

*„Restriction of Tropical  
Deforestation to Conserve  
Biodiversity“*

**COMMITTEE GUIDE**

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME GC



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### Personal Introduction

Hi, my name is Yannick Engel and I am the president of the UNEP this year. I am currently attending the Graf-Anton Günther-Schule in Oldenburg. Since I attended my first OLMUN in 2010 grade, I fell in love with it. Unfortunately I was not able to be part of the 2011 OLMUN because of an exchange year I spend in the US. Being able to spend this year abroad, it allowed me to be part of three more MUN in the US as part of a team at my High school. Coming back to Germany I was highly motivated to be further involved at the OLMUN as a member of the Inner Circle and eventually by chairing the UNEP.



In my free time I like to play soccer, read or go out for a run.

I am looking forward to a great time of debates with you at the OLMUN 2013!

#### Yannick Engel

Dear delegates,

my name is Vanessa von Jan and I have the honor to be one of this year's presidents of the United Nations Environment Programme. I am 18 years old and currently attending the Otto-Hahn-Gymnasium in Gifhorn. When we meet in June, I will have hopefully passed my A-levels.



My first contact with MUN was at the Leiden Model United Nations Conference in 2010. Ever since, I have been attending as many conferences as possible. This OLMUN will be my 6th conference in total, but first time chairing (which I am really excited about).

Apart from debating, I like to draw, take pictures, read or go swimming in my free time.

I am looking forward to meeting you all and I hope we will have some fruitful and fun debates at this OLMUN!

#### Vanessa von Jan

### **The Committee**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was founded by the UN in June of 1972 to coordinate the environmental activities of the UN. It currently consists of 58 member states, which are elected by the General Assembly for a four-year term.

Its main focus lies on promoting international cooperation in the field of environmental policies. As a consequence they keep the environmental development under review and react to any occurring environmental problems. In this manner they assist the exchange of environmental technologies in between the UN-member states.

### **The Topic**

According to Greenpeace the earth is losing approximately 50,000 sq miles (132,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of forest per year. This is an equivalent to an area the size of Greece. Consequently it could not be more urged to find a way to sustainably use the forest.

The consequences are multi-faceted. Not only does the burning of trees release tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, but it also threatens the habitat of endangered species. Furthermore the trees of the forest take in CO<sub>2</sub> continuously and store it. It therefore is in the interest of the conservation of this planet and its climate to reduce the amount of trees cleared and renaturalize as much forest as possible.

Searching for a solution one is facing numerous challenges. First of all, the selling of wood is an important factor in many economies, such as Thailand according to the CIA World Factbook with wood exports accounting for almost half of its GDP.

Another example of forests being cut down for economical purposes is Peru: Roughly 70 square miles (18000) of rain forest have already been destroyed as of May 2011 in order to mine gold. Giving work to thousands of people the closures of the mines would have a tremendous impact on the country's economy. As another downside the use of mercury pollutes the region and makes a natural rehabilitation of the rainforest impossible.

The significance of the deforestation is also shown by the dependence of the entire ecosystem of the tropical areas on the rain forests. Its vegetation protects the soil from the erosion by the sun and provides itself with humidity. Additionally the vegetation provides the species with a source of nourishment and protects them from the impact of the sun.

As the this years topic suggests the deforestation thus threatens the diversity of species on earth, with half of the worlds inhabiting the rain forests.

As one factor, the species are being threatened by the extensive cattle ranching in that area. Large area of rain forest are being burned down in order to achieve enough space for the cattle ranches. The size of those ranches makes it impossible for the rain forest to recover itself and therefore reshaping the landscape dominantly.

Having taken the natural habitat of the species having lived there through the burning, most of them will not stand a chance to survive those methods. Thus the great diversity of species the rain forest provides is being replaced by the single species cattle. Due to those negative impacts one might ask one-self why this is an attractive investment for numerous companies. The reason is to be found in the continuously growing global demand for meat. It results in highly attractive profits for companies investing in such rain forest ranches.

Another factor would be the cutting down of tropical trees for the purpose of selling their wood. The noise made by cutting down, transporting and processing the trees makes it impossible for certain species to continue living in their natural habitat.

### **The Solution**

Seeing that in many impoverished countries the deforestation is a matter of survival, any program would need to provide the people economically depending on the clearing with alternative sustainable sources of income.

Cutting down trees to use them as burning wood or for construction does not necessarily have to be opposed to sustainability. A limitation to just cutting down single trees would therefore be a possible compromise between ecological and economical interests. Just cutting down tiny areas in forms of circles, surrounded by intact rain forest will make it possible for the rain forest to recover on its own. Thus the wood cutting should be kept at a rate that allows the rain forest to sustain or even enlarge its current level. The trade with the wood would create job opportunities and possible wealth due to the high value of tropical wood for the local communities and the international investors.

Taking into consideration that there is imminent risk of illegal deforestation for the purpose of selling wood to industrial nations, an international monitoring agency is necessary to provide customers in Europe and other nations and providing suitable companies with a label guaranteeing for certain standards such as the following:

The company which has the right to cut down trees in a certain area provides an international agency with funds that would allow them to patrol areas of the rain forests and arrest poachers and illegal woodcutters.

This international agency would help governments to enforce their legal right on deciding who is allowed to cut down trees. The label would certify the possessors and make them the only one legally allowed to trade with that wood.

Added to that the agency would have to control the trade with wood around the world and only allow the passing of wood which is proven to be from an area corresponding to the set standards. Otherwise sold wood should then be confiscated.

The woodcutting companies should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest. In this manner they shall minimize the waste with the harvesting and on-site processing of the wood. For example the path on which the trees are transported out of the forest would have to be as small as possible.

Moreover the woodcutting companies would have to take responsibility for the diversity of the local economy ensuring that it does not solely depend on the cutting of wood.

Alternative fields could be for example the traditional form of agriculture as it has been practiced by numerous jungle tribes for multiple generation. This form of agriculture implies that the people would only burn down small area in form of a circle. The burned down plants would then provide the soil with enough minerals for some agricultural use. Having used all the minerals provided after a couple of years, the farmers would then move on to another spot far enough away from the

from the previous one allowing the rain forest to recover in the previous spot.

But also the tradition of ancient tribes collecting the goods of the forest could be supported by the woodcutting companies. Establishing an infrastructure that would allow those tribes to trade their goods, processing businesses would spread them to the global market providing the local community with new job opportunities.

Another possible source of income for the local communities could be the sustainable use of the fishing grounds in the rainforest. Therefore it would be necessary that the woodcutting companies or if necessary the government provide the local communities with the equipment and knowledge needed to use those resources in a sustainable manner.

While economically using the forest the companies should always act guaranteeing the forest regeneration and succession, its genetic, species and ecosystem diversity and the natural cycles that effect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.

In their areas of woodcutting the companies should promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and completely avoid the use of chemical pesticides. Furthermore the pesticides used should never accumulate in the food chain above their intended use, or should their derivatives remain biologically active.

Containers of fuel and such pesticides in the same manner as other occurring wastes should be properly disposed on off-site locations. If possible the waste should be recycled.

The companies should further not be allowed to turn existing forest structures into plantation or other non-forest land for the purpose of containing the ecosystem.

All species brought to the site by the woodcutting companies on purpose and unintended should be strictly monitored in order to prevent an impact on the existing ecosystem.

As the woodcutting companies would work in their area they should be obliged to continuously monitor the condition of the forest, growth rates, regeneration, composition, observed changes in the flora and fauna and environmental and social impacts of the harvesting and other operations. Those results should be reported to the international agency mentioned above. Those monitoring practices should be controlled unannounced by the international at the site once a year.

Finally the woodcutting companies could be made responsible for reforesting the same area of forest that they are allowed to economically use in a country allotted by the international agency. Thus the people using the rainforest would help to repair and/or reestablish the greatness of the rain forest.

Seeing that the noise the woodcutting companies make doing their work harms the animals located in that area, adequate alternative areas would have to be established for every area in which wood cutting would be allowed. The companies then should be held to help the animals to relocate while providing animal conservationist with the needed infrastructure to do so. This relocation process would have to be completed prior to any woodcutting being allowed to start.

Acknowledging that the worlds demand for meat is not going to lessen, it is nearly impossible to completely abandoning the practice of cattle ranching in the regions of the rain forest. It therefore becomes logical to at least put some restrictions on the size of such cattle ranches. First, it should be agreed upon that expansion of those ranches should be ceased. Most of those ranches are owned by internationally operating companies. Thus a committee containing those companies

and a group of independent experts would be able to find ways of making ranching more efficient in the tropical area, consequently allowing further areas to be denaturalized while keeping the production level constant.

Added to that the ranching companies should be held to denaturalize an area of former rain forest not being used equivalent to the area they use for ranching. The accordance of the companies to those restrictions should be monitored by the international agency mentioned earlier. If companies that would not follow those restrictions they should be sanctioned by all UN-member states, leading up to a trade embargo as a worst-case-scenario.

## Research

In order to be able to actively participate in debate, you will need to do some preparation beforehand.

1. Begin researching your country's position on deforestation. A good starting point for some general information about your country is the **CIA World Fact Book**, afterwards you could e.g. use the links provided below and have a look at older resolutions that passed on the topic of the deforestation.
2. Find out how your country is affected by this topic; what measures have been already taken to stop deforestation and what effects possible solutions may have.
3. Write a policy paper, which is a short summary of your country's position (maximum of 150 words) and a draft resolution. For some instruction how to write a resolution, please read the OLMUN 2013 handbook. You should send your policy statement to **unep@olmun.org** by the **25th of May**, so that we can look through it and give you some tips for further improvement, if necessary.
4. Have a closer look at the **Rules of Procedure**. Of course, we will give a rough outline of the procedures to the first-timers at the beginning of the session, however it might be less overwhelming if you know the basics already.
5. Take all of your creativity, enthusiasm and tolerance along to the conference, so that we can expect productive debates and meet lots of friendly new people!

### Useful sources

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> (*CIA World Factbook*) Here the CIA publishes important information about the economy, geography, people and society, government, infrastructure, military and transnational issues of every country of the world that is acknowledged by the US.

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org) can also be a helpful source of information if it comes to general information about the topic and possible solutions.

[www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org) is a useful source to inform one-self about possible standards in sustainability.

[www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org) is another useful source illustrating the threats to different animal species.