechos.fr/idees-debats/cercle/le-double-impactclimat-du-transport-maritime-international-1010151>