



United Nations Educational,
Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Directed By: Gregory Gutierrez

TSMUN XXIII BACKGROUND GUIDE

2019

**Topic I: Preserving World Heritage Sites During Conflict and Natural
Disasters**

Topic II: Protecting the World's Oceans



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 23rd annual Tallahassee Southern Model United Nations (TSMUN) Conference. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to be your committee staff in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). My name is Gregory Gutierrez and I will be serving as the Director of UNESCO for TSMUN 2019. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in International Affairs from Florida State University. I have been a part of the Tallahassee Community College Model United Nations for two years and have been on staff for my second year of TSMUN.

The topics under discussion for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are:

- I. Preserving World Heritage Sites During Conflict and Natural Disasters
- II. Protecting the World's Oceans.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is an organization that seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, science and culture. Encompassing all 195 Member States and eight associate members, UNESCO has strengthened bonds between nations through the promotion of cultural heritage and the constant advocating for people to live in a world free of hate and intolerance. UNESCO hosts several scientific agendas and guidelines that stand for development, cooperation, and expression. UNESCO's accomplishments have ranged from preserving 1,073 World Heritage sites in 167 countries to leading the global effort for quality education for all. With the cooperation of United Nations (UN) organizations, foreign governments, and the private sector it continues to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda.

This Background Guide will be imperative to understanding UNESCO's history, roles and jurisdiction within the selected topics. Delegates are encouraged to conduct their own research outside the Background Guide. Although the Background Guide will serve as an introduction to the topics, nothing can replace independent research. Please note that in preparation for the Conference, every delegation is required to submit a Position Paper before the start of the Committee's first session. Delegates are also encouraged to use the available resources on the TSMUN website regarding research and development of the Position Paper, dress code and agenda for the day of the conference.

If you have any questions regarding the conference, you are welcome to contact the Secretary-General, Hannah Cake, at sg@tsmun.org, or the Director-General, Brenda Jones, at dg@tsmun.org.

We are hopeful that you have a fun and educational experience at TSMUN 2019 and wish you all good luck.

Gregory Gutierrez,

Director of UNESCO



Committee Overview

Introduction

During the Second World War, the governments of the Allies met in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME).¹ The conference discussed the means of restoring their education systems once peace was returned. After the Second World War was over, many new states emerged from conflict and lacked the means of an institution to set a new education system. CAME sent a proposal to the United Nations to create an international, cultural, and educational body. In late 1945, 37 countries created an organization called the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.² It would symbolize a culture of peace. “The new organization must establish the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind...[preventing] the outbreak of another world war” (UNESCO)³ UNESCO since then works with 195 Member States and 10 associate states in its platforms of Education, Natural Science, Social and Human Science, Culture and Communication and Information.^{4 5} UNESCO has since expanded its goals to include pursuing a competent human rights campaign, attaining education for all, addressing ethnic and social problems, promoting cultural diversity, and providing further inclusivity of information and communication with all societies.⁶ Projects of UNESCO range from the securing of Natural and Cultural Heritage sites, to promoting gender equality in education, to addressing climate change.⁷ Much of the goals of UNESCO align with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda and UNESCO provides much of the activity towards accomplishing the goals with its efforts in Education, Science and Innovative support, Promotion of Universal Values, and SDGs for the Ocean.⁸

Committee Mandate

According to UNESCO’s constitution, the purpose of the organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science, and culture. This ensures further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinctions made by race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.⁹ To fulfill its mandate, UNESCO performs five principal functions: prospective studies, the advancement and transfer of knowledge, standard-setting action and expertise.¹⁰

¹ “The Organization’s History”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

² “UNESCO in Brief,” *UNESCO*, 2017.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “About Us”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

⁵ “Bureau of Strategic Planning”, *UNESCO*.

⁶ “Global Challenges and Opportunities for UNESCO’s Action, Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013”, *UNESCO*, 2008.

⁷ “UNESCO in Brief”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

⁸ “UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

⁹ “UNESCO Constitution, Article I”, *UNESCO*, 1945.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*



I. Preserving World Heritage Sites During Conflict and Natural Disasters

Introduction

On April 18th, the United Nations celebrated World Heritage Day which is a day dedicated towards all the Heritage Sites established all over the world and to bring awareness towards them.¹¹ World Heritage is either cultural or natural. Cultural Heritage Sites, according to UNESCO are monuments, groups of buildings or sites that are outstanding in their universal value in the point of view of history or science.¹² Natural Heritage Sites are composed of natural and geological sites that consist of unique features that are outstanding from the scientific point of view.¹³ Examples include the Taj Mahal as a cultural site and Yellowstone National Park as a natural site. Cultural Heritage has often been the site of destruction. Due to wartime chaos or the pillaging of cultural heritage. This was often called the “spoils of war”, this was usually carried out by the victor.¹⁴ Other examples include ethnic conflict, which can cause the direct attack towards certain heritage sites due to them symbolizing the enemy’s ethnic culture.¹⁵ Conflict is not the only threat towards World Heritage Sites. Catastrophic events triggered by nature such as erosion, flooding, human activity, and earthquakes also pose a risk. In 2007, UNESCO held its 31st World Heritage Session, and a strategy was developed to start assessing the heritage sites to determine which are in threat and which need active monitoring. The session also discussed the possible reduction of underlying risks at Heritage areas and strengthen preparedness at World Heritage properties. However, as of 2018, relatively few World Heritage properties have any established policy or plan for managing risks with disasters.¹⁶

Role of the International System

On March 24th, 2017 the United Nations Security Council adopted *Resolution 2347* unanimously to increase protection of cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict and declared that direct attacks towards to the protected sites could constitute a war crime and prosecution could also be made.¹⁷ Progress has been made towards this issue but, more is needed to be made with the organization for assessing disaster risks. In 1994, the international community convened at the first *Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)* to discuss preparations towards natural disasters. So far two different agendas have been adopted towards the development of the prevention framework.¹⁸ *The Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2030* has suggested the implementation of four pillars for a disaster preparedness framework.¹⁹ The first pillar states that DRR should be based on an understanding of disaster risks in all aspects of danger.²⁰ The second pillar declares that strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk is imperative to developing a strong

¹¹ “World Heritage Day”, *Saudi Commission for Tourism & National Heritage*, 2018.

¹² “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage”, *UNESCO*, 1972.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “1954 Hague Convention Information Kit”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ “State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties”, *UNESCO*, 2014.

¹⁷ “Security Council Condemns Destruction, Smuggling of Cultural Heritage by Terrorist Groups, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2347”, *UN*, 2017.

¹⁸ “Reducing Disaster Risk at World Heritage Properties”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

¹⁹ “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”, *UNISDR*, 2015.

²⁰ *Ibid.*



plan.²¹ The third pillar states that investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience is needed from public and private investment for the protection of people, communities, Member States and the assets within the environment.²² The final pillar suggests that empowering women and people with disabilities to publicly lead reconstruction efforts can promote equality within the framework. It can also provide an opportunity for communities to “Build Back Better”.²³ To “Build Back Better”, is an initiative by the DRR to use recovery and reconstruction after a disaster to increase cooperation of communities and Member States. It also wishes to improve upon the physical and societal structures with reconstruction to achieve its goals of equality for all and revitalize all livelihoods.²⁴ The framework provides a semi-solid foundation for UNESCO to advocate for a Disaster Risk Reduction, but nonetheless a majority of World Heritage Sites still lack the framework.²⁵ According to *INTERPOL*, the International Crime Police Organization, the illicit traffic of cultural heritage has been on the rise in the last decade and most of these artifacts are being smuggled out of war-torn regions.²⁶ From the war-torn regions the artifact is then transnational and very difficult to track and often becomes lost. According to the Minister of Culture of Brazil, Sérgio Sá Leitão, to fight this issue of trafficking cultural artifacts is to “congregate in one joint effort.”²⁷ The possibility of cooperation with the private sector and law enforcement could bring many benefits but there is no set plan is in place towards recovering lost artifacts²⁸.

International and Regional Frameworks

During the Second World War with the elevated levels of bombings and exportation of cultural property from the occupied territories resulted in high numbers of disputes concerning these cultural objects.²⁹ After the Second World War, in attempts to resolve and prevent the damage and destruction of cultural heritage, the international community got together at the *Hague Convention* in 1954.³⁰ This treaty adopted the safeguarding of cultural artifacts and property if armed conflict was to ensue by having them recognized or marked as a site of importance.³¹ Although this was implemented with conflict between states, the rise of internal ethnic conflict and tension lead to the creation of *the Second Protocol* in 1999 to the *1954 Hague Convention*.³² *The Second Protocol* outlined the further elaboration of safeguarding of and respect for cultural property within the terms of protecting the heritage sites in the name of humankind and legal protection for said artifacts.³³ Despite these two conventions and minor resolutions following them, there has been a

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ “Reducing Disaster Risk at World Heritage Properties”, *UNESCO*, 2015.

²⁶ “Works of Art”, *INTERPOL*, 2018.

²⁷ “Cooperation is One of the Main Actions Against the Illicit Traffic of Cultural Goods”, *UNESCO*, 2018.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “1954 Hague Convention Information Kit”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

³⁰ “1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

³¹ Ibid.

³² “1954 Hague Convention Information Kit”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

³³ “Second Protocol (1999) to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”, *UNESCO*, 2017.



rise in intentional destruction of cultural heritage in the name of radical terrorism, an infamous example being the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan. The Buddhas of Bamiyan were 10-meter-tall, 3rd century Buddha statues which were priceless historical artifacts.³⁴ UNESCO released the *Declaration Concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage* in 2003. This declaration recognized the importance of Member States commitment towards the protection of cultural heritage and the importance of combating the destruction, so it may be passed onto future generations.³⁵ It called upon Member States that are currently in a period of peace to comply with the laws and status of said cultural artifacts.³⁶ With occupation and instability, it is recommended that all states continue to maintain the compliance of customary law towards sites and artifacts. It was also suggested that if a state fails to protect or prevent the destruction of the cultural site or artifact intentionally or even if they destroy the site themselves, they could be subjected to sanctions towards the person or state.³⁷

In the 1970s, due to increased instability in many Member States, there was rise in theft in archaeological sites and museums.³⁸ Many of artifacts would leave the states of instability and be sold in developed western countries. This led to the creation of the market for trafficked goods, many private collectors and even institutions purchased objects that were illegally obtained. The international community met at the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*.³⁹ This convention outlined that member states should take preventive measures by ensuring proper inventory and monitoring of cultural artifacts. An international framework was created to strengthen cooperation with Member states to help recover lost or stolen artifacts. Within article 7 of the convention it states, “the Convention, States Parties undertake, at the request of the State Party "of origin", to take appropriate steps to recover and return any such cultural property imported.”⁴⁰ Since 1970, only 132 out of the 193 Member States are a part of this framework. Cooperation, education, security and ethics are the issues raised within this framework and there is need to have transparency with all members of this framework.⁴¹ Often many of the artifacts that are purchased by private stakeholders are bought, unknowingly, from terrorist organizations.

In 1972, the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* was created to “protect cultural and natural heritage site with outstanding value to all of mankind”.⁴² This convention meets annually to add to the list of World Heritage Sites and updates its requirements for sites to obtain this status. The convention also provides a list of requirements to Member States for maintaining this status. Member States who keep to their pledges and maintain the protection of the Heritage Sites can qualify for the *World Heritage Fund*. The *World Heritage Fund* are donations from Member States that wish to assist others in identifying and

³⁴ ”Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of Bamiyan Valley”, *UNESCO*, 2018.

³⁵ “UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage”, *UNESCO*, 2003.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, *UNESCO*, 1970.

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² “World Heritage Convention”, *Australian Department of Environment and Energy*, 2005.



preserving heritage sites.⁴³ Emergency assistance can be granted to states who need it. These are the benefits towards Member States that commit towards the goals of preservation.⁴⁴

Case Study: Syria

Since the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, six cultural heritage sites have been classified as endangered.⁴⁵ As of 2018, much of the cultural heritage sites have been damaged and some have even been destroyed, such as in Palmyra, Crac des Chevaliers, and Aleppo. UNESCO in response of damages to these sites in conflict, created the *Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage*.⁴⁶ The main objective of the project is to restore social cohesion and stability through the protection of cultural heritage during the conflict⁴⁷. The first goals of the project are to actively monitor the damages and loss to these sites and prepare a post-conflict action plan that follows its main objective of restoring stability.⁴⁸ UNESCO has developed a current three step plan: first monitor and assess the damage in Syria, second reduce destruction and loss of heritage through international awareness and third protect the heritage sites through technical assistance. Though there is a plan in place, UNESCO often has issues implementing their goals due to the chaos of conflict.

There is a new phenomenon being conducted now in the mainstream of warfare called “cultural cleansing.”⁴⁹ Cultural cleansing is defined as an intentional strategy that seeks to destroy cultural diversity through the deliberate targeting of individuals identified based on their cultural, ethnic or religious background, combined with deliberate attacks on their places of worship, memory and learning.⁵⁰ At the *International Conference on Heritage and Cultural Diversity at Risk in Iraq and Syria*, the conference concluded that there were links between conflict and culture. The intentional targeting of cultural heritage was an attempt to destroy the legitimacy of the opposition to exist.⁵¹ Although much of the damage towards these heritage sites have been intentional for delegitimization of an opposition, another reason for the destruction is using those sites as military areas.⁵² With the protected status of cultural areas not being allowed to come under fire, many would seek an opportunity to seize the area of cultural value to their benefit as they cannot be attacked by an opposing force as it would destroy said site. This leaves a problem at hand. Much of the destruction towards the cultural heritage sites is in violation of the *1954 Hague Convention* and *1999 Second Protocol*.⁵³ In response to the claims of cultural cleansing and destruction, the international community commenced an international ban on trade of cultural objects, the creation of a protected cultural zone to reduce violence, stronger investment in education to prevent

⁴³ “The World Heritage Convention”, *UNESCO*, 2017.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “Ancient History, Modern Destruction: Assessing the Current Status of Syria’s World Heritage Sites Using High-Resolution Satellite Imagery”, *AAAS*, 2014.

⁴⁶ “About Us”, *UNESCO*, *UNESCO*, 2011.

⁴⁷ “The Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage Project”, *UNESCO*, 2011.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ “Expert Meeting on the ‘Responsibility to Protect’”, *UNESCO*, 2015.

⁵⁰ “Heritage and Cultural Diversity at Risk in Iraq and Syria Report”, *UNESCO*, 2014.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² “Practice Relating to Rule 39. Use of Cultural Property for Military Purposes”, *ICRC*, 2017.

⁵³ “The Hague Convention 1954”, *Blue Shield International*, 2018.



radicalization and promote respect for cultural diversity, stronger implementation of the *1954 Convention*, and further in-depth review of cultural cleansing.⁵⁴

A major issue towards the preservation of cultural sites in Syria is the bombings from the air campaign from coalition forces against terrorism.⁵⁵ The reason for this is a lack of regard towards these sensitive sites. Some sites are not just special buildings, but towards those of archaeological interest. Due to the air bombings more than 140 of the 470 sites in Idlib, Syria have been destroyed.⁵⁶ This carelessness about these sensitive sites are having repercussions towards the locals and to the international community with losing priceless artifacts. Cooperation is needed with the coalition forces against terrorism to avoid damaging these priceless areas.

One of the most damaging issues that cultural sites are facing within Syria are looters that go to the sites to tamper and vandalize the artifacts.⁵⁷ Many of these items are often presented to private collectors in the United States and Europe where they can be sold for millions of dollars. This is a complete and direct violation of the 1970 convention against smuggling. A method that the Syrian Government has been conducting to counter the smuggling is to place a clear, traceable liquid on much of the artifacts.⁵⁸ They are invisible to the naked eye, but when viewed under ultraviolet light they can be seen. Other methods to help prevent smuggling is to relocate much the art away from areas of conflict, another is to wait for UNESCO or certified individuals to evaluate an area and objects to be determined if moving can damage the area of importance or should remain untouched.⁵⁹ In 2017, However, it will take more cooperation from coalition forces and the international community to help reduce the amount of damage the cultural sites face in Syria.⁶⁰

Conclusion

UNESCO has many challenges to face as it tries to achieve its goals of preserving World Heritage and Natural Heritage Sites, but conflict and natural disaster make it more difficult. Although protocols have been made in the past such as the *Sendai Framework*, the *Hague Conventions* and others, the attempts to close the gaps for the lack natural disaster readiness and the attempts to secure and protect Cultural Heritage sites in conflict are often lacking.⁶¹ The fundamental issues at hand are Natural Heritage Reserves failing to meet the *Framework for Damage Risk Reduction*. In conflict, there is a rise of cultural cleansing, the smuggling of priceless artifacts out of Syria and other war-torn areas, the abuse of the protection system of Heritage Sites for military benefit and the carelessness of collateral forces when repelling terrorism. All these issues have caused heritage sites to be damaged.⁶² Delegates are to be actively searching for ways to encourage Member States to resolve the lack of disaster response for natural heritage sites. Delegates are to

⁵⁴ “Heritage and Cultural Diversity at Risk in Iraq and Syria Report”, *UNESCO*, 2014.

⁵⁵ “The Scorched Earth: Aleppo”, *NAOC*, 2016.

⁵⁶ “Saving Syria's Cultural Heritage”, *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, 2017.

⁵⁷ “Saving Syria's Heritage: Archaeologists discover invisible solution”, *BBC*, 2017.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ “Syria's Civil War: Aleppo's Heritage sites 'in danger'”, *Aljazeera*, 2017.

⁶¹ “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”, *UNISDR*, 2015.

⁶² “Practice Relating to Rule 39. Use of Cultural Property for Military Purposes”, *ICRC*.



also think of ways to help prevent culture cleansing and to resolve the increase of looting in World Heritage sites through UNESCO's mandate. Delegates should be looking for ways to increase cooperative measures and awareness to the damages of cultural sites in conflict. Delegates are to also be actively searching in ways to help recover lost artifacts through proper channels of diplomacy and develop a proper measure that can enable cooperation of the private and public sector.



II. Protecting the World's Oceans

Introduction

Covering more than two-thirds of the Earth, the ocean is what makes life habitable on earth and is a source of much of its life.⁶³ The Ocean provides an essential source of nourishment, especially to those in developing countries.⁶⁴ Many countries rely on fish as a source of protein. According to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), 17% of the world's population relies on fish for protein and supports the livelihoods of almost 10%-12% of the earth.⁶⁵ The ocean also helps humanity in a range of ways from aiding the development of new drugs that can possibly cure cancer to providing new and innovative ways for renewable energy.⁶⁶ Overall, the ocean is a part of humanity's common heritage and is important for many cultures and all walks of life. Unfortunately, because of human activity in the last 200 years with the advent of industrialization, the ocean's environmental, social, and economic benefits are disappearing. With the rise of Overfishing, illegal fishing, pollution, agricultural waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and coastal development the ocean's ability to provide food, clean water, and recover from environmental stresses like hurricanes and carbon absorption from the atmosphere is becoming strained.⁶⁷ Climate Change is causing and will continue to cause coastal erosion and flooding unless action is taken. This will continue to cause the loss of habitat and way of life for millions of people, especially to those who live on small islands.⁶⁸

Another issue is the increasing loss of biodiversity worldwide. With coastal habitats under stress from development and human activity, coral reefs have been reduced by 20% and an additional 20% lost altogether.⁶⁹ Seagrass is also seeing a rapid disappearance and invasive species unknown to certain areas of the ocean are contributing to most of the biodiversity loss.⁷⁰ Marine pollution, land sources account for 80% of marine pollution, and excessive nutrients from sewage and agricultural runoff have caused dead zones in the ocean.⁷¹ Plastics also accounts for most of the damage to ocean life. Plastics when released to the ocean break down into toxic micro-particles causing animals to mistake for food and it causes them either choke or develop an illness and die.⁷² Ocean acidification is continuing to increase due to greenhouse gas emissions, the ocean accounts for 26% of CO₂ absorption that is emitted into the atmosphere from human activity.⁷³ This increased absorption of CO₂ causes the pH levels of the Ocean to drop leading to a reduction of the availability of Calcium for plankton and shellfish species.⁷⁴ This threatens their survival and since they are often the part of the foundation of the food chain, this could disrupt it leading to a

⁶³ "Preserving the Ocean", *UNESCO*, 2018.

⁶⁴ "Healthy Ocean, Healthy People", *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ "Healthy Ocean, Healthy People", *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁶⁸ "Healthy Ocean, Healthy People", *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² "Ocean Issues & Threats", *Greenpeace*, 2017.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*



catastrophic shift of the entire oceanic ecosystem. If humans do not act effectively the ocean will be 150% more acidic by 2100.⁷⁵

International and Regional Frameworks

UNESCO established the *Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)* in 1960 to serve as a principal point in the United Nations System of Oceanic Observation, Science, Services and Data Exchange.⁷⁶ Much of the work of IOC was regarding fish stocks and whaling in the early years, but as more research of the climate became more available, the more responsibility it undertook. With the advent of climate change, the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* in 1992 adopted *Agenda 21*.⁷⁷ Within *Agenda 21*, Chapter 17 of it deals with the protection of oceans and the advocating for the sustainable use of it with its living resources.⁷⁸ Since 1997, the IOC has been helping Member States in their efforts to establish proper management plans towards the sustainable and rational use of the ocean's resources.⁷⁹ *The United Nations Climate Change Conference* in 2015, also known as *COP21*, succeeded the *Kyoto Protocol* implemented more about sustainable use and protection of the ocean than its predecessor.⁸⁰ The ocean was finally considered a key role in climate change as no prior agreement included ocean with the reduction of carbon emissions. Appearing in the final part of the Paris agreement it included, "noting that it is important to ensure the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans...".⁸¹ Although this was significant towards the acknowledgement of the ocean, financial implementation and other instances relating to commitment stall some efforts of revitalizing the ocean.⁸² Since COP21, the upcoming meeting in the Ocean and Climate Platform in September 2018 will discuss further efforts towards methods of sustainable development of the ocean.⁸³

Implementing New Methods

Since the Integration of the Ocean into COP21 discussions regarding climate change has mostly stalled around the talks about the possible reduction of carbon emissions generated by humans on a land base.⁸⁴ The ocean has only been given a marginal consideration in the reduction of emissions as of now, but integration into the future protocols and resolutions are needed. There are solutions that are in development in three main categories: the restoration and preservation of biodiversity, the reduction of pollution and combating climate change, and using the ocean for sustainable development. When discussing the restoration and preservation of biodiversity, it can prove to be

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO", *International Coral Reef Initiative*, 2016

⁷⁷ "About UN Oceans", *UNOCEANS*, 2017.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ "Healthy Ocean, Healthy People", *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁸⁰ "COP21: a universal agreement and a first for the ocean", *Tara Expeditions Foundation*, 2015.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ "From COP21 towards the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)", *UNESCO*, 2018.

⁸⁴ "COP21: a universal agreement and a first for the ocean", *Tara Expeditions Foundation*, 2015.



difficult as it has remained minimally studied.⁸⁵ Much of the ocean remains unexplored and many of the ocean's unique traits and creatures remain unknown. We cannot protect and preserve what we do not know. One innovative system dedicated towards the preservation of biodiversity is the implementation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).⁸⁶ MPAs have yet to put be implemented on a large scale, but the idea behind it is that it restricts human activities in defined areas and it offers protection to coastal and shoreline ecosystems.⁸⁷ With MPAs the studying and observation of marine life can be undisturbed by fishing and other human activities. This can overall help with comparing impacts of biodiversity in other areas.⁸⁸ When discussing the reduction of pollution and climate change, information becomes imperative to its efforts. The ocean has a complex system of water patterns dedicated to regulation of earth's climate.⁸⁹ Once again to obtain this information the methods that can be used include continued observation and data collection using satellites, research ships, buoys, and autonomous robots. In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the scientific community came to a concession that international cooperation is needed for accessing of information of the ocean.⁹⁰ UNESCO has created sub organizations dedicated towards the gathering and posting of information since 1992, but overall statistics declare that humans' understanding of the ocean's knowledge base at a minimal level is only at 62% due to lack of funding and political support⁹¹. Besides the need of information, there is need for further cooperation with the private sector to limit greenhouse emissions.⁹² With a stronger understanding of disaster risks and the gathering of information about the ocean the goals of sustainability of the ocean could be achieved. Education will be domineering towards the reversal of climate change with the ocean. The ocean being used for sustainable development is important for many island nations, from Micronesia to Fiji, who rely on it for their markets.⁹³⁹⁴ According to the World Ocean Observatory, many island fishers, such as Maldives, Tuvalu, and the Caribbean islands contribute more than 10% of their GDP and sometimes go as high as 50% of exports. If sustainable development does not occur these nations could contribute to future crisis of refugees in addition to ones caused by climate change.⁹⁵

A suggested way to promote sustainable development of the ocean is to “blue the green economy”.⁹⁶ That means to develop sustainable economic activities which generate jobs and assist in poverty alleviation while also integrating proper management and adaptation to climate change and other issues.⁹⁷ The key points within the blue-green economy is to include the development of blue carbon markets, protection and restoration of ocean ecosystems, greater use of renewable energy from the ocean, the recycling of ocean pollutants, and change fisheries and aquaculture

⁸⁵ “Healthy Ocean, Healthy People”, *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁸⁶ “The Benefits of Marine Protected Areas”, *Commonwealth of Australia*, 2003.

⁸⁷ “Marine Protected Areas Vital to Restoring Biodiversity”, *The World Bank*, 2012.

⁸⁸ “The Benefits of Marine Protected Areas”, *Commonwealth of Australia*, 2003.

⁸⁹ “Healthy Ocean, Healthy People”, *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² “3 Ways to Reduce Climate Change Impact on Oceans”, *International Chamber of Commerce*, 2017.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ “Small Island Nations.” *Humans and the Ocean | World Ocean Observatory*, 2017.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ “Healthy Ocean, Healthy People”, *UNESCO*, 2010.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*



management to further sustainable methods.⁹⁸ With lack of attention towards the oceans, the estimated climate impact cost can range from \$322 Billion in 2050 to \$1.3 Trillion in 2100.⁹⁹ To create this ideal model of sustainable development in a blue-green economy, there needs to be a better relationship with the ocean and human activity. Only through active participation and observation can better understanding of the ocean's complex system be achieved. Only through education by public awareness can change from our unsustainable use to a sustainable one¹⁰⁰. By building the ocean's knowledge base, protecting and creating sustainable measures of the ocean and presenting the risks and information to the public can ocean sustainability be accomplished in the future.

Case Study: The Pacific Garbage Patch

The Great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch was discovered in 1972 and is currently located halfway between Hawaii and California.¹⁰¹ It currently contains about 80 metric tons of plastic and is composed of small plastic pieces that are no larger than 0.5 cm.¹⁰² The estimated size of the garbage patch is about 1.6 million square km.¹⁰³ It is thought that the Great Pacific Garbage Patch was formed gradually by ocean currents and marine pollution. The improper waste disposal and management of trash (illegal dumping and littering) lead to the development of the garbage patch¹⁰⁴. With plastic becoming more common in the ocean, animals confuse the plastic for food causing malnutrition and illness. About 700 species have encountered marine debris, and 92% have encountered plastic and 17% have been affected by plastic¹⁰⁵. There is 180x more plastic than food at the garbage patch. Fishing nets littered in the ocean have also caused damage to marine life as some animals such as sea turtles becoming entangled and causing death. Not only does the plastic pollution affect the marine life, but also humans.¹⁰⁶ It is estimated that Plastic Pollution costs an annual \$13 billion per year worldwide to beach cleanups and monetary loss by low amounts of fish. Not only does the plastic affect humans monetarily, but it also affects the food chain through a process of bioaccumulation.¹⁰⁷ Bioaccumulation is when chemicals in plastics enter an animal feeding on plastic, then a predator consumes the prey, the animal who ingested plastic, thus leading to the predator also ingesting plastic.¹⁰⁸ Eventually, this process leads back to humans and the chemicals enter human bodies with the potential to cause illness.¹⁰⁹ Efforts to clean the garbage patch have been limited to simple cleanup of the garbage, but the main issue is gathering the microplastics, which are small enough to not be seen by the human eye.¹¹⁰

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Introduction", *Garbagepatch.net*, 2012.

¹⁰² "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch", *The Ocean Cleanup*, 2014.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ "Plastic and Human Health: A Micro Issue", *NCBI*, 2017.

¹¹⁰ "How scientists plan to clean up plastic waste threatening marine life", *The Independent*, 2016.



There are currently many vessels in place to gather the garbage thanks to the efforts of NGOs such as the Ocean cleanup and Ocean Conservancy, but not enough is being done. There are new innovative technologies dedicated towards the removal of microplastics such as V-shaped arrays of floating barriers to prototypes of clean robotic filters to clean up the microplastics, but funding is needed to resolve the plastic menace in the Pacific and all over the world.¹¹¹¹¹²

Conclusion

The world's oceans are at risk due to excessive amounts of pollution caused by human activity, and the consequences of lack of attention towards it has caused ocean diversity to take a hit along with the coastal countries associated.¹¹³ The international community has made progress towards helping the world's oceans, but it was not until recently that recognition of the ocean's importance towards climate change did discussion begin. There are methods towards the restoration and preservation of ocean life, but there is a lack of understanding of the ocean's role in climate change and how to manage the restoration.¹¹⁴ Information and research are imperative towards the understanding of the oceans and cooperation is a must.¹¹⁵ Another issue at hand is that there is a lack of funding towards research towards. To reiterate, we cannot protect and preserve what we do not know. To assist the goals of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development, it is suggested that "bluing the green economy" will help provide action towards protecting the ocean and helping developing Member States economically. Only through education by public awareness can change from our unsustainable use to a sustainable one.¹¹⁶ By building the ocean's knowledge base, creating sustainable measures of the ocean, and by presenting the risks and information to the public can the ocean be protected. Delegates should be thinking of ways to improve research methods of the ocean, how funding can be obtained towards the oceans through UNESCO means, how to combat negligence towards the ocean, how to increase public awareness and ways to possibly improve upon removing microplastics across the oceans. Delegates are to also think of ways to improve the current methods within international and regional systems regarding the protection of oceanic ecosystems.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² "Lack of Staffing, Funds Prevent Marine Protected Areas from Realizing Full Potential", *Conservation International*, 2017.

¹¹³ "Facts and figures on marine biodiversity", *UNESCO*, 2017.

¹¹⁴ "Healthy Ocean, Healthy People", *UNESCO*, 2010.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.



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