

*Setting guidelines for the protection
of the ocean against pollution*

Committee Guide

*United Nations Environment Program
Governing Council*





Table of contents

Personal Introductions	2
1. The United Nations Environment Programme	3
2. The current situation of ocean pollution	4
2.1 Poisonous substances	4
2.2 Over fertilization	5
2.3 Plastic waste	5
3. Consequences for the future	5
3.1 For Human	5
3.1.1 Human Health	5
3.1.2 Loss of fishing industry	5
3.1.3 Loss of touristic places and recreation areas	6
3.1.4 Loss of land values	6
3.2 For animals	6
4. Solving approaches	7
5. Information concerning the conference	9
5.1 Helpful links	10

Personal Introductions

Dear Delegates,

My name is Annika Kuczka and I am 17 years old. I am in 12th grade at the Graf-Anton-Günther School in Oldenburg, the hometown of OLMUN. This MUN will be my fifth besides two BERMUNs and a lot of school intern MUNs. In my free-time I enjoy meeting my friends and playing golf. Maybe after school I am going to study law or politics. I am really looking forward to a couple of productive, joyful and memorable days with you.

Dear All,

My name is Oya Gursoy and I am very much delighted to be joining UNEP in its quest to combat ocean pollution this year, also just as much excited to be travelling to Germany for the first time!

I have been utterly captivated by English literature and psychology ever since I started high school, later branching out to sociology and linguistics as well. I cannot imagine going for more than a week without writing: I majorly write for literary purposes, but I also have quite a motley of experience in non-fiction prose and journalism. Having been pursuing it for over three years, I guess it will be fair to say that I've had my acquaintance with Model UN, and now I am quite impatient to experience what OLMUN has to offer in April. See you then!

1. The United Nations Environment Programme

Before diving into the material at hand, a proper and brief introduction to the attributes of the committee should be in order, so that we do not allow any misconceptions damage our subsequent work through dispelling them beforehand.

Following many revolutions and revolutionary inventions, expansion of large-scale industries, and economic growth, an indisputably drastic change took place in the last century and completely altered the ecological global dynamics once and for all. There may have been an infinite number of consequences correlated to this great shift, both detrimental and positive, but one conclusion that I will now draw is going to be of incontrovertible truth: we have fatally harmed the ecological balance and the natural habitat on earth, inflicting pain upon not only other species but our own kind as well, and at the same time delayed acknowledging the status-quo for very long.

It should not be of surprise to you that the United Nations Environment Programme was founded only a couple of decades ago, back in 1972. The agency has been carrying out many environmental activities and assisting governments and institutions through eco-friendly and sustainable policies since then. It operates through various mediums, ranging from worldwide summits to regional divisions, with a wide range of partners. It has recently played a significant role in bringing the world's attention to the unaddressed problem of climate change by COP21, finally attaining a common framework on the quest of coping with the global warming.ⁱ



Although one of the most prominent accomplishments of its relatively brief history pertains to this praise worthy event, the Programme has set out to work in numerous other fields that include disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, chemicals and waste, environmental governance, and resource efficiency.

It always carries a vital importance to gain a general understanding of the makeup of the committee; so, if you feel the need to further analyze its work and mission, feel free to go through a more detailed context here: unep.org.

‘Oceans are the point at which planet, people, and prosperity come together. And that is what sustainable development is about. It is about all of us as shareholders of Earth, incorporated, acknowledging and acting on our responsibility to the planet, to the people, and to its bloodstream, the oceans.’

Elizabeth Thompson, Co-Executive Coordinator for the Rio+20 Conference, at Oceans Day at Rio+20, 16 June 2012

2. The current situation of ocean pollution

A major threat to the environment is the ocean pollution, also called the marine pollution. The world’s seas and also rivers get filthy, leading to the death of many inhabitants.



2.1 Poisonous substances

Often, stretches of water, or the groundwater, are soiled by partly toxic substances. The sewage comes from large fabrics or cities which channel their waste through the sewerage into the water. Oil and plastic gather together at the water surface and pollute the oceans, rivers and seas. The discharge of waste water and poisonous substances is illegal. Ship pollution is one of the main causes of such oil spills. Oil is, in addition to plastic, the biggest problem pertaining to ocean pollution because it is quite difficult to remove from the water and, as a result, the flora and fauna found in ecosystems are either detrimentally affected or wiped out.

Toxic substances in the water are sometimes connected to ocean mining. Deep down in the sea ocean miners search for elements such as, gold, silver or zinc. This causes a considerable amount of damage to the lowest level of the ocean and increases the toxicity of the water. Yet, scientists have not reached a conclusion on the long-term effects of ocean mining.



2.2 Over fertilization

Another contributing factor is over fertilization caused by agriculture. The oxygen concentration in the water decreases to such a low level that there is not enough left for sea animals to keep their system running. In addition, large companies pollute the oceans with heavy metals which are difficult to dispose.

2.3 Plastic waste

The largest element to ocean pollution is the high amount of plastic garbage found in waters. Immense waste carpets flood on the water surface due to disposal of plastic waste into them.

3. Consequences for the future

The reasons explained above pose a great threat to humans, animals, and the environment.

3.1 For Human

3.1.1 Human Health

Ocean pollution is detrimental to health. When oil or plastic dissolves in water, small toxic substances are released, toxicating the most essential substance to our very existence.

Consumption of contaminated water or species that live in it may cause health problems such as birth defects, cancer or other long-term effects not even discovered yet.

Another problem with this is that the drinking water, in some regions, is filtered from oceans or rivers. But some parts of polystyrene last in the water for longer. Scientists already warn against plastic bottles due to micro plastic.

3.1.2 Loss of fishing industry

Many fish get sick or die because of ocean pollution. This is going to be a problem for the fishing industry and the fishermen. Their daily hauls will not be as productive as before. Maybe in a few years or decades there will be no more fishing in oceans and only in special pools with cultured animals which could be genetically modified. .

3.1.3 Loss of touristic places and recreation areas

For a lot of people it is the best activity to do in vacation. Going to the beach and relax. But no one likes to lie down beneath large amounts of garbage all around you and oil flooding in the ocean. Beaches and oceans will lose their attractiveness for consumers. This is a problem for countries and especially cities which profit from the tourism. It also causes unemployment and economic problems.

Further some sports will become less popular like surfing or kiting.

3.1.4 Loss of land values

In former times it was really expensive to buy a house or a flat besides a river or near the ocean. The air was better because of the salt coming from the ocean and the view was stunning. But with the damages of ocean pollution the land values and houses will get cheaper. Now the air smells like oil and when you look out of the window the only thing you see is plastic and dead animals. House owner are unable to sale their houses.

3.2 For animals

Scientist wrote an article in the magazine *Proceeding of National Academy of Sciences* in which they pointed out that in 2050 almost every (99%) sea gull or other bird will contain parts of micro plastics. Nowadays already two third of birds unfortunately consume parts of plastic.

Also other animals like fish, turtles, seals and a lot more suffer from the waste in seas. The plastic many times resembles preys to them, so they confound it. Besides the oil on the surface of the water leads to stick together of the feathers of sea birds so it is difficult for them to fly and often they fall down and drown.

Chemicals in the water damages outsides of animals that inhabit them, leading to dysfunctional reproductive systems. Further garbage, as it decomposes and makes it way into the deeper layers of the sea, results in a decrease in oxygen levels, altering many living creature`s environment adversely.

The oil often causes a disruption to the cycle of coral reefs if disposed nearby. When there are deposits of oil on the surface, it prevents sunlight from reaching the bottom of the ocean, halting the process of photosynthesis.



4. Solving approaches

After naming all of the causes and consequences for the humans and the nature, what can we do to solve the problem of ocean pollution?

There are a lot of ideas, some are more efficient than others but every method brings us closer to a healthier and clearer ocean.

One idea is recycling of plastics so that people or companies do not need to throw them away. Mostly plastic waste can be burned and reproduced. In chemical process monomers, gases and oil could be regained. However this is a long process which cost high energy expenditure.

Another possibility offers the mechanical recycling in which plastics are being cleaned up and crushed. It only works with pure plastics like for example plastic bottles and no mixtures. Plastics could also be used as a fuel for heating.

But the new effective method is up-cycling: The plastics from the oceans are used to create something new such as a pair of jeans or a t-shirt. The "Raw of the Ocean" project does exactly this and gets financial help and support from public figures.

One big project is "The Ocean CleanUp" founded by the Dutch man Boyan Slat during his stay on vacation. While he was diving, he got the idea of huge nets in the water which produce large whirls. This leads to a flood of plastic garbage and the water easily cleans itself. This is called the passive cleanup concept. Heavy weights keep the nets on the ground. Smaller animals will not get stuck in the construction and larger fish can swim around it.

Every 45 days someone should collect the waste inside the nets. Slat's goal is the clean the oceans completely by 2019.

But critics fear that the nets have to big holes so that micro plastics reaches out of it. The project also gives no solution for the garbage on the bottom of the ocean.

But there are some other creative ideas for helping the ocean to get cleaner.

A lot of times, fishermen just throw the garbage back in the ocean because it is too much or they have no opportunity or the time to recycle it. Now the initiative "Fishing for litter" donates free garbage bags for every fisherman.

Furthermore, scientists have the concept of waste-eating microorganism in the ocean. But the long-term effects are not founded out yet.

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships by the IMO is linked bellow. On the internet you can also find a statement from the EU according to this topic.

Every one of us could be more carefully when it comes to garbage. The separation of waste is really important and also renewable energies can lower the ocean pollution. All of the human must now the consequences this problem but mostly the enlightenment is missing.

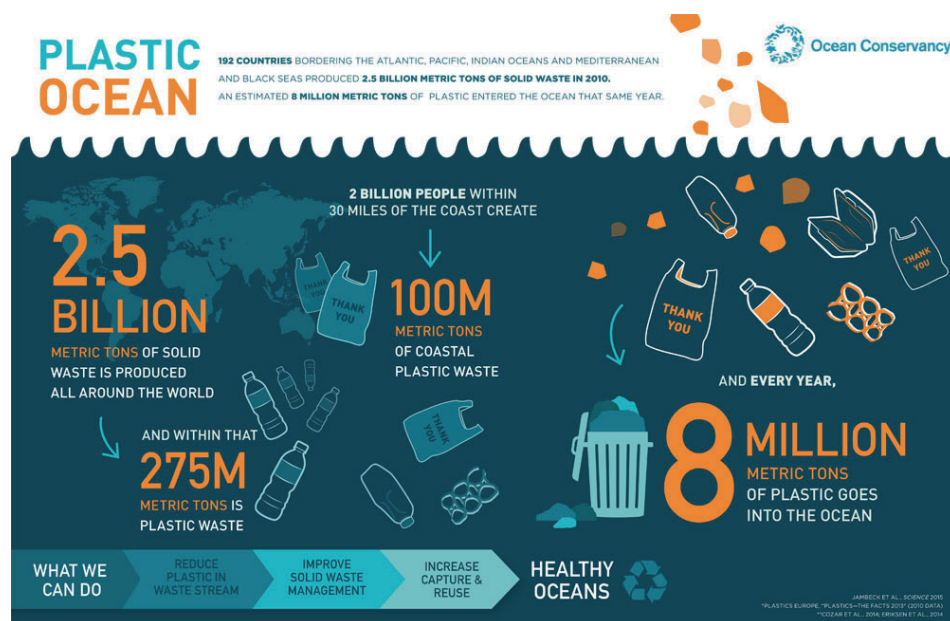
The solving approaches named are all a good start in the right direction. They all fight the problem but cannot extinguish it. Most of them are too expensive or too costly. The human beings need to realize the damages being made to the environment and sooner or later to themselves. It is the only way to really stop the ocean pollution.

Finally, when striving to come up with solutions to put an end to this wide-ranging problem, please do keep the deployment of Sustainable Development Goals in mind; particularly this one:

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceansⁱⁱ





5. Information concerning the conference

For a good start into the topic and the position of your country we would like every delegate to write a policy statement and a draft resolution until **May 25th** and send it to us via mail at **unep@olmun.org**. Otherwise maybe you could be punished for not handing it in.

It helps you for the conference and the lobbying. For the first timers it is a helpful practice for holding speeches in front of an audience.

If you need any help with it there is a lot of information in the handbook on our website **olmun.org**. But you can also always contact us by email or Facebook as well.

Further there is a dresscode at the OLMUN so we would like to remind every boy to wear a suit and also a tie and for the girls a blazer combined with either skirt or trousers. We think you might already have this type of clothing or buy it until the conference.

We will also open up a group on Facebook and would like to invite you to share current information.

5.1 Helpful links

For the topic in general:

<http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effects-of-ocean-pollution.php>

http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/blue_planet/problems/pollution/

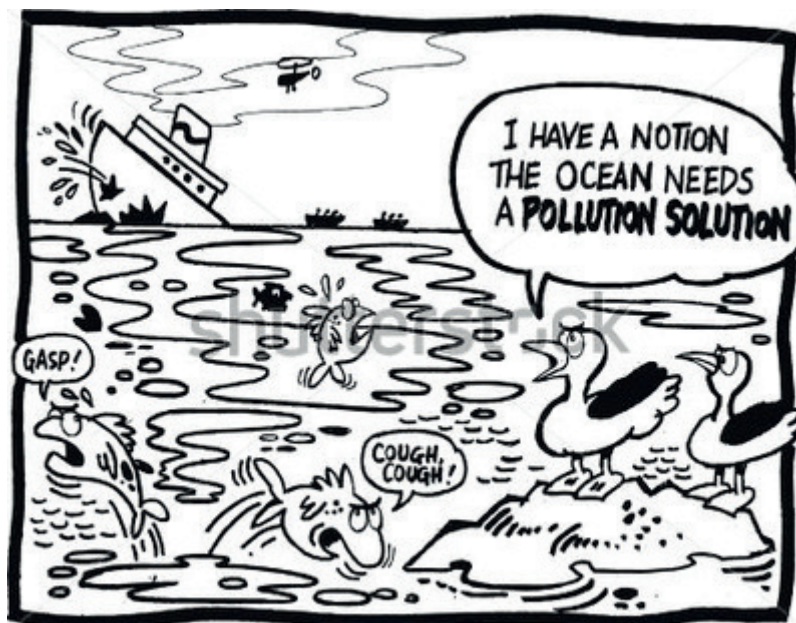
<http://www.oceanhealthindex.org/methodology/components/trash-pollution>

<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20100320/Impact-of-plastics-on-human-health-and-ecosystems.aspx>

<http://plastikmeer.plasticontrol.de> (This page is in German but it is the website from our guestspeaker)

[http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-\(MARPOL\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-(MARPOL).aspx)

<http://www.unep.org>



www.shutterstock.com · 100994176

ⁱ <http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.globalgoals.org/>