



United Nations Environmental  
Assembly  
Directed By: Brenda Jones

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## TSMUN XXII BACKGROUND GUIDE 2018

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**Topic I: Combating Pollution in All Forms**  
**Topic II: Protecting Ecosystems from Deforestation and Land  
Degradation**



Dear delegates,

Welcome to the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Tallahassee Southern Model United Nations (TSMUN) Conference! We are pleased to announce one of the committees at this year's conference, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). My name is Brenda Jones and I will be serving as director of UNEA for TSMUN 2018. I am pursuing a Bachelor's of Science degree in International Affairs from Florida State University. This is my second year on staff for TSMUN.

The topics under discussion for the United Nations Environment Assembly are:

- I. Combating Pollution in All Forms
- II. Protecting Ecosystems from Deforestation and Land Degradation

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the governing body of the UN Environment programme. With the membership of all 193 Member States, the UNEA has been able to facilitate an all-encompassing dialogue regarding environmental issues such as illegal trade in wildlife, air quality, and the environmental rule of law. With the cooperation of other UN institutions, the private sector, representatives of civil society, environment ministers, and the scientific and academic communities the UNEA has been able to set the global climate agenda.

This Background Guide will be a key resource in beginning your understanding of the United Nations Environment Assembly, its functions, and the topics that will be discussed at the conference. Delegates are expected to expand their research beyond this background guide by using the footnotes and researching specifics about the Member State they will be representing. When writing their position papers, we will be looking for a complete understanding of their Member State's views regarding both topics along with solutions that can apply to all Member States. When preparing for the conference delegates are encouraged to use the preparation tools on the TSMUN website regarding research, position paper formatting and content, dress code, and what is expected on the day of the conference.

We look forward to your participation in Tallahassee Southern Model United Nations 2018!

Sincerely,

Brenda Jones, *Director*  
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## Committee Overview

### *Introduction*

The United Nations' (UN) first step towards creating a platform for discussing environmental issues began in 1972 at the UN conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm this, “marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics.”<sup>1</sup> During the Stockholm Conference, there were a few key points made such as the importance of the improvement and protection of the environment and its effects on human well-being, the many environmental problems that are generally caused by industrialization and technological advancements, and the significance of developed states assisting developing states in safeguarding the environment. The Stockholm conference also recognized, “a point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences.”<sup>2</sup> The Stockholm conference is the foundation of international environmental policy, and many of the recommendations made during the conference are still relevant today.

One of the most crucial recommendations established at the Stockholm conference was the creation of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). During the 27<sup>th</sup> session in December of 1972, the General Assembly adopted A/RES/27/2997 on, “Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation,” which in fact established the UNEP the official body regarding the environment. The UNEP was to review the global environmental situation so that emerging issues of international importance could be discussed appropriately.<sup>3</sup> Decades later, at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20) in June of 2012 Member States launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to build off the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) along with strengthening the UNEP by establishing the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) raising the importance of environmental issues to same level as poverty, health, peace, and security.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference)*, 2015

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Documents, *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Documents, 2997 (XXVII). *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation*, 1972

<sup>4</sup> UNEP, *About the UN Environment Assembly*



## I. Combating Pollution in All Forms

### *Introduction*

The Third United Nations Environment Assembly is set to meet in Nairobi, Kenya the 4<sup>th</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> of December and will be focusing on pollution in all forms.<sup>5</sup> The goal of this Assembly is to create tangible commitments that center on bringing an end to all forms of pollution: air, land, waterways, and oceans.<sup>6</sup> UN Environment breaks down pollution into six dimensions that include air, chemical, freshwater, marine, waste, land, and soil. Along with upcoming events, UN Environment has also started a #BeatPollution movement and created online platforms for citizens, governments, businesses, and civil society to register voluntary commitments toward the movement.<sup>7</sup> Air pollution is the cause of 7-8 million deaths per year around the world and is the leading environmental health risk; pollutants such as methane, black carbon, and airborne particles are the cause of death among one-third of stroke, chronic respiratory disease, and lung cancer victims.<sup>8</sup> There are two types of air pollution indoor and outdoor air pollution; indoor or household air pollution can come from stoves, heating, and lighting over 3 billion people use solid fuels to cook with and attributes to 4.3 million deaths mostly in low and middle-income countries and 800,000 deaths caused by indoor air pollution are children under the age of five. Outdoor or ambient air pollution is caused by agriculture, power generation, transport, wildfires, and many others. Many countries are lacking regulation regarding outdoor pollution, for example, 86 percent of countries practice the open burning of waste and agriculture.<sup>9</sup> Chemical pollution threatens human health and environment in many ways: chemical pollutants can deplete the ozone layer and disrupts fragile ecosystems; these pollutants can include persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury, cadmium, and lead with grave health risks such as birth defects in children, acute poisoning, hormone disruption, neurological disorders, and more.<sup>10</sup>

Every day four thousand children die because of inadequate sanitation and pollution of freshwater as well as 2 billion tons of human waste being dumped into our waterways every day; annually 1.8 billion people are exposed to contaminated drinking water.<sup>11</sup> Healthy soil and land help filter pollutants out of the water along with regulating flow and supporting productivity; when soil becomes contaminated, it affects crops and can have direct impacts on health and biodiversity.<sup>12</sup> A majority of marine pollution is caused by the actions being taken on land, for example, the growing amount of solid waste that slowly degrades being dumped into oceans is causing an increase of toxins that can be ingested by marine life and possibly passed through the food chain to humans or can hinder ecosystem functions; 8 million

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<sup>5</sup> UN Environment Assembly, *UN Environment*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Act Now, *UN Environment*

<sup>8</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Air, *UN Environment*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Chemical, *UN Environment*

<sup>11</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Freshwater, *UN Environment*

<sup>12</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Land & Soil, *UN Environment*



Tons of plastic waste finds its way to the world's oceans.<sup>13</sup> As previously mentioned, human waste is finding its way into the environment through a number of outlets, but the waste in our landfills also has negative effects on the environment. Food waste is the primary source of landfill gas and is the largest amount of materials sent to landfills, yet 30 percent of food produced is lost or wasted.<sup>14</sup>

### ***International and Regional Frameworks***

Waste is a common factor among all dimensions of pollution; this is why at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20) in 2012 Member States adopted the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP).<sup>15</sup> Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is vital to human health and the health of the environment, and SCP is also outlined in the SDGs as goal 12 in which it calls for the implementation of the 10YFP.<sup>16</sup> There are six programme areas of the 10YFP that come together to accomplish SCP: Sustainable Public Procurement Programme (SPP) to expand knowledge and effectiveness as to support sustainable development through collaboration, Consumer Information for SCP (CI-SCP) to work towards easily accessible consumer information to drive a behavioral change in making more sustainable choices regarding services and products, the Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP) is to ensure the cooperation of all stakeholders for good practices in efficient tourism development, Sustainable Lifestyles and Education (SLE) promotes people to adopt greener lifestyles and build shared visions on how to achieve this along with measuring the benefits, Sustainable Building and Construction supports development that has a minimal impact on the natural world through sustainable use of natural resources and healthy to work in, and the Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) which works to enable sustainable food practices and increase access as well as raising awareness.<sup>17</sup>

Lead poisoning in children alone accounts for the loss of approximately \$977,000 billion a year. For this reason, the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint was created in partnership with UN Environment and the World Health Organization (WHO) to prevent exposure.<sup>18</sup> The Lead Paint Alliance is completely voluntary and works to identify manufacturers that still contain lead in their paint and promote actions to phase out these paints, spread knowledge on safer alternatives and toxicity levels, and to assist in the identification and reduction of potential threats to lead exposure especially in children and workers.<sup>19</sup>

Resolution 1/7 Strengthening the Role of the United Nations Environment Programme in Promoting Air Quality was adopted by the UNEA in June 2014. This resolution calls for the UNEP to catalog actions taken by governments in promoting air quality and compiling regional reports highlighting some of the most notable actions taken by governments.<sup>20</sup> South East Asia has the

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<sup>13</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Marine, *UN Environment*

<sup>14</sup> Dimensions of Pollution: Waste, *UN Environment*

<sup>15</sup> What is the 10YFP? *UN Environment*

<sup>16</sup> 10YFP brochure, *Secretariat of the UN Environment Programme*, 2012

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Ban Lead Paint, *UN Environment*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Air Quality, *UN Environment*



highest number of premature deaths due to air pollution than any other region, but countries such as Malaysia and Singapore have implemented newly established air quality standards that have been succeeding in improving their air quality; these actions were highlighted in The South East Asia Air Quality Regional Report which can assist other regional Member States to implement similar strategies.<sup>21</sup> In 2011, the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference adopted The Honolulu Strategy A Global Framework for Prevention and Management of Marine Debris. This framework's three goals were to reduce the amount and impact of marine debris from land-based sources, sea-based sources (solid waste, discarded fishing gear, and abandoned vessels), and accumulated debris on shorelines.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

In 1978, the Global Environment Monitoring System for Water (GEMS/Water) was established this was to collect data from all over the world regarding water quality; this monitoring network can help discover trends and assess the status of inland water, and the programme also supports developing countries wishing to launch monitoring systems.<sup>23</sup> With the adoption of the SDGs the importance of freshwater quality has been exemplified by goal six, “clean water and sanitation,” this along with the renewed mandate at the first UNEA strengthened GEMS/Water; subsequently more data was being collected which allowed for the World Water Quality Assessment to begin which resulted in many important finding about the status of the world's oceans.<sup>24</sup> Many coastlines are dealing with the growing amount of litter washing up on shore even in remote areas, and a lot of this litter is coming from the continued dumping of solid waste into the world's oceans; this issue was addressed at the RIO+20 in 2012 with the creation of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML).<sup>25</sup> The GPML's objectives were clear, reduce the impact of marine litter on economies, animal welfare, human health, and ecosystems as well as encouraging information and knowledge sharing of progress; the promotion of international cooperation through the Honolulu strategy and the increase in resource efficiency through waste prevention were also objectives of the GPML.<sup>26</sup>

The Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) was created in 2012 to urgently tackle the issue of short-lived climate pollutants because of a scientific assessment that was released stating that if these were targeted then in a short period of time achievements would be made regarding the climate, human well-being, and air quality.<sup>27</sup> The CCAC partners are all on a volunteer basis, and they work to deliver a substantial reduction in short-lived climate pollutants by engaging governments in developing laws and regulations, political outreach, training, and many other actions.<sup>28</sup> The CCAC, WHO, and UN Environment launched a new campaign called BreatheLife which was established to rally cities and individuals to protect our air; with the combined expertise of these three leading bodies the BreatheLife campaign intends to connect cities, increase

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<sup>21</sup> The South East Asia Air Quality Regional Report, *UN Environment*

<sup>22</sup> The Honolulu Strategy, *UN Environment Programme and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*, 2011

<sup>23</sup> GEMS Water, *UN Environment*

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Global Partnership on Marine Litter, *UN Environment*

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Who are we, *Climate and Clean Air Coalition*

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



monitoring, accelerate solutions, and empower individuals to implement solutions to air pollution that will also support global goals.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Case Study: Air Quality in the Middle East and North Africa***

Within the Middle East and North African (MENA) region, there are 18 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen. Although natural sources of air pollution, such as desert dust, are the leading cause of air pollution in the MENA region industrial emissions from the numerous fossil fuel power plants and petroleum refineries, lack of regulations regarding vehicular emissions and fuel quality, open burning of waste, and little investment in public transportation all negatively impact the air quality.<sup>30</sup> Only two countries in the region, Iraq, and Israel have policies or laws in place regarding air quality. Israel adopted a National Air Pollution Reduction and Prevention Programme in 2013 addressing the reduction of emissions from transportation, energy, industry, and household.<sup>31</sup> Within the region there is a reliance on fossil fuels because of the large supply, but more countries are realizing the importance of diversifying their economies by slowly converting to renewable resources; Libya, for example, has set a goal to have 25 percent of the energy supply come from renewable energy sources by 2025 and will do so by following the ‘renewable energy roadmap’ eventually reaching 30 percent by 2030; Israel has established a center for research and development on renewable resources but has a smaller target in mind regarding what percent of their energy needs will come from renewable sources, reaching (10% by 2020).<sup>32</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The UNEA has established all forms of pollution as the main focus of the 2017 Assembly. Not only will the discussions be based around the many dimensions of pollution, but the Assembly itself is going to be sustainable and climate-neutral.<sup>33</sup> The three main ways that the 2017 UNEA will be sustainable, specifically at the 2017 December conference, are very simple and can be applicable to all types of events; greenhouse gas emissions associated to the Assembly will be measured and offset by purchases of Carbon Emission Reduction Credits, delegates will be encouraged to bring laptops or tablets as there will be no hard copies of documents, and delegates will also be encouraged to bring their own water bottles but if that is not possible there will be glass bottles instead of plastic.<sup>34</sup> This illustrates the simplicity tackling pollution can be although there are many improvements to be made. Delegates are to be searching for gaps where enhancements can be made in frameworks and global efforts including those within this guide.

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<sup>29</sup> About the Campaign, *BreatheLife Campaign*

<sup>30</sup> The North Africa Middle East Air Quality Regional Report, *UN Environment*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> UN Environment Assembly, *UN Environment*

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



## II. Protecting Ecosystems from Deforestation and Land Degradation

### *Introduction*

Forests are a quintessential part of our world, and more than 1.6 billion people rely on forests for traditional cultures and livelihoods, fuel, medicine, water, and food; on average about 13 million hectares of forest are cleared each year this devastates communities and negatively impacts biodiversity and the safeguarding of the climate.<sup>35</sup> The leading causes of deforestation around the world are the production of commodities such as a number of different oils, beef, and paper with urban expansion, energy, and infrastructure influencing in varying degrees.<sup>36</sup> Mitigating deforestation is recognized as one of the most useful tools in combating climate change thus many documents that have been released within the UN stressing the importance of conserving the world's forest. Land degradation can be caused by many things such as deforestation, droughts, and human activities. All of these degrade the quality of soil and affect food production; over-cultivation and overgrazing of land are leading causes. When fertile soil becomes a desert, namely desertification, production is moved elsewhere putting other ecosystems in peril.<sup>37</sup>

### *International and Regional Frameworks*

The only legally binding international agreement linking sustainable land management to environment and development was the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) established in 1994; the focus was specifically on the drylands (arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas) and restore soil and land productivity.<sup>38</sup> To enhance the implementation of the UNCCD in 2007, the convention adopted the 10-Year Strategic Plan and Framework (2008-2018) in order to prevent the continuation of desertification/land degradation and the eventual reversal of such to support environmental sustainability and poverty reduction.<sup>39</sup> This strategic plan included the enhancement of land productivity and ecosystem goods in affected areas in a sustainable behavior, the guarantee that desertification/land degradation are addressed in the appropriate international forums, and to support affected parties to the convention in creating and implementing national action programmes benefitting ecosystems.<sup>40</sup> The outcome document of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Agenda 21 highlighted in chapter 11 entitled 'Combating Deforestation' the multiple functions of all types of forests, forest lands, and woodlands and the lack of policies and methods adopted to support conservation and sustainable development of the forest.<sup>41</sup> In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was established in 2015, numerous goals were laid out to be reached by 2030 including goal 15 "protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage

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<sup>35</sup> New York Climate Summit, *Forest Action Statements and Action Plans*, 2014

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> WHO, *Land degradation, and Desertification*

<sup>38</sup> UNCCD, *About the Convention*

<sup>39</sup> UNCCD, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighth session, 2007*

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Forest*



forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”<sup>42</sup> The Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) launched the UN Forum of Forest (UNFF) in October of 2000. The objective of this subsidiary body is promoting all political commitments for the conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest like the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, and many other key global forest policies. The universal participation of all UN Member States and specialized agencies along with forest-related stakeholders is crucial to getting regional organizations to support forest initiatives and exchange information.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

The Bonn Challenge is a commitment to restore 150 million hectares of the globe’s forests by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030 so by reaching the 150 million mark of restored land there will be an increase in net benefits of about 84 billion US dollars which would increase income opportunities for rural communities 90 percent of which has the potential to be tradable. The advantages of reaching the 350 million mark aside from the net dollar benefits are improved crop yields and could sequester up to 1.7 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.<sup>44</sup> On May 9<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> the first Asia Bonn Challenge High-Level Roundtable was held in South Sumatra where Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka all pledged different portions of degraded or deforested land to the challenge putting the total of pledged land just over the 150 million mark for 2020.<sup>45</sup> In 2003, a small group of like-minded organizations came together to create The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) with the International Union for Conservation of Nature at the forefront (IUCN) their purpose was to create pathways to share knowledge on restoration efforts and accelerate the process as well as advocating for awareness; the GPFLR responds directly to the Bonn Challenge.<sup>46</sup>

In 2008, the UN launched a multilateral programme between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) called the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, the UN-REDD programme in other words, which assists developing countries in achieving REDD+ requirements by promoting cooperation of all involved groups such as forest-dependent communities and supporting nationally led REDD+ implementations.<sup>47</sup> REDD+ which was created by the parties of the UNFCCC is a results-based payment opportunity for developing countries that, “reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development,” not only through mitigating deforestation and land degradation but by also sustainably managing forest and improving forest carbon stocks through conservation.<sup>48</sup> The UN-REDD programme is currently working in many countries across the African, Asian-Pacific, and Latin American and

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<sup>42</sup> Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *Desertification, land degradation, and drought*

<sup>43</sup> UN Economic and Social Development, *UN Forum on Forest*

<sup>44</sup> Bonn Challenge, *The Challenge, A Global Effort*

<sup>45</sup> Bonn Challenge, *Bonn Challenge crosses the 150 million hectare milestone with pledges from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mongolia and Sri Lanka*, 2017

<sup>46</sup> The GPFLR, *About the Partnership*

<sup>47</sup> UN-REDD Programme, *How We Work*

<sup>48</sup> About REDD+, *UN-REDD Programme Workspace*, 2016



the Caribbean regions spanning 64 countries.<sup>49</sup> The initial Framework for the UN-REDD programme was written in 2008 it was centered on the nine pilot countries, but because of the rapid growth of the programme it was expanded, and a new framework was put in place in 2011; it was the first five-year strategy for the programme (2011-2015).<sup>50</sup> This five-year strategy was created around a set of goals that would build a solid foundation to expand upon including monitoring systems, supporting governments in creating national strategies, and assessing numerous benefits while engaging stakeholders.<sup>51</sup>

By 2015, there were 60 partner countries within the UN-REDD Programme while also working in unison with the Readiness Fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank; together readiness proposals, exchange of knowledge and information, and various guidelines for technical matters were created.<sup>52</sup> The progress and results of the UN-REDD Programme were assessed in 2013 and 2014 by an independent external evaluation not only to go over the results but to guide the programme strategy beyond 2015. The external evaluation commended the UN-REDD Programme for accomplishments regarding stimulating the search for viable solutions to deforestation and land degradation, bringing global attention to the significance of forest, giving a voice to marginalized populations in decision-making forums, engaging countries in policy reforms, and increasing transparency.<sup>53</sup> This external evaluation also offered recommendations for the UN-REDD Programme moving forward to which influenced the 2016-2020 Strategic Framework along with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The overall development goals of the 2016-2020 Strategic Framework are, “Reduce forest emissions and enhance carbon stocks from forests while contributing to national sustainable development.” To achieve the goals in the 2016-2020 Strategic Framework political commitments need to equate to national strategies such as political will and finances to be used for REDD+ implementations, involving all stakeholders in creating solutions regarding natural resources, and incentive payments for Results Based Actions.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Case Study: Ecuador***

The Republic of Ecuador is considered one of the world’s megadiverse countries because of its Equatorial location. The biological diversities are exemplified by the four major biogeographic sections of Ecuador including the: Pacific Coastal Plain, Andes, Galapagos Islands, and Amazon.<sup>55</sup> The diverse forests of Ecuador cover about 55 percent or roughly 10 million hectares of the country, but there is an annual loss of approximately 61,764 hectares of forests as reported by Ecuador's Ministry of Environment.<sup>56</sup> The main cause of deforestation within Ecuador is the growing agricultural industry, and along coastal forest fragile habitats such as mangroves, dry forest, and other wetlands have been severely degraded; the Amazon also has large swathes of land that have been deforested due to oil extraction followed by human colonization.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Partner Countries, *UN-REDD Programme*, 2016

<sup>50</sup> UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework 2016-2020, *UN-REDD Programme*, 20-22 May 2015

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> REDD in Ecuador, *the REDD desk*, May 2011

<sup>56</sup> Ecuador, *UN-REDD Programme Workspace*, 2017

<sup>57</sup> REDD in Ecuador, *the REDD desk*, May 2011



The national action taken by Ecuador to preserve their Forests began in 2008 with the Plan for Good Living where they planned to reduce deforestation by 30 percent and also offered financial incentives to landowners of the forests, private and community, if they kept them standing; this was done so through the Ministry of Environment's Socio Bosque Programme.<sup>58</sup> As of October 2009, Ecuador has been a partner country of the UN-REDD Programme. In 2010 Ecuador created the working group Inter-Institutional Committee on Climate Change (CICC) dedicated to creating and facilitating the implementation of national strategies along with delegating responsibilities under the UNFCCC. By 2011 Ecuador's National Programme was approved for funding allocation of \$4 million.<sup>59</sup> Ecuador is now one of the countries that is in the advanced stages of the REDD+ readiness phase, and the next step is the REDD+ activities phase for results based finances.<sup>60</sup> As well as their work towards the halting of deforestation Ecuador announced restoration and conservation commitments for its degraded and deforested land in December of 2014 to the Initiative 20x20 which is to restore 20 million hectares of forest by 2020 it is expected that of those 11.1 million hectares are to be from Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador which also be considered as formal contributions to the Bonn Challenge.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The loss of forest and degraded land continues to drop, but there are still declining trends of biodiversity and land productivity. The conservation of forests is the leading deterrent of climate change along with reducing the risk of natural disasters and supporting communities that rely on them.<sup>62</sup> There are many UN bodies highlighted in this guide that is working towards the overall protection of ecosystems; there are also many cross-cutting themes that are tackled as well: Governance, Tenure, Stakeholder engagement, and Gender equality. Delegates should be actively searching for improvements to the already established action plans within international and regional systems regarding the protection of ecosystems from deforestation and land degradation.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ecuador, *UN-REDD Programme Workspace*, May 2011

<sup>61</sup> Ecuador, *Bonn Challenge*

<sup>62</sup> Forest, *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*



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