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STUDY GUIDE
UNEP
(United Nations Environment Programme)

It's time to be UNique!

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Prague Model United Nations Conference

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Welcome Letter

Distinguished delegates:

Welcome to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) at Prague Model United Nations 2019!

My name is Mohammed Babiker, and I have the honor of being one of your chairs for this committee along with Niklas Jakobs. I was born and grew up in the United Kingdom, moved to Sudan and then Saudi Arabia where I am currently studying Software Engineering. This is only my second year participating in Model United Nations (MUN), and my very first as a chair. Despite seeming unrelated to my major, I believe MUN is a great experience for students of all academic backgrounds. In my spare time, I like to participate in my local Toastmasters club, read historical novels, get involved with politics and waste time on the Internet. My goal is to become a regional influencer who can help his region advance to and beyond its global competitors.

My name is Niklas Jakobs, and I have the honor of being the other chair of our committee. I am from Germany (sadly, I do not have such a diverse history of origin like my fellow colleague Mohammed) and I am currently studying law at the University of Heidelberg in my fifth semester. This will be my fifth MUN conference and my third time as a chair. I am especially looking forward to PragueMUN as it will be my first conference outside of Germany and as I have only wonderful memories of the city from a class trip two years ago. In my free time, I play the trumpet in an orchestra, I enjoy to dream of all the MUN conferences I cannot attend, and I love to spend as much time as possible with my friends.

As numerous studies have shown, anthropogenic actions are having a lasting negative impact on the earth and its ecosystems. We were chosen to chair this committee because we strongly believe that we, as an international community, must collaborate to combat environmental issues which are often transnational in nature and have the potential to worsen quickly without immediate attention. The two topics for this committee, overpopulation and eco-tourism, are related, transnational, and complex in nature. Thus, they need to be effectively addressed by the international community as these issues can influence other environmental problems and can worsen dramatically in the future.

If you have any concerns or questions about the topics, parliamentary procedure, the flow of committee, or anything at all, please contact us. We look forward to seeing you all in the committee.

Sincerely,

Mohammed Babiker and Niklas Jakobs, email address: unep2019@praguemun.cz

Introduction to the UNEP

The United Nations Environment Programme was founded in 1972. Its headquarter is in Nairobi, Kenya. It is the main agency dealing with environmental protection within the system of the United Nations.

UNEP as the United Nation's advocate for the global environment has the task to set the environmental agenda and to work out measures and international frameworks aiming at the conservation of the environment and at sustainable development[1].

The organization's activities can be divided into seven thematic groups:

- climate change

- disasters and conflicts

- ecosystem management

- environmental governance

- chemicals and waste

- resource efficiency

- environment under review[2].

UNEP cooperates with the United Nations, member states, businesses and many other relevant actors involved in the field of sustainability and environmental protection[3].

Delegates should keep in mind that UNEP does not have the authority to pass any binding documents nor to take binding measures. It can only support the United Nations and therefore the international community by addressing topics of importance and by working out policies, recommendations and guidelines.

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[1] "About UN Environment", UNEP, https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment, last accessed 9 December 2018.
[2] "Why does UN Environment matter?", UNEP, https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter, last accessed 9 December 2018.
[3] "What we do", UNEP, https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/what-we-do, last accessed 9 December 2018.

Topic A: Overpopulation and its Consequences for the Environment

Introduction

In the past century, the global population has exploded from 1.5 up to 7 Billion, and it is projected to continue to grow for a while until it slows down. This unprecedented increase in human population has had devastating effects on the environment, and particularly on our most precious natural resources. There has been a recent global shift towards addressing these issues, but the world has a long way to go in terms of properly addressing the effects of overpopulation and planning around it for the future.

In our committee, we will try to focus on four main issues that are strongly linked to overpopulation: Water Access, Intensive Farming, Deforestation and Habitat Loss and Global Warming. These issues are closely interconnected, for example intensive farming often causes deforestation, and it's important to have a good idea of all of the problems and their potential solutions. However as a delegate you should focus most of your research on the most relevant problems to your country for the position paper, as you will not be able to cover everything.
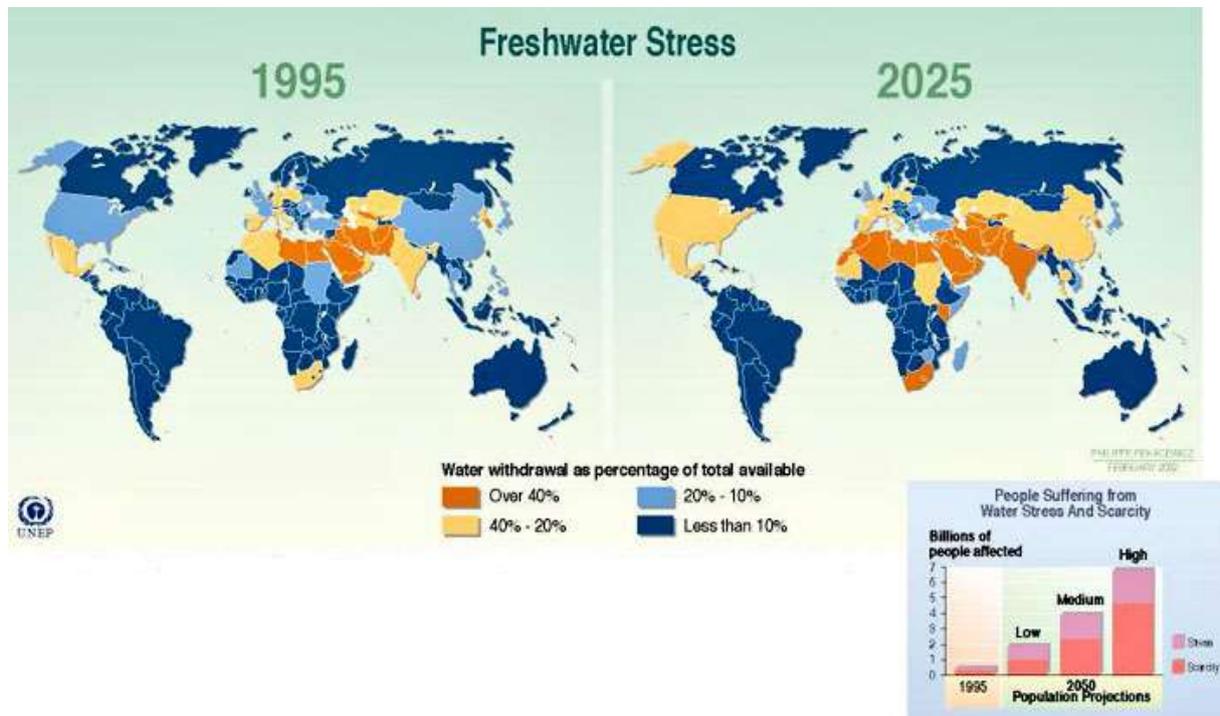
Past UN Actions: There are numerous United Nations (UN) committees and bodies dedicated to the issue of overpopulation. Both the UN Population and UN Population Fund provide statistical estimates and projections on human populations as well as help implement the objectives of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. In addition, the UN announced the annual recognition of July 11 as World Population Day in order to raise awareness for the issue of overpopulation and to mark the day in 1973 when the world population reached 5 billion people. However, these UN bodies do not effectively address the environmental effects of overpopulation. Thus, it is the responsibility of the UNEP to do so. (10)

Water Access

According to the Global Outlook for Water Resources to the Year 2025, it is estimated that by 2025, more than half of the world population will be facing water-based vulnerability and human demand for water will account for 70% of all available freshwater.

Furthermore, a report in November 2009 by the 2030 Water Resources Group suggests that by 2030, in some developing regions in the world, water demand will exceed supply by 50% and a report jointly produced by more than two dozen U.N. bodies states that, "By 2030, nearly half of the world's people will be living in areas of acute water shortage." The planet is in the midst of what the United Nations is calling a "Global Water Crisis." Freshwater is the most fundamental finite resource with no substitutes for most uses, yet we are consuming fresh water at least 10 times faster than it is being replenished in regions of northern Africa, the Middle East, India, Pakistan, China, and the U.S. According to the World Resources Institute, "Freshwater ecosystems – the diverse communities found in lakes, rivers, and

wetlands – may be the most endangered of all. As human populations grow, so will the problem of clean freshwater availability.". (2) (3)

An example of a recent water crisis was South Africa. In Cape Town, the country's capital, the population has grown from 2.4 million residents in 1995 to an estimated 4.3 million by 2018, representing a 79 percent population increase in 23 years, whereas dam water storage only increased by 15 percent in the same period. In early 2018 the dam levels were predicted to decline to critically low levels by April, the City announced plans for "Day Zero", when the municipal water supply would largely be shut off if a particular lower limit of water storage was reached, potentially making Cape Town the first major city to run out of water. (4)

Intensive Farming

Intensive farming practices produce more and cheaper food per acre and animal, which has helped feed a booming human population and may prevent surrounding land from being converted into agricultural land, but has grown to become the biggest threat to the global environment through the loss of ecosystem services and global warming, has led to the emergence of new parasites and re-emergence of parasites previously considered to be 'under control' by creating the conditions for parasite growth and is responsible for 80% of tropical deforestation. Furthermore, intensive farming kills beneficial insects and plants, degrades and depletes the very soil it depends on, creates polluted runoff and clogged water systems, increases susceptibility to flooding, causes the genetic erosion of crops and livestock species around the world, decreases biodiversity, and destroys natural habitats. (5) (6) (7)

Share of global habitable land needed for agriculture if everyone had the diet of...

The percentage of global habitable land area needed for agriculture if the total world population was to adopt the average diet of any given country, in 2011. The actual proportion of habitable land used to agriculture was 50 percent. Values greater than 100% are not possible within global land constraints.

Source: HALF Index (Land Use)- Alexander et al. (2016)   OurWorldInData.org • CC BY-SA

An example of a country that has already started to struggle strongly due to intensive farming is Brazil. Entire forests were wiped out in order to make room for farms to feed the population. This has resulted in the endangerment of many of Brazil's unique animals, many of whom face the threat of extinction. Brazil's very capital, Brasilia, was built in the heart of the Amazon rain forest, and it's current population is 2.5 Million. The government's policy of expanding cities and farms regardless of the consequences has led to Brazil's current status of having very little habitable land (see picture), and has become unsustainable.

Deforestation and Loss of Habitat

Human overpopulation is a major driving force behind the loss of ecosystems, such as rainforests, coral reefs, wetlands and Arctic ice. Rainforests once covered 14% of the Earth's land surface, now they cover a bare 6% and experts estimate that the last remaining rainforests could be consumed in less than 40 years and certainly by the end of the century at the current rate of deforestation. Due mainly to warming temperatures, acidifying oceans and pollution, close to 30% of the ocean's reefs have already vanished since 1980, including half of the reefs in the Caribbean and 90% of the Philippines' coral reefs, and scientists forecast that Australia's Great Barrier Reef may be dead by the year 2050 and all coral reefs could be gone by the end of the century. Furthermore, the area of permanent ice cover is now declining at a rate of 11.5% per decade, relative to the 1979 to 2000 average. If this trend continues, summers in the Arctic could become ice-free in as few as 4 years or in the next 30 years. Wetlands are increasingly under threat in the United States, but also all over the world. In the U.S, less than half of original wetlands remain with 53% being lost, which is about 104 million acres. In Europe, between 60% and 70% of wetlands have been completely destroyed.

As human populations continue to grow, so will our footprint on the interconnected, ecological infrastructures of life. (6)

Global Warming

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, "The largest single threat to the ecology and biodiversity of the planet in the decades to come will be global climate disruption due to the buildup of human-generated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. People around the world are beginning to address the problem by reducing their carbon footprint through less consumption and better technology. But unsustainable human population growth can overwhelm those efforts, leading us to conclude that we not only need smaller footprints, but fewer feet." Every national academy of science of every major country in the world agrees.

Every professional scientific society in every field related to the field of climate endorses it. 97-98 percent of all scientists that are most active in publishing in the field of climate science agree with it. The consensus is unequivocal: human activities are causing climate change. The effects of climate change are profound and far-reaching. Learning the hard way that we can't separate the economy from the ecological systems that support it, climate change, perhaps the greatest challenge and threat humanity has ever faced, has been left largely unchecked by world leaders to continue unabated threatening the basis of civilization. (8)(9)

China is the world's biggest ammiter of CO2 annually. It produces the most coal and has the world's larger population at over 2 billion. However it has, along with the US and India, increased coal mining in 2017. In China the glimpses of climate change can already be seen as fogs caused by air pollution force many citizens to put on face masks for health reasons.

Notable Organizations and Agreements

The UNW (United Nations Water) contains all of the work of different UN organizations that address water sanitation (12)

Intensive farming tends to range quite a bit from one country to another, but the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) in the EU has taken steps to boost less intensive farming.

Many different organizations are working with the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) to deal with deforestation, such as the UNFF (United Nations Forum on Forests) which works to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. (11)

On global warming, almost all of the members of the UN have agreed to reduce greenhouse emissions in the Paris Agreement, 2018. The Paris Agreement's long-term goal is to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels; and to limit the increase to 1.5°C, since this would substantially reduce the risks and effects of climate change. While it is not binding, it shows a global intention to address the problem.

Key questions to consider before the committee

- Does your country face issues with population growth? Is your national population growth rate higher, lower, or at replacement level?

- What has your country done in the past to increase or decrease population size? Were these measures successful? Why or why not?

- What environmental issues of the four discussed have arisen in your country due to overpopulation? Which two should your country prioritize the most?

- Does immigration play a large role in your country's population demographics? Is immigration reform or reduction a viable solution?

Questions the draft resolution should address

- What possible solutions relative to overpopulation are there to the main problems of water access, intensive farming, habitat loss and climate change?

- Should developing countries with higher population growth rates take the lead in addressing this issue? Or should developed countries with higher resource consumption take the lead in combating overpopulation?

- Should the international community focus more on reducing population size or reducing consumption of natural resources?

Further reading

1. Our World in Data, https://ourworldindata.org/world-population-growth

2. Everything Connects, comprehensive list of everything related to overpopulation and its effects on the environment, http://www.everythingconnects.org/overpopulation-effects.html

3. Over Population Awareness, https://www.overpopulationawareness.org/en/

4. Deforestation introduction video, https://youtu.be/Nc7f5563azs

5. Capte Town water crisis, https://youtu.be/XxZAqswJfL4

Topic B: Accelerating the Eco-tourism for Environmental Sustainability and Social Equality

Introduction

Tourism has been a rapidly growing industry in the recent years: Between 2005 and 2015 the number of international tourist arrivals has risen from 528 million to 1.19 billion and is expected to reach 1.9 billion in 2030[4]. The industry earned approximately 1.6 trillion USD in 2017[5].

While it is evident that tourism is an important factor for economic growth in many countries, the amount of people arriving in popular tourist destinations definitely has a drawback for the environment. Mass tourism causes a high consumption of natural resources like water, land or fossil fuels, and generates waste, loss of biodiversity and emissions: It is said that tourism is the reason for eight percent of humanity's greenhouse gas emissions[6].

Ecotourism is a concept that tries to mitigate all negative environmental effects of travel. No official definition of the term "ecotourism" exists. The most commonly used one is from The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) that defines the term as *"responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"*[7].

Ecotourism aims at the conservation of nature; it tries to reach that goal by these principles:

small groups to keep the environmental footprint as small as possible

education of the traveler about his or her responsibilities regarding nature

low consumption of natural resources

full inclusion of the local population to preserve their life and surroundings

re-investment of parts of the generated income into the protection of the visited environment[8].

The idea is that ecotourism brings tourists and locals together so that both groups benefit from one another: Locals teach their visitors about their surroundings and culture while the tourists contribute to the population's income in order to make ecotourism feasible.

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[4] "Global travel and tourism industry - Statistics & Facts", https://www.statista.com/topics/962/global-tourism/, last accessed 16 November 2018.
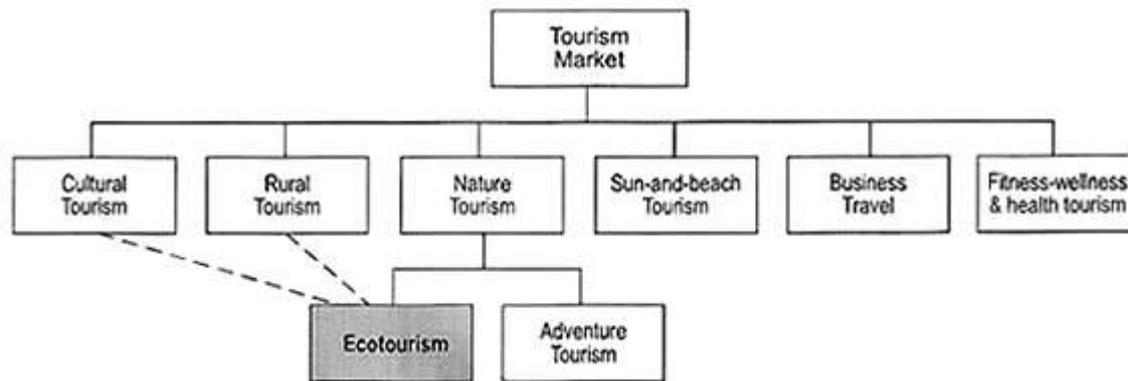
[5] "Why Tourism", UNWTO, http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism, last accessed 16 November 2018.

[6] "Tourism is responsible for nearly one tenth of the world's carbon emissions", The Independent, https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/tourism-climate-change-carbon-emissions-global-warming-flying-cars-transport-a8338946.html, last accessed 16 November 2018.

[7] "What is Ecotourism", TIES, http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism, last accessed 16 November 2018.

[8] Ibid., pp. 10, 14.

There is confusion with regards to the placement of the term "ecotourism" in the system of touristic activities. It shares similarities with "nature-based travel" which also revolves around visiting places with lots of biodiversity but does not share the rest of ecotourism's principles[9]. Basically, ecotourism is a subgroup of sustainable tourism which is a genus for all forms of travel that are characterized by a sparing contact with nature and its resources[10].

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Ecotourism-as-a-market-segment-Source-Strasdas-2001_fig1_314035254, last accessed 16 November 2018

History of Ecotourism

While the basic idea is probably much older, the trend "ecotourism" began in the 1970s[11]. The Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, Kenya and Nepal were among the first destinations where the principles of ecotourism were applied[12]. Ecotourism became a trending style of travel.

The topic got a boost in popularity in 2002: In 1998 the United Nations General Assembly declared 2002 the "UN International Year of Ecotourism" via Resolution A/RES/53/200[13]. During that year, multiple relevant actors from governments to NGOs to members from the tourism industry came together to promote ecotourism, raise awareness and to work on guidelines and rules[14]. The biggest event was the World Ecotourism Summit in Canada in May 2002, organized by UNEP and the UN World Tourism Organization. The result of the conference with participants from 132 countries was the *"Québec Declaration on*

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[9] "Eco and Sustainable Tourism", The Global Development Research Center, https://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/eco-sust.html, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[10] Ibid.
[11] "What Is Ecotourism? (The History & Principles of Responsible Travel)", Green Global Travel, https://greenglobaltravel.com/what-is-ecotourism-10-simple-steps-to-more-sustainable-travel/, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[12] *Megan Epler Wood*, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability", UNEP and TIES, 2002, p. 12, http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=WEB/0137/PA, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[13] http://undocs.org/A/RES/53/200, last accessed 17 November 2018.
[14] "International Year of Ecotourism 2002", The Global Development Research Center, https://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/2002/yearecoturism2002.html, last accessed 17 November 2018.

Ecotourism"[15], a document which summarizes ideas for the implementation of guidelines and addresses all relevant stakeholders.

The international community sees the concept of ecotourism not only as a way to spare the environment. It was recognized that by involving local communities ecotourism can generate steady income for those and therefore be a tool to fight poverty in less developed areas in the world and strengthen social equality. Locals can be tour guides, vendors or work otherwise in the field of preserving nature. For example, this can be seen in the resolution A/RES/65/173[16] from 2010 in which the following clause is included:

"1.   Recognizes that the development of ecotourism, within the framework of sustainable tourism, can have a positive impact on income generation, job creation and education, and thus on the fight against poverty and hunger, and can contribute directly to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;"

Since then, ecotourism has been addressed in multiple resolutions by the General Assembly[17]. In addition to that, 2017 was the "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development"[18] where efforts were made to develop ecotourism as a form of sustainable tourism even further.

Today, destinations for ecotourism can be found on the whole planet[19]. As the wish for nature-friendly travel rises in the world due to the problems related to climate change, ecotourism has been growing steadily. According to the United Nations Travel Organization it even is the fastest growing market segment in the system of tourism[20].

Important Factors and Problems

Seeing the development of ecotourism in the recent years, it is undisputed that the topic is a very relevant factor in the preservation of the environment – the more people become ecotourists the more important it gets. If not executed correctly, the opposite effects can occur: The protected natural areas can be damaged and the local community does not gain enough from the visitors. Therefore, the following section will illuminate important factors for successful ecotourism and indicate problems this committee should develop solutions for.

Guidelines and regulations

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[15] https://www.gdrc.org/uem/eco-tour/quebec-declaration.pdf, last accessed 17 November 2018.

[16] http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/173, last accessed 17 November 2018.

[17] The most recent resolutions are A/RES/67/223, A/RES69/233, A/RES 71/240 and A/RES/72/214 which focuses on Central America.

[18] "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017", UNWTO, 2017, http://www2.unwto.org/content/international-year-sustainable-tourism-development-2017, last accessed 17 November 2018.

[19] Because of problems this guide will examine later, it is rather impossible to get a list of every ecotourism attraction existing, nevertheless, a map as a broad example can be found here: http://atlas-for-the-end-of-the-world.com/world_maps/world_maps_ecotourism.html, last accessed 17 November 2018.

[20] "Ecotourism the Fastest Growing Segment in the Travel Industry, Yucatan Times, https://www.theyucatantimes.com/2015/07/ecotourism-the-fastest-growing-segment-in-the-travel-industry/, last accessed 17 November 2018.

In terms of regulations, policies and governmental control ecotourism is a patchwork rug. UN resolutions do not go further than stating the necessity of national policies, guidelines and control mechanisms. For the system to work it is necessary to have such rules to ensure that ecotourism spots are really handled in a sustainable manner by qualified locals.

Many organizations like TIES have published guidelines and regulations. Yet, an international framework created by states including an official definition, set principles of ecotourism, contents of training of tour guides, sustainable accommodation, codes of ethics and control is still missing. The efforts of NGOs are admirable and certainly a good basis for examination but the next step has to be taken.

When defining rules for tour guides, the focus must be put on education[21]. The goal of ecotourism is a learning experience; a tour guide has to know his ecosystem but he also has to stress the ethical responsibilities of every visitor in order to promote sustainable behavior[22].

When rules are established, constant control of the whole ecotourism site and the people operating is inevitable to recognize and – if necessary - sort out black sheep[23]. With the necessity of supervision more problems arise: Governments will have to start collecting data to be able to assess one's performance. To do that, envoys have to visit the places. As ecotourism is primarily happening in countries and areas that are underdeveloped, missing infrastructure can be an obstacle[24].

Right marketing and the problem of greenwashing

As already implicated in the Introduction, the term ecotourism can be difficult to define. Many similar forms of tourism exist that do not share the same characteristics. As a consequence, tourist destinations are often labelled as "eco" although that is not the case. This phenomenon where sustainable sounding tags like "environment-friendly", "eco" or similar key words are used to attract customers is called "greenwashing". One reason for greenwashing can be a lack of understanding of the principles of ecotourism[25]. The other reason can simply be the intent of the tour operator to deceive his customers who are willing to spend more for a "sustainable" vacation[26]. Especially the latter reason causes concerns.

One measure against that form of false advertising are clear regulations and laws by the states forbidding greenwashing and taking penal actions. For that, as mentioned before, ecotourism must be exactly formed so that criteria can be carved out in order to determine when there is a case of greenwashing.

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[21] "What Is Ecotourism? (The History & Principles of Responsible Travel)", Green Global Travel, https://greenglobaltravel.com/what-is-ecotourism-10-simple-steps-to-more-sustainable-travel/, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[22] *Pamela Wight*, "Ecotourism: Ethics or Eco-Sell", p. 1, https://eurekamag.com/research/002/352/002352286.php, last accessed 17 November 2019.
[23] "World Ecotourism Summit - Final Report", pp. 35, 54, https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284405503, last accessed 17 November 2018.
[24] *Megan Epler Wood*, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability", UNEP and TIES, 2002, p. 14, http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=WEB/0137/PA, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[25] *Megan Epler Wood*, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability", UNEP and TIES, 2002, p. 12, http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=WEB/0137/PA, last accessed 16 November 2018.
[26] "The Introduction To Ecotourism Tourism Essay", UK Essays, https://www.ukessays.com/essays/tourism/the-introduction-to-ecotourism-tourism-essay.php, last accessed 19 November 2018.

Another measure is certification. Certificates labelling a program as "real" ecotourism can help the customers to recognize the right products[27] and create competition resulting in the overall enhancement of quality of sustainable tourism. Once again, lots of organizations have published guidelines and established their own certificates. Over 100 different certifications exist which vary in criteria and reliability[28]. As long as the marketing is not executed in a clear manner, the current state is not sufficient for a further promotion of ecotourism.

Local participation and financing

Without full cooperation with the local community ecotourism cannot be called that way. When they do not get the chance to finance their subsistence – for example, because international travel companies are in full control – ecotourism cannot fulfil its purpose to fight poverty. Tourism has a high potential to generate prosperity.

That is why everything has to happen in accordance with them. Otherwise, mass tourism and poorly managed destinations can lead to conflicts with the residents over land and profits. Any form of exploitation has to be prevented[29]. No groups should be excluded. Resolution A/RES/69/233 by the General Assembly from 2014 summarizes that thought:

"*14. Emphasizes the need for effective measures, in the context of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism initiatives, to ensure the full empowerment of women, including the equal participation of women and men at all levels and in decision-making processes in all areas;*

15.   Also emphasizes the need for effective measures, in the context of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism initiatives, to help ensure the equal participation of youth, persons with disabilities and older persons at all levels and in decision-making processes in all areas and to promote the effective economic empowerment, including through international cooperation, of women, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons, in sustainable tourism, including ecotourism activities, mainly through decent job and income creation;"

Multiple problems arise when tourism becomes a main source of income for locals:

Tourism is not fully stable, man-made conflicts in the country or natural disasters can stop travelers from coming

Corruption in the country can be a hindrance for a fair distribution of income

Cultural change can happen as a result of much contact with outsiders (although that has not to be viewed solely as a matter)

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[27] "Certification and Standards", TIES, http://www.ecotourism.org/certification-and-standards, last accessed 19 November 2018.

[28] "Ecotourism. A Look at the Fastest Growing Segment of the Travel and Tourism Industry", EBSCO Sustainability Watch, 2009, p. 6, https://ebscosustainability.files.wordpress.com/.../ecotourism.pdf, last accessed 19 November 2018.

[29] "What Is Ecotourism? (The History & Principles of Responsible Travel)", Green Global Travel, https://greenglobaltravel.com/what-is-ecotourism-10-simple-steps-to-more-sustainable-travel/, last accessed 16 November 2018.

The price for groceries and other products can increase so much due to the presence of many tourists that the inhabitants cannot pay for them anymore[30].

With these factors in mind, achieving **social equality** is not self-evident.

Impacts on the environment

Ecotourism would be meaningless if it would not contribute to the preservation of biodiversity. The growing interest in this form of travel means some challenges for that primary goal.

First of all, the right way of accommodation is crucial. It is evident that even when a tourist destination is labelled as "eco" it undermines the idea of ecotourism when the hotel site has a golf course which gets watered every day. Therefore, there are certain criteria for so-called "ecolodges" (just to name a few):

It has minimal impact on the environment during its construction and during its business

It fits into the cultural context (as one goal of ecotourism is getting to know a different culture)

It puts emphasis on sustainability

The local community is somehow involved[31].

Secondly, transportation is always an issue. Whenever a tourist decides to travel to a location that is far away, the trip he or she plans can be as eco as possible: Travelling by plane causes a high amount of greenhouse emissions[32]. As you cannot forbid people to travel in general, these emissions are a necessary evil. Developing sustainable airplanes is a topic in itself that cannot be fully covered here. To at least counter these negative effects, an ecotourism destination has to ensure that all means of transportation happen in an environmental-friendly manner.

Another factor of importance is measures to preserve the surrounding of the destination itself. One concept of ecotourism is to use parts of the generated revenues for conserving the environment. That way, ecotourism becomes sustainable and feasible for every following generation. Entry fees for areas like national parks have proven to be effective[33]. These fees can be used directly for the area but also for programs directed at educating the visitors and strengthening their awareness.

Lastly, ecotourism is meant to happen on a small-scale level. As the title of the topic suggests, the session is mostly aimed at **accelerating** ecotourism. When ecotourism is defined, promoted and financed better, more people will logically start seeking eco-destinations. Crowding makes it difficult to achieve the initial goal of ecotourism: The more

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[30] "Ecotourism. A Look at the Fastest Growing Segment of the Travel and Tourism Industry", EBSCO Sustainability Watch, 2009, p. 2, https://ebscosustainability.files.wordpress.com/.../ecotourism.pdf, last accessed 19 November 2018.

[31] *Megan Epler Wood*, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability", UNEP and TIES, 2002, p. 28, http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=WEB/0137/PA, last accessed 16 November 2018.

[32] "Ecotourism. A Look at the Fastest Growing Segment of the Travel and Tourism Industry", EBSCO Sustainability Watch, 2009, p. 2, https://ebscosustainability.files.wordpress.com/.../ecotourism.pdf, last accessed 19 November 2018.

[33] *Megan Epler Wood*, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability", UNEP and TIES, 2002, p. 23, http://www.unep.fr/scp/publications/details.asp?id=WEB/0137/PA, last accessed 16 November 2018.

popular it becomes the harder it will be to operate without damaging the environment[34]. Thus, the final question is if ecotourism will eventually have to be limited.

Case Study: The Maasai Mara National Reserve

One example where negative consequences of ecotourism based on wrong decisions can be seen is the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. It had the same goal as other national parks: Giving tourists the possibility to admire the astounding wildlife of Kenya, ranging from elephants to cheetah to hyenas, while preserving the landscape.

The Reserve grew immensely in the last thirty years – from 300 beds in lodges to ten times that amount[35]. Since no additional measures have been adopted to limit the environmental footprint of all these visitors, tour guides and other people involved, the enlargement caused the loss of wildlife and the habitat it needs[36]. Furthermore, the local population – the Maasai people – has lost much of their original land due to the expansion[37].

The chronic of the reserve shows how an area that started as a fine example of ecotourism can slowly turn into the opposite. The nature in the region is not preserved in a sustainable way and the local community is not benefitting from the frequent visits of travelers. The reason for that is an inconsiderate and profit-orientated usage of the resources and the detachment from the core principles of ecotourism.

Key questions

Questions for the delegates in general

- What are the main factors that make ecotourism successful?
- Are there ecotourism destinations in the delegate's country?
- If yes, what were positive and negative effects caused by the way ecotourism has been executed?
- Does the country have policies and regulations regarding ecotourism or has it joined any international agreements?

Questions a resolution should address

- What could be an official definition of the term "Ecotourism"?
- How should the member states control ecotourism-enterprises?
- How does the international community tackle the problem of greenwashing and false advertising?

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[34] Ibid., pp. 2, 4.

[35] *Octavia Drughi*, "The Positive and Negative Impacts of Ecotourism on African Wildlife", BookAllSafaris, 2018, https://www.bookallsafaris.com/de/news/impact-ecotourism-african-wildlife, last accessed 20 November 2018.

[36] *Jessica Hatcher*, "The Masai Mara: 'It will not be long before it's gone'", The Guardian, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2013/aug/23/masai-mara-tourism-politics, last accessed 20 November 2018.

[37] *Octavia Drughi*, "The Positive and Negative Impacts of Ecotourism on African Wildlife", BookAllSafaris, 2018, https://www.bookallsafaris.com/de/news/impact-ecotourism-african-wildlife, last accessed 20 November 2018.

- What are criteria for certification of destinations and should there be one central certificate by the United Nations?
- What are good ways to include the local communities?
- How can small enterprises be funded?
- What should the criteria for sustainable transportation and accommodation be?
- Is there the need to limit ecotourism once it has been fully implemented?

Further reading

Regional policies regarding ecotourism:

- European Commission: "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism" and the "EU Ecolabel" (it has to be noted that the EU does not use the term "ecotourism" but "Sustainable tourism"; however the recommendations share the same goals that ecotourism has so the source still is of interest),

- https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable_en, last accessed 9 December 2018

- IGAD (an African trade bloc): "Ecotourism in the Intergovernmental Authority on

- Development (IGAD) Region", Chapter 6.0: "Recommendations and way forward for Ecotourism Development in IGAD region",

- https://www.uneca.org/publications/ecotourism-intergovernmental-authority-development-igad-region, last accesses 9 December 2018

- Asia: "Sihanoukville Declaration On Multilateral Cooperation For Ecotourism Development" (2011),

- sdt.unwto.org/sites/all/.../final_declaration_at_mrt-first_edited.pdf, last accessed 9 December 2018

- United States of America: Recommendations by the US Department of States,

- https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/oes/rls/or/19412.htm, last accessed 9 December 2018

More to read:

A good introductory video with beautiful footage:

- "Ecotourism – A Sustainable Way To Travel", 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWFSx23DqY8, last accessed 20 November 2018

Recent Reports of the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization to the General Assembly:

- A/71/173, 2016, http://undocs.org/A/71/173, last accessed 20 November 2018

- A/73/274, 2018, http://undocs.org/A/73/274, last accessed 20 November 2018

- *Amos Bien*, "A Simple User's Guide To Certification For Sustainable Tourism And Ecotourism", 2006,

- https://www.responsibletravel.org/docs/Ecotourism_Handbook_I.pdf, last accessed 20 November 2018

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4. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/01/19/cape-town-could-first-major-city-run-out-water/1047237001/

5. https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/researchnews/isfeedingninebillionpeoplepossible.5.668e42d4131b5c9d513800014998.html

6. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/65505/6316-drivers-deforestation-report.pdf

7. http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/en/6/index.html

8. https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/climate/index.html

9. https://www.forbes.com/sites/quora/2017/08/21/what-does-overpopulation-have-to-do-with-global-warming/#37e06ad016fa

10. http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/population/

11. https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/land-use--land-use-change-and-forestry-lulucf

12. http://www.unwater.org/

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