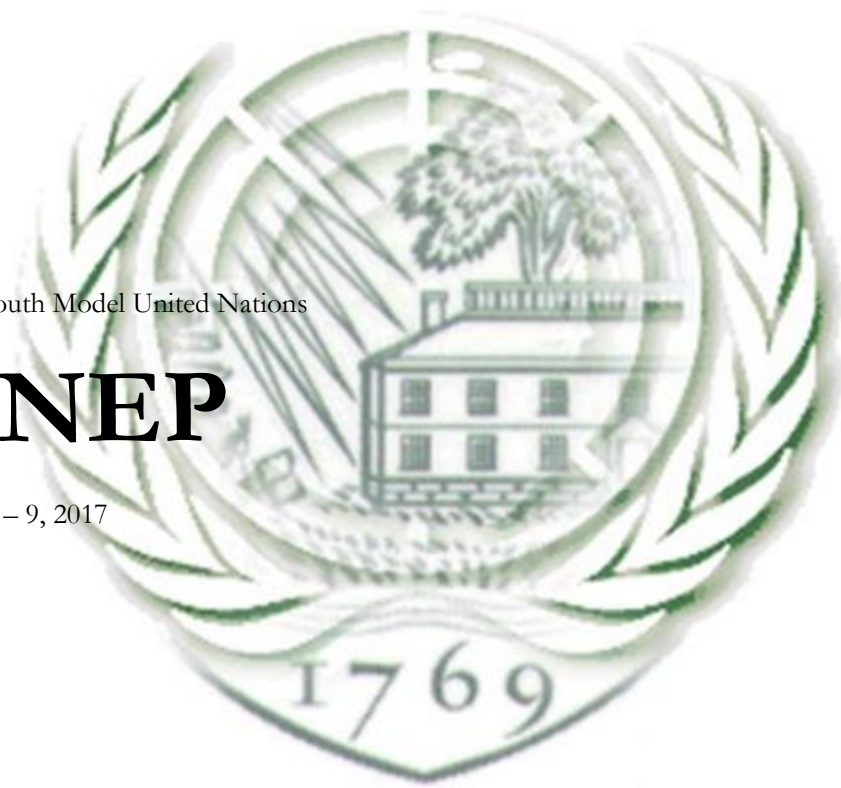


Dartmouth Model United Nations

UNEP

April 7 – 9, 2017





DARTMOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

Twelfth Annual Conference • April 7 - 9, 2017

Dartmouth College • Rockefeller Center • Hanover, NH 03755

E-mail: dartmun@dartmouth.edu • DartmouthMUN.com

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Secretary-General

January 11, 2017

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Eva Wang
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Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the entire Dartmouth Model United Nations staff, I would like to welcome and thank you for registering for the twelfth annual Dartmouth Model United Nations conference this April 2017. We have been working relentlessly since the end of last year's conference to provide a better and more worthwhile Model U.N. experience for this winter's delegates. We are optimistic about this winter's conference and Dartmouth Model U.N.'s future.

DartMUN is a unique conference. We pair world-class delegations and dais staff members in smaller, more-interactive environments to facilitate an enriching experience for delegates of all skill levels. We believe DartMUN's active, small committees ensure delegates feel comfortable immersing themselves in a competitive but supportive environment that encourages trial by error and participation.

Furthermore, DartMUN's well-trained staff is excited to work with your delegates this winter in committee to equip the next generation of college students with the skills to tackle complex global problems.

With this said, Model United Nations is only meaningful when delegates are thoroughly prepared. To aid in your research preparation, your committee staff has spent hours researching, writing, and editing this Background Guide. The Background Guide serves as an introduction to your respective committee and an overview of the topics that you will be debating over the course of the conference.

The Background Guide is intended to be a starting point for your research and is not, in itself, an adequate exposure to the complexities of your committee's topics. To be prepared, each delegate should do further research and focus on processing information through the lens of their respective country or position. If you are having trouble digesting all the information, the Background Guide contains relevant discussion questions that break down the topics. Also, as questions or ideas arise, do not be shy in contacting your committee staff via e-mail. Committee staff are knowledgeable and can help you better understand a particular topic or how your country fits into a larger international debate. More often than not, discussing the problem with another person can open up more paradigms and viewpoints that may guide you throughout the brainstorming process.

As in years past, all delegates are expected to write a brief position paper before the conference to synthesize all of their preparatory research and analysis. Please see the position paper guidelines on the conference website for specific information about content, format, etc. Committee staff will collect position papers at the beginning of the first committee session on Friday evening, so be sure to bring a hard copy because delegates who do not submit position papers will not be eligible for awards.



Sincerely,

William Tremml
Secretary-General
DartMUN XII



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the UN Environmental Programme and DartMUN XII! The UNEP is a committee that discusses key environmental topics of the day, a category that has become all the more contentious in the United States with this year's election. I believe one of the best ways to engage with environmental problems is to really wrestle with the pros and cons of different policies, something I hope each of you will experience in April. As delegates on this committee, you will be forced to reconcile the complex aspects of two distinct environmental problems: the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and the illegal wildlife trade. In doing so, I hope that you will fully embrace your country position and look at these topics from a perspective different from your own. In addition, you must analyze these topics from every angle in order to develop effective, feasible solutions. I am so excited to discuss key environmental issues with all of you and hope that DartMUN will prove to be an engaging, eye-opening and, most importantly, fun experience!

Throughout the weekend my co-Chair Melanie and I will be helping you all hone your ideas and leading you through debate. We are both freshman at Dartmouth this year and equally excited for our very first DartMUN experience.

Following this letter is a background packet that will provide an introduction to our topics. This packet should be used to guide your research, but by no means should be the only research you conduct. We are really looking for each and everyone of you to step into your roles as representatives of different countries. This means researching in-depth on your country's policy on each topic as well as solutions it would develop. This aspect of the process is crucial to lively debate throughout the weekend and in my experience makes conferences a far more rewarding experience. If you're ever stuck, a key part of the background guide is the "Questions" section, which I would encourage you to use as a way to think about what aspects of these topics to research. In addition, if you ever have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to either Melanie or me. Our emails are Grace.E.Anderson.20@dartmouth.edu and Melanie.C.Kos.20@dartmouth.edu.

Welcome again to DartMUN XII, I can't wait to meet all of you in April and learn something new from all of you.

Sincerely,

Grace Anderson

William Tremml

Secretary-General

Emily Choate

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Topic A: Combatting Climate Change- Implementing COP21

Introduction

The international community has faced the issue of global warming since the end of the industrialization era, but only recently have we come to recognize its true severity. Recently, the ratification and entry into force of the historic Paris Climate Agreement suggests that states are finally taking action on this pertinent issue that will face the globe for generations to come. However, there is still much to be done in terms of reaching the ambitious goals set by this agreement.

History of the Problem

In 1712 Thomas Newcomen invented the first widely used steam engine, paving the way for the coal-powered industrial revolution. During that era, fossil fuels drove the rise of the world's great powers.¹ By 1927 carbon emissions had reached two billion tons, but only a few scientists had even begun to consider the idea that burning fossil fuels could create a warming effect. None had yet focused on the potential harm that could come as a result. Finally, about thirty years later Charles Keeling made systematic measurements of atmospheric CO₂ and demonstrated that the concentration of this gas was rising.²

In the wake of greater scientific concern for the greenhouse effect, the United Nations held the first ever environment conference in 1972. This conference resulted in the formation of

the UN Environmental Program (UNEP). However, climate change remained an issue of little concern. Instead, debate centered on issues like chemical pollution, atomic bomb testing and whaling.³ Despite this setback, climate change came up for discussion as the century progressed. In order to evaluate the merit of various scientific findings, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) formed. Its first assessment report indicated that global temperatures have risen by 0.3-0.6 C over the last century. It also demonstrated that carbon emissions contribute to the natural greenhouse gases which resulting in the warming effect we now see. In the early 21st century, the IPCC ruled that it was 90% likely, and later 95% likely, that humans are the dominant cause of global warming.⁴ We can see now from the increasing number of natural disasters and low levels of Arctic Sea ice that the impacts of global warming are only accelerating. This spiral-effect of negative consequences makes this issue all the more pertinent for this committee to address.

Past Actions

Although critics of climate change still remain in the international community, over time countries have managed to find common ground on this issue. However, past agreements have resulted in highly variable levels of success. The first of these attempts occurred in 1992 during the Earth Summit in Rio when countries agreed on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In signing this convention, developed countries agreed to return their carbon emissions to 1990 levels.⁵ This goal was

¹ Black, Richard, "A Brief History of Climate Change," *BBC Science and Environment*, September 20 2013.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Background on the UNFCCC: The international response to climate change," *United Nations*, 2014.



met with disparate levels of success but did not reach the ultimate goal of slowing climate change. However, this organization is still present today and leads the international community in organizing its fight against climate change.

One key treaty is the Kyoto Protocol, which countries agreed upon in 1997.⁶ It sought to reduce overall emissions by 5% during 2008-2012 and provided various targets for different nations. However, this agreement focused primarily on developed countries, rather than developing ones, as a way to provide standards for the world's largest emitters. This aspect of the Kyoto Protocol ultimately made it ineffective because major emitters like the United States opted out for fear that carbon-producing companies would simply move to developing nations that lacked environmental standards.⁷

Later on in the early 21st century, world leaders tried once more to develop an effective protocol for combatting climate change. Most experts note that the Copenhagen Accord failed simply because it didn't do enough in terms of enforcement since it did not provide legally binding targets.⁸ In addition, it failed to provide any kind of independent review system to monitor country's adherence. The agreement did recognize the need to keep

temperature rises below 2 C, but even this stipulation disappointed many vulnerable nations who desire to keep the rise below 1.5 C. The deal did note that countries would work to provide \$30 billion to assist developing countries in combatting climate change by 2012 and would increase this amount to \$100 billion by 2020. The final failure of the deal lay in the fact that it dropped the goal of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050. This decision outraged many environmentalists since it demonstrated what they referred to as a lack of ambition within the agreement.

Although international agreements on the reduction of emissions have had difficulties, the international community has found more success in providing funding for projects that combat climate change. The World Bank's Global Environment Facility Program is one such organization. It invests in projects that combat major environmental issues like climate change. These projects focus on building low-carbon based economies and carbon resilience in developing countries in order to assist with economic development while not resorting to the use of fossil fuels.⁹ Another such group is the Green Climate Fund, which the UNFCCC established in 2010 in order to organize assistance funds for developing countries in their attempts to combat climate change. This fund was created in part to alleviate concerns of developing nations because many of them feel that they bear an undue burden when dealing with global warming. This is because industrialized countries are largely responsible

⁶ "Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," *United Nations*, 1998.

⁷ Schenker, Alex, "The Kyoto Protocol Summary," *Earths Friends*, September 10 2014.

⁸ Vidal, John, Allegra Stratton and Suzanne Goldenberg, "Low targets, goals dropped: Copenhagen ends in failure," *The Guardian*, December 18 2009.

⁹ "The World Bank Group's Global Environment Facility Program," *The World Bank*, May 21 2014.



for the original rise in emissions and developing countries had only a small role.¹⁰

Current Situation

The international community recently passed one of the most landmark agreements of all time- The Paris Climate Change Agreement, also known as COP21. This agreement addresses many of the shortcomings of previous attempts. First, it provides legally binding targets for all nations that sign on, one of the main failures of the Copenhagen Accord.¹¹ Second, it is a global agreement, so both developing and developed nations are responsible for meeting emission reduction requirements. Individual nations were responsible for submitting Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in which they laid out which specific areas of their economy they intend to target and, in some cases, how they plan to reach these targets.¹² Finally, it creates a monitoring system where countries can keep one another accountable and submit their own progress toward meeting their goals. This keeps the international community up to date and will make it clear earlier on if goals are not being met. Most importantly of all, the agreement entered into

force this past fall on November 4, 2016 when 100 nations signed on.

Although COP21 is certainly a historic agreement, it also highlights one key area for the international community to focus on in the future: implementation. While COP21 is certainly a major success, it does not include any implementation mechanisms for countries to actually reach their INDCs. While many developed nations may not struggle to come up with the necessary technological expertise to meet their goals, developing nations may not have the same existing capacity. In addition, even though many countries have ratified this agreement, international agreements can only be enforced by the nations themselves. Due to this, some countries may simply lack the incentive to divert national resources toward developing techniques for implementing COP21 because they believe their scientists' expertise will be better served elsewhere. Developing clear policies for implementing COP21 can help alleviate these issues because they will provide developing countries with a path forward and incentivize less concerned nations to engage in the process.

Proposed Solutions

There are a number of mechanisms already in place that countries could expand upon or utilize in order to address the issue of climate change. A few of the key ones are outlined below. When looking at these solutions it is important to think about how they would be most effectively implemented. Some countries

¹⁰ Harvey, Chelsea, "Countries Are Donating Billions to a Global Fund- Here's What It's For," *Business Insider*, December 12 2014.

¹¹ "Outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris," *Center for Climate and Energy Solutions*, December 12 2015.

¹² "Intended Nationally Determined Contributions," *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 2015.



may desire to implement solutions independently within their nation while still engaging in international information sharing. Others may want to take on more regional solutions that support a system of inter-governmental monitoring and enforcement. Finally, there are still other solutions that it may be pertinent to implement on a global scale or even existing global institutions that could be reformed in order to be more effective for implementing COP21. It is also important to note that even though COP21 has entered into force for those countries that have signed it, only 125 of the 197 total signatories have signed on. This means that an important first step in any attempt to implement COP21 should include ensuring that all countries sign on to this agreement, as this is the only way it can succeed.

Carbon Tax

Many economists suggest that a carbon tax would be the most straightforward way to combat climate change. In addition, it is a solution that nations could implement independently and at their own pace. Essentially, the purpose of this tax would be to make sure that people using carbon-emitting products incur both the actual cost and the social cost of using it.¹³ Often when we use machinery that burns fossil fuels, like a car, we don't necessarily think about the impact on the environment. This is because one car has such

a small impact that although the total social cost of all people driving cars every day is quite high for the environment, we can barely perceive that cost at all. Some critics argue that increased taxation places an undue burden on citizens who already pay a large number of taxes. However, using the money gained from the carbon tax to improve other public works could mitigate this. For example, the money could be used to subsidize the cost of alternative energy or simply to reduce the cost of social security taxes.¹⁴

The main inhibitor to this type of solution lies in the political realm. Carbon taxes are generally not very popular among voters since politicians are unlikely to make it a major part of their campaigns. In addition, firms that utilize fossil fuels usually have a strong lobbying presence and are adamant about making their voices heard in the political realm.¹⁵ Finally, although the national nature of a carbon tax makes it very appealing to most states, the lack of uniformity means that companies could just focus exports more on areas where these taxes do not exist.

Cap-and-Trade System

A cap-and-trade system is a mechanism that large countries can implement nationally or that could be implemented regionally that supports the gradual reduction of emissions. Countries achieve this by either giving or auctioning off allowances to firms that emit fossil fuels. If they give these allowances away

¹³ Krugman, Paul, "Earth in the Balance Sheet: Economists Go For The Green," *The Dismal Science*, April 17 1997.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



they do it based on historical emissions reports. Each allowance is the equivalent of one ton of carbon emissions, which means that company's emissions are "capped" at the number of allowances they are given. If companies go over their number of allowances they are forced to purchase, or "trade," with other firms that fell below their limit. Every year, the total number of allowances available is reduced in order to encourage companies to gradually alter their policies toward more environmentally friendly ones.¹⁶

This mechanism for combatting climate change has been most widely utilized by the European Union, which is now in phase three of the process. Although the EU did face difficulties with cap and trade early on, this was mainly due to the fact that they over-projected the number of allowances necessary. Determining the number of allowances is difficult in general because basing it on historical projections incentivizes companies to emit more up until the point that cap and trade is implemented so they receive more allowances. Due to this, many experts suggest that countries should solely rely on an auction-based system, rather than having the government allocate allowances.¹⁷

¹⁶ "The EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS)," *European Commission Climate Action*, 2016.

¹⁷ Plumer, Brad, "The EU cap-and-trade program is in trouble. Can it be fixed?" *The Washington Post*, April 20 2013.

Public-Private Partnerships

One way that some countries have enhanced their ability to combat climate change is through public-private partnerships. This means that the government develops a joint project with a firm, often one in renewable energy, to develop a scheme for improving the country's system for energy consumption. This mechanism for combatting climate change has had a lot of success in the past primarily because it combines the needs of nations with the expertise of companies in order to fill a technological gap. This can especially help countries with integrating more renewable technology into their economies and making these technologies more affordable in the long-term.

A key case of success in this area is Uruguay. Its government opted to utilize public-private partnerships because there were major technological gaps in the country's existing economy. Due to this, working with an outside firm allowed Uruguay to build expertise and diversify its economy. As a result, Uruguay now gets 95% of its electricity from wind turbines and is working toward achieving 100% sustainable energy.¹⁸

Global Development Funds

Funds like the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility have been highly effective in raising and allocating large amounts of money to developing countries for combatting environmental issues. These are

¹⁸ Watts, Jonathan, "Uruguay makes dramatic shift to nearly 95% electricity from clean energy," *The Guardian*, December 3 2015.



only two of the groups that exist to aid developing countries in this fight, as many more non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations share this aid goal. However, the actual returns on investment for these types of funds vary from case to case. This is in part because countries lack information about best practices for their specific nation. One way that these types of funds could be enhanced would be through data sharing. Groups like Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility could create a database in which information could be shared regarding the type of initiative they undertook and the outcome. The Paris Climate Agreement has expressed its support for these funds, particularly with the idea that developing countries should be provided with monetary support for ventures combatting climate change. Future steps for signatories should seek to support these organizations and one way of doing so would be to lead the way in the development of a data-sharing mechanism.

Questions

1. Has your country signed on to COP21?
2. What areas of focus did your country outline in its INDC? Did it propose a specific plan for reaching those goals?
3. What percentage of the global emissions rate is your country responsible for?
4. What has your country's stance been on past climate agreements? Has your country had success with implementation?
5. What types of solutions do you think would be most effective for

implementing? Do we need national, regional or global frameworks?

6. Does your country have the technical expertise in place to combat climate change?



Topic B: The Illegal Wildlife Trade

Introduction

Although at first glance the illegal wildlife trade may not seem like a substantial problem, it is now consisting of one of the most concerning criminal trade networks. According to UNEP and Interpol, the illegal trade of wildlife, which includes the trade of endangered species as well as illegal fishing, is now the fourth largest criminal enterprise following drug smuggling, counterfeiting, and human trafficking. The yearly trade is estimated to be worth as much as USD \$23 billion.¹⁹

It is important to first note that the wildlife trade contains legitimate and legal elements, but even these aspects of it can have negative implications. The wildlife trade in general has a variety of impacts both on natural ecosystems and human populations. The environmental concerns revolve around issues with altered ecosystems and species endangerment or even extinction. This wildlife often plays a key role in the maintenance of their respective ecosystems, so their removal or introduction into a new environment throws off the natural balance. This is especially true if the animal lacks major predators or was a key predator because it can cause an imbalance in the natural levels of wildlife. The wildlife trade can also negatively impact economies, human

populations and development. Plants and animals and their products are important to the world economy and have almost infinite uses, from prescription drugs to fabric to food to transport. Maintaining biodiversity is also a moral issue for many countries, particularly developed ones, where environmental organizations such as World Wildlife Fund look to protect nature for the enjoyment and survival of present and future generations.

The black market trade of wildlife is an issue of national security, public health, and economic security.²⁰ Much of the illicit trade of wildlife is perpetrated by organizations that are not affiliated with governments, and the sale of wildlife further funds their criminal enterprises. These groups also fail to adhere to trade agreements and standard transport channels, which creates challenges for nations attempting to monitor, prosecute or regulate this type of trade. Many nations that must deal with this are often developing countries. The governments of developing nations are often spread too thin to be able to focus fully on enforcement of legislation prohibiting the illicit trade of wildlife.²¹ The illegal wildlife trade also promotes poaching, which creates problems particularly for countries dependent on ecotourism. This is because it depletes the natural wildlife tourists come to view and the

¹⁹ Nellemann, Christian et. al. "The Rise of Environmental Crime: A Growing Threat to Natural Resources Peace and Security," *UNEP*, 2016.

²⁰ Lawson, Katherine and Alex Vines, "Global Impacts of the Illegal Wildlife Trade: The Costs of Crime, Insecurity and Institutional Erosion," *Chatham House*, February 2014.

²¹ "Threats: Illegal Wildlife Trade," *World Wildlife Fund*, 2017.



lack of enforcement of poaching regulations delegitimizes the industry, which creates market instability.

In addition to funding crime syndicates, the wildlife trade also poses health issues. Since 75% of emerging infectious diseases originate in contact with wildlife, the unregulated transport of these products is cause for health concern. In fact, the illegal wildlife trade has been linked to the spread of infectious diseases in the past due to unregulated passage across borders.²²

History of the Problem

There are various wildlife targeted for international trade and smuggling. Every region of the United Nations faces different problems surrounding the illicit trade of wildlife, be it fighting poachers, stopping the importation of illegal species, or regulating the wildlife available for trade. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is an international agreement among governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.²³ The treaty has been signed by all but twelve United Nations member states, and the Convention is administered by UNEP. The

²² “Pilot Study Establishes Importance of Tracking Diseases Associated with Illegal Wildlife Trade at U.S. Ports,” *WCS Newsroom*, 10 January 2012.

²³ “What is CITES?” *Conventional on the International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora*, 2013.

treaty regulates the trade of wildlife, and places species in danger of overexploitation in one of three appendices, with Appendix I providing the greatest level of protection by restricting commercial trade, Appendix II protecting species that may become threatened with extinction without trade controls, and Appendix III including species protected by at least one country, and requiring other countries assistance to regulate trade.²⁴ TRAFFIC is the monitoring program affiliated with CITES that seeks to ensure the regulations on different appendices are actually followed. It works at the international, regional and local level with specific governments in order to improve information sharing, build capacity and increase the resiliency of their regulatory environments.

There are various impacts that the illicit trade of wildlife has, both on areas the wildlife are taken from and where the wildlife or their products are introduced. The introduction of non-native species can cause damage to the ecosystem and environment of non-native regions. The introduction of water hyacinth, for example, as an ornamental plant in the late 1800s to areas other than South America has caused damage to infrastructure and impeded transportation, among other things, as the plant becomes a noxious weed when introduced to environments other than its native one. This has caused it to be classified as an invasive species, and has been prohibited

²⁴ “Appendices,” *Conventional on the International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora*, 2013.



from various countries.²⁵ Non-native species can also throw off the existing balance of the ecosystems they enter. For example, in Florida, Burmese pythons are believed to have been brought in as exotic pets, and have since wreaked havoc on the Everglades, with local officials even allowing a snake hunt to quell population sizes, as the snakes threaten native animal populations and could potentially spread further inland.²⁶

Current Situation

The United Nations continues to view the illegal wildlife trade as an increasingly pertinent topic due to its rapid expansion in recent years. In response to this, the UN General Assembly passed its first ever resolution on the topic just last year and resolved to work more closely together and more effectively on the problem.²⁷ First, in many ways the industry incentivizes criminals to continue obtaining and selling wildlife because scarcity actually increases the price. Therefore, the more a crime group sells the more they can sell the same product for in the future. This black market trade is also fairly low risk as compared to other criminal enterprises like drug smuggling or human trafficking. The lack of both comprehensive legislation, enforcement

mechanism and simply visibility make this a very attractive industry for criminals looking for a low-risk pay-out.²⁸

When it comes to a global trade like this one, one of the most important aspects of combatting it is making sure the entire international community undertakes a harmonized approach. Otherwise, if there are gaps in regulations or different strategies, it becomes much easier for criminals to exploit those loopholes. Unfortunately, experts tend to have polarizing opinions on how to address this trade. There are two main streams of thought that should be highlighted. The first group focuses on developing stricter regulations, legislation and monitoring in order to stamp out the trade all together.²⁹ However, others argue that this illegal trade should be allowed to continue, but that governments should be more involved. Specifically, this could be achieved by legally breeding exotic wildlife for the purpose of this type of trade in order to reduce demand for ones found on the illegal market.³⁰ Another version of this second option is to allow trophy hunting. This means allowing people to hunt in specific sectors in order to reduce the incentive of poaching for

²⁵ Osei-Agyemang, Myralyn, "Water Hyacinth (*Eichborinia crassipies*)," *Introduced Species Summary Project*, 2002.

²⁶ Djalili, Diana, "The Effects of Burmese Pythons on Everglades Ecosystems," 18 May 2015.

²⁷ *UN General Assembly Resolution 69/314*.

²⁸ Phelps, Jacob, Chris Shepherd and Tony Lyman, "Combatting Asia's Catastrophic Illegal Wildlife Trade," *ALERT*, 2016.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*



sport.³¹ Many critics of this approach cite moral repugnance, specifically that we have a duty to protect these animals and not set them up to be killed.

A final issue that has developed more recently is the problem of the internet-based illegal wildlife trade. Most of the existing legislation regulates the physical wildlife trade, rather than the virtual one. These leaves lawmakers and regulators poorly equipped to deal with the ever-evolving and changing trade on the Internet. Although there are certainly some legal websites that auction off these items, the web provides a number of opportunities for the illegal trade to develop. Wildlife are often sold live or whole in addition to as the products derived from them. Some sellers also attempt to appear legitimate by claiming the products are historical artifacts and providing provenance documentation, which are ultimately very difficult to verify.³²

One important item to note is that criminally organized groups may not yet have fully infiltrated the online trade. Studies showed that mainly individuals in chat rooms or on themed websites were responsible for sales, rather than organized groups.³³ This indicates that there is

still time for governments to band together and develop cybercrime units or monitoring programs that would crack down on these types of sites before they become prevalent.

Bloc Positions

Africa

In Africa, poaching has been a large concern, especially in regards to the ivory trade. In 1989, CITES placed African elephants in its Appendix I, a designation that effectively bans these elephants and their products from international trade.⁴ Before this ban on ivory, the trade was used for monetary gain from the sale of the animal product, political leverage, as rebel groups would poach and sell ivory to continue funding their campaigns against governments, and so-called environmental purposes, as a growing elephant population required periodic culls. However, the culls would produce no more than 7 tons of ivory; South Africa was exporting about 49 tons of ivory, meaning that most of this ivory was illegally harvested.³⁴ Despite the ivory ban in 1989, the market demand remained, and poaching continues. Ivory from elephants as well as rhino horn continues to be harvested and traded by crime syndicates and illegal non-state entities and groups.

³¹ Carrington, Damian, “Trophy hunting could help conserve lions, says Cecil the lion scientist,” *The Guardian*, 5 December 2016.

³² “Wildlife Trade on the Internet,” *Conventional on the International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora*, 2013.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Lemieux, Andrew M. and Ronald V Clarke, “The International Ban on Ivory Sales and its Effects on Elephant Poaching in Africa,” *The British Journal of Criminology*, 2009.



Americas

In North America, the importation of exotic flora and fauna has been the most concerning trend regarding the illegal wildlife trade. The North American Wildlife Enforcement Group (NAWEG) was created in 1995 in an effort to improve the continent's capacity to enforce wildlife trade laws, such as CITES.³⁵ Trophy hunting is popular especially within developed nations such as Canada and the U.S., with lions, elephants, rhinos, buffalo, and leopards being popular imports from 2005-2014.³⁶ The animals are often raised on ranches with the purpose of being shot by hunters in fenced areas, a practice called canned hunting.

Asia/Oceania

As a region with a great deal of biodiversity, Asia encapsulates a lot of the problems the illegal wildlife trade poses. Many parts of Asia are reliant on specific plants and animals for traditional types of medicine and food that play a role in their daily lives. In addition, these products are utilized in the fur and skins trade as well as in developing forest products, which are both key economic sectors in this part of the world. Due to the role of wildlife in both local economies and people's lives, the wildlife trade has a highly disruptive effect in many parts of Asia.³⁷ On the opposite of the end of

³⁵ "North American Wildlife Enforcement Group," *Commission for Environmental Cooperation*, 2016.

³⁶ Bale, Rachael, "Hard Numbers Reveal Scale of America's Trophy Hunting Habit," *National Geographic*, 6 February 2016.

³⁷ Shepherd, Chris R, "Wildlife Trade in Southeast Asia," *TRAFFIC*.

the spectrum, this region also has a flourishing illegal wildlife trade. Its rich biodiversity and variety of exotic wildlife make it an easy target for many criminals. In particular, the sale of tiger skins has characterized much of Asia's illicit trade. Asia also has a sometimes illicit pet trade that involves different kinds of birds, snakes and turtles. Finally, this region is also responsible for the importation of many ornamental items from other parts of the world. Often these products are smuggled in illegally and then sold legally because vendors are unaware of the laws they are violating.³⁸

Europe

Many countries in Europe are transit countries for illicit wildlife products, as well as destination countries.³⁹ However, just this year the EU developed a comprehensive action plan for addressing its illegal wildlife trade. In particular, it noted that a main problem lay in the fact that different countries were not implementing EU policies in the same way or to the same degree. This lack of coordination allowed criminals to take advantage of loopholes in border management. Their new plan focuses on combatting the illegal trade at its roots by engaging with rural communities and helping them benefit from conservation activities rather than pay the costs. They also focused on building overall capacity, improving information flow and setting enforcement priorities to ensure coordinated action between

³⁸ *Ibid*.

³⁹ Banos Ruiz, Irene, "Europe, A Silent Hub of Illegal Wildlife Trade," *DW*, 20 January 2017.



all countries. Finally, they discussed providing greater support to developing countries in combatting this problem in order to reduce the overall flow of illegal wildlife throughout the world.⁴⁰

Questions to Consider

1. How is your country involved in or impacted by the illegal wildlife trade? What role does wildlife play in your country's economy or on the daily lives of people within your nation?
2. What specific illegal wildlife products does your country import or export?
3. Does your country support trophy hunting or farm-breeding of exotic wildlife?
4. What existing national regulations does your country have on the illegal wildlife trade?
5. What mechanisms has your country developed in the past for combatting illegal virtual markets?
6. To what, if any, extent should UNEP be involved with local and federal governments?

⁴⁰ "EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking," *European Commission, 2016.*