



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME STUDY GUIDE

TOPIC I

**ENFORCING REGULATIONS
ON THE USAGE OF NUCLEAR
PLANTS**

TOPIC II

**ENSURING A JUST TRANSITION
INTO SUSTAINABILITY**



GMUN 2023
GENIUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE



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INTRODUCTION TO BOARD OF DAIS

Nuraini Shapariah

Chair of UNEP-GMUN 2023

Dear fellow purveyors of diplomacy, it is my privilege to welcome you to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) of GMUN 2023. My name is Nuraini Shapariah and will be serving as your Chair for this council.

I am a Legal Associate, specialises in Banking and Real Estate transactions, and an alumna of GENIUS@Pintar Negara. It is a pleasure to be back with GENIUS@Pintar, particularly the MUN Committee. During my undergraduate studies, I was actively involved in the MUN circuit and this GMUN would be my third time chairing a council. Aside from my passion for MUN conferences and the world issues that they may concern, I am into mootings and parliamentary debate. I appreciate the procedure and I hope all delegates are able to transform their research into meaningful discussions and debates. Each country in UNEP is expected to present its own challenges and solution on the matter in the concerns of UNEP, and hope that all delegates will treat the issues of discussion with diplomacy and sincerity. I will be looking forward to seeing all delegates actively participating in this council and construing successful resolutions.

Should any of you have questions or concerns whether it be regarding the topics of the council or ROP, please do not hesitate to contact me at nurainishapariah@gmail.com. With all that, I hope this experience will benefit all delegates and will be a great success. See you all there!

Regards,

Nuraini Shapariah

Chair of UNEP-GMUN 2023



Dhanya Dhayanand

Co-chair of UNEP-GMUN 2023

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) of GMUN 2023! My name is Dhanya Night Dhayanand and I'll be serving as your Co-chair for this conference.

I am a student at Kolej Tuanku Ja'afar who is studying Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Economics, and Physics under the A-Levels programme. I attended my first MUN conference in 2021 through IMUN, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of how policies are debated and passed. I have also been a delegate at the Harvard Model Congress San Francisco MUN 2023, where I was named Best Debater. This year, I became a member of the Malaysian Youth Association of Diplomacy and Policy (MYADP) under the SMK-Affairs Department; through their initiatives, I hope to help provide better access to MUN opportunities to secondary school students in government schools. This is my first time co-chairing a MUN conference and am so lucky to have a supportive team beside me! On behalf of the Chair, we are looking forward to a diplomatic and thoughtful conference with you all.

Best,

Dhanya Dhayanand

Co-chair of UNEP-GMUN 2023

INTRODUCTION TO COUNCIL

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading environmental authority in the United Nations system. UNEP uses its expertise to strengthen environmental standards and practices while helping implement environmental obligations at the country, regional and global levels. UNEP's mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.¹

It has six areas of concentration which are climate change, post-conflict and disaster management, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances, and resource efficiency/sustainable consumption.²

To date, the international community has not applied the principle of universal jurisdiction in the field of environment and as such UNEP doesn't have direct legal authority like a court.³ However, it is well within UNEP's jurisdiction to develop and recommend environmental policies, guidelines and strategies to member states as well as work towards enhancing environmental governance by providing a platform to negotiate, adopt, and review multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Examples of MEAs include Convention on Biological Diversity and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.⁴

Other jurisdictions of UNEP include: Environmental Assessment and Reporting,⁵ Capacity Building,⁶ and Resource Mobilization.⁷

¹ United Nations. UNEP : United Nations Environment Programme <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/08/unesp-united-nations-environment-programme/#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Environment%20Programme,country%2C%20regional%20and%20global%20levels>.

² Ibid.

³ UNEP: Observations on The Scope and Application of Universal Jurisdiction to Environmental Protection. https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/75/universal_jurisdiction/unep_e.pdf

⁴ UNEP: Secretariats and Conventions (MEAs) <https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter/secretariats-and-conventions>

⁵ UNEP: Environmental Assessment <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environment-under-review/what-we-do/environmental-assessment>

⁶ UNEP: Capacity Building <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/biosafety/what-we-do/capacity-building#:~:text=The%20BCH%20is%20a%20mechanism,their%20obligations%20under%20the%20protocol>.

⁷ UN Environment Document Repository <https://wedocs.unep.org/>



TOPIC 1: ENFORCING REGULATIONS ON THE USAGE OF NUCLEAR PLANTS

KEY TERMS

Nuclear Energy

Form of energy released from the nucleus, the core of atoms, made up of protons and neutrons. This source of energy can be produced in two ways: fission – when nuclei of atoms split into several parts – or fusion – when nuclei fuse together. The nuclear energy harnessed around the world today to produce electricity is through nuclear fission.⁸

Nuclear material

A collective term for materials so designated in this Order. For information, these materials are americium-241, americium-243, californium, curium, deuterium, enriched lithium, neptunium-237, plutonium-238, plutonium-239-241, plutonium-242, thorium, tritium, depleted uranium, normal uranium, enriched uranium, and uranium-233.⁹

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Widely known as the world’s “Atoms for Peace and Development” organization within the United Nations family, the IAEA is the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear field. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.¹⁰

Less economically developed countries (LEDCs)

Countries that have less developed economies than others.

More economically developed countries (MEDCs)

Countries that have more developed economies than others.

Export Control

Federal laws that prohibit the unlicensed export of certain commodities or information for reasons of national security or protections of trade.

⁸ International Atomic Energy Agency. What is Nuclear Energy? The Science of Nuclear Power. <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/what-is-nuclear-energy-the-science-of-nuclear-power>

⁹ U.S. Department of Energy. Directives Program. https://www.directives.doe.gov/terms_definitions/nuclear-materials

¹⁰ International Atomic Energy Agency. <https://www.iaea.org/about>

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1945: The United States of America becomes the first country to develop and use nuclear energy for military purposes in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This led to international interest and research for nuclear energy both peaceful and not.

1957: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is established within the United Nations system as an autonomous organisation in order to promote safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as establishing safeguards to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons.¹¹

1979: In order to avoid nuclear materials from falling into the wrong hands the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) was adopted and is one of the first legally binding documents ensuring the safety of nuclear material.¹²

1986: On 26 April 1986 The Chernobyl accident occurred as a result of a flawed reactor design that was operated with inadequately trained personnel. The resulting steam explosion and fires released at least 5% of the radioactive reactor core into the environment, causing massive environmental consequences due to deposition of radioactive materials in many parts of Europe. This disaster was a turning point in nuclear energy which brought about international attention to the pressing matter of strict regulations, safety measures, and emergency preparedness in the operation of nuclear plants.

After further efforts by the international community to establish safe use of nuclear energy, conventions aimed to ensure prompt notification and international cooperation in the event of a nuclear or radiological emergency are adopted. These conventions include the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.¹³

1994: The adoption of the Convention of Nuclear Safety marks a milestone in international regulation of nuclear energy as it is a legally-binding international treaty under which 80 Contracting Parties commit to maintain a high level of safety at land-based nuclear power plants by setting international benchmarks to which they subscribe to.¹⁴

¹¹ The International Atomic Energy Agency. Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. <https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2015/pdf/IAEA%20factsheet.pdf>

¹² The International Atomic Energy Agency. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment. <https://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/conventions/convention-physical-protection-nuclear-material-and-its-amendment>

¹³ The International Atomic Energy Agency. Nuclear safety conventions. <https://www.iaea.org/topics/nuclear-safety-conventions>

¹⁴ USNRC. Treaties and Conventions. <https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/ip/treaties-conventions.html#cns>

2011: On 11 March 2011 The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster occurred in Japan following a massive earthquake and tsunami. This led to re-evaluations of nuclear safety measures, emergency response capabilities, and the need to enhance international cooperation.

By September 2011, the IAEA developed the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety (Action Plan), endorsed by IAEA Member States, which defined a programme of work to strengthen the global nuclear safety framework in response to the accident. In addition to the Action Plan, a great deal of work has been conducted worldwide to strengthen nuclear safety.¹⁵

2015: The ever nearing threat of climate change has pressured the international community to take harsh and swift measures in limiting global warming during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France. This conference has led to a legally binding international treaty on climate change, The Paris Agreement which was adopted on 12 December 2015.

The Paris Agreement has acknowledged the necessity of nuclear energy in accomplishing its goal. However, it emphasises the importance of the highest level of safety standards and regulations when dealing with nuclear energy due to the threats it carries.¹⁶

2017: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted on 7 July 2017 marks another milestone in nuclear non-proliferation. This treaty is a legally binding document which includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities including undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also obliges States parties to provide adequate assistance to individuals affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, as well as to take necessary and appropriate measures of environmental remediation in areas under its jurisdiction or control contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons.¹⁷

2021: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force on 22 January.

¹⁵ The International Atomic Energy Agency. Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident. <https://www.iaea.org/topics/response/fukushima-daiichi-nuclear-accident>

¹⁶ The International Atomic Energy Agency. Nuclear Power and the Paris Agreement. <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/16/11/np-parisagreement.pdf>

¹⁷ UN: Office of Disarmament Affairs. Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20on%20the%20Prohibition,threaten%20to%20use%20nuclear%20weapons.>

MAJOR ISSUES WITHIN THE TOPIC

Variety in Regulatory Frameworks

Countries with nuclear programmes usually have their own safety and security regulatory frameworks to ensure the safety of their nuclear power plants as well as national level bodies to implement and ensure those regulations are met. However, this causes variation between how different countries regulate their nuclear programmes and the level of effectiveness of the enforcements of those regulations. These variety in regulations may cause the safety and security standards of some nuclear power plants to be lacklustre compared to those in other nations.

While the IAEA does have safety standards that provide guidelines on principles of protection, radiation effects and nuclear plant operations as well as provide assistance in developing regulatory frameworks for countries with developing nuclear programmes, the adherence and international commitment to these standards by different nations may vary. This lack of commitment and adherence may lead to dangerous nuclear disasters that offsets the positive change that nuclear power-plants can provide.

Non-Proliferation and Security

The dual-use nature of nuclear energy, may it be for destructive military purposes or as a source of a cleaner and more environmentally-friendly form of energy generation raises concerns about misuse of nuclear technology by nations to develop nuclear weapons. While the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has entered into force, there are still a lot of countries with major nuclear arsenals who refuse to be a part of the treaty.

Development of nuclear weapons are not however limited to governments and nations but a lacklustre security standard and regulation may cause nuclear material and technology to fall into the wrong hands especially in countries experiencing both internal and external conflicts. These security threats include terrorists, insurgencies, civil wars, and other military organisations. While this scenario is rather unlikely due to the complexity required in developing a nuclear weapon it still remains a cause of concern.¹⁸

The nature of nuclear power plants as a strategic military target makes it a security threat whenever a nation is involved in a conflict. There are rather recent examples of this such as the Russian capture of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in the on-going Russo

¹⁸ C. Wirz and E. Egger – Use of nuclear and radiological weapons by terrorists? International Review of the Red Cross. https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/irrc_859_egger_wirz.pdf

Ukrainian conflict which increases the risk of nuclear incidents and accidents.¹⁹ In 2020, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan has also threatened to launch a missile strike at the Armenian Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant during the Armenia–Azerbaijan border crisis which is a flagrant violation of International Humanitarian Law and First Additional Protocol to Geneva Conventions.²⁰

Access to nuclear technology and resources among nations

Nuclear energy's necessity in helping achieve climate goals set by the Paris Agreement is undeniable. However, there is a necessary difficult decision to be made which is essentially a gamble on millions of lives. Should every nation be allowed to develop nuclear programmes?

On one hand, nuclear energy development in LEDCs would definitely contribute greatly to achieving said climate goals. However, some LEDCs do not currently have the technological, financial, and military capacity to develop nuclear power-plants with high-level safety regulations. While the IAEA and UNEP does assist in capacity building, the political and economical instability faced by some LEDCs will always be an increased risk in the safety and security of said power-plant.

Ensuring just transition

The rapid development in nuclear energy technology has led to transitions from traditional fossil fuels to more environmentally-friendly nuclear power plants. However, the potential dangers of nuclear power plants has led to strict international regulations and pressure from the international community to ensure that nations with nuclear power plants are able to keep them secure from threats both internal and external.

At first glance, this may seem to only be beneficial, however there are some issues that may arise from international regulations that are set too strictly. Regulations and standards which are overly-strict will hinder and slow down LEDCs from achieving access to nuclear materials and power plants. Participation of LEDCs in the transition to nuclear energy is not only necessary in achieving global climate goals but also acts as an opportunity to further develop its economy and energy independence. Preventing access to nuclear power plant developments in LEDCs may also be considered unfair and unjust as nuclear energy just becomes another advantage only limited to MEDCs. Thus, widening the gap even more between LEDCs and MEDCs.

¹⁹ The Diplomatic Service of the European Union. Ukraine-joint statement on the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vienna-international-organisations/ukraine-joint-statement-situation-zaporizhzhia_en

²⁰ MFA of Armenia. https://archive.ph/20200804172947/https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2020/07/16/MFA_Metsamor/10379



Public Participation and Transparency

Engaging and educating the public regarding the safety, security, and necessity of nuclear energy and power plants is essential in allowing them to make informed decisions instead of those based on fear mongering prevalent in anything related to nuclear energy. A more educated and informed public will lead to a better safety culture and prevent unsubstantiated public backlash from hindering progress of nuclear power plant developments.

Transparency to the public regarding international nuclear regulation is also important to build public trust and support for decisions made by the international community which can ensure smoother implementation of those decisions at a national level.

STATUS QUO

International regulatory frameworks

The international regulatory frameworks ensuring safety and security of nuclear energy including those that are legally binding and otherwise are actually really strong and up to date. The current issues however lies in the international community's cooperation and adherence to these standards and regulations loosening the enforcements of said regulations. Currently nations are allowed to develop their own safety regulations as well as their own bodies to ensure the enforcement of it but the standards of these regulations are frequently monitored and assessed by the IAEA.²¹

Access to nuclear technology and resources among nations

Currently the IAEA recognises the sovereign right of every member state to decide on whether or not to launch a nuclear programme.²² This means that every member state regardless of its military, technological or economical advancements have the right to launch a nuclear programme. This may threaten the physical security of nuclear material and technology as well as increase the risk of radiological accidents if a nation makes over-expedited decisions on launching a nuclear programme.

²¹ The International Atomic Energy Agency. Safety standards. <https://www.iaea.org/resources/safety-standards>

²² The International Atomic Energy Agency. Introducing Nuclear Power – The Role of National Leadership. <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/role-nuclear-power.pdf>



Just Transition

Currently, nuclear power plants are mostly located in European, North American, South and East Asia countries.²³ The establishments of these power plants allow countries to gain more energy independence as well as build their economy by introducing more high-level jobs in new sectors. The efforts by the international community to promote the use and development of nuclear energy as a form of green energy has caused nations to develop their own nuclear programmes. However, there are still a lot of LEDCs who struggle in this aspect as establishing nuclear programmes requires a lot of initial investments up front which is a huge financial constraint. When deciding on enforcement of regulations, the international community should also keep in mind that over-regulations may make it even harder for LEDCs that are already struggling to develop their own nuclear programmes.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG)

The Nuclear Suppliers collection (NSG) is a collection of nuclear supplier nations that aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons by putting two sets of export guidelines for nuclear and nuclear-related goods into effect.

The so-called "Non-Proliferation Principle," which was adopted in 1994, states that a supplier may only sanction a transfer when confident that it will not aid in the spread of nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Principle aims to address the uncommon but significant situations in which adherence to the NPT or a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty may not be sufficient to ensure that a State will consistently support the Treaty's goals or that it will continue to uphold its obligations under the Treaty. The many international, legally binding documents in the realm of nuclear non-proliferation are consistent with and complemented by the NSG Guidelines.²⁴

This group holds great control over access of nuclear material by other member states and thus the agreement of member states within this group towards any regulations decided by the council is necessary to ensure the enforcement of said regulations.

²³ IAEA. Nuclear Share of Electricity Generation in 2022.
<https://pris.iaea.org/pris/worldstatistics/nuclearshareofelectricitygeneration.aspx>

²⁴ NSG – Nuclear Suppliers Group. <https://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/en/about-nsg>

IAEA

Being the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field, this body is by nature in close relation to the agenda.

United States of America

The United States of America has the largest number of nuclear power plants which supply at least 20% of their total annual electricity generation.²⁵ The significant shares of nuclear power plants and energy generation by the United States of America of total international nuclear energy and power plants makes it a major shareholder in the topics.

European Union and France

The total number of nuclear reactors in the member states of the European Union is 100 which actually beats that of the United States of America not taking into consideration that the USA is a single nation compared to the union nature of the EU. France is the main state that holds the most nuclear reactors which is 56 contributing to more than half the total number.²⁶ This makes the EU and especially France a major shareholder in the topic.

Russia and China

Two states known for their allied nature against Western countries hold the third (China) and fourth (Russia) largest number of nuclear power plants.²⁷ This makes them major shareholders representing the Eastern region of the world compared to that of the Western-European major shareholders.

LEDC

LEDCs involvement in safe and secure nuclear programme developments is necessary to achieving the climate goals set by the Paris Agreement as well as reducing general environmental pollution. These developments however, require international assistance and capacity building due to the high-initial investments needed for them.

²⁵ U.S. Energy Information Administration. *Nuclear power plants*. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/nuclear/nuclear-power-plants.php#:~:text=Nuclear%20power%20plants%20have%20generated%20power%20plants%20in%2028%20states>.

²⁶ Statista. Number of operable nuclear power reactors worldwide as of May 2023, by country. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/267158/number-of-nuclear-reactors-in-operation-by-country/>

²⁷ Ibid.



RELEVANCE TO THE UN

SDGs

Nuclear energy and its safe and secure regulation relates to the following SDGs:²⁸

- SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
- SDG 3- Good Health And Well-Being
- SDG 6 - Clean Water And Sanitation
- SDG 7 - Affordable And Clean Energy
- SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation And Infrastructure
- SDG 13 - Climate Action
- SDG 14 - Life Below Water
- SDG 15 - Life On Land
- SDG 17 - Partnerships For The Goals

PAST ACTIONS

Conventions and Treaties

There has been many legally binding conventions and treaties regarding the safety and security regulations of nuclear programmes by the international community including:

- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- Convention on Nuclear Safety
- Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
- Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
- Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

Establishment of international bodies

International bodies have been established which attempts to regulate nuclear technology and material safety and access such as:

- International Atomic Energy Agency
- United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
- International Nuclear Regulators Association
- Nuclear Suppliers Group

²⁸ IAEA. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
<https://www.iaea.org/about/overview/sustainable-development-goals>



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are many solutions that take different levels of extremities and prioritisations when it comes to enforcing regulation of nuclear energy including but not limited to:

Reassessing a nation's sovereign right to develop a nuclear programme

A set of minimum requirements that a nation has to achieve can be set before they are legally allowed to develop a nuclear programme. An assessment body should also accompany this.

Call for a singular, legally binding, international framework

This would be a more controversial and extreme approach which is implementing a single high-level safety standard for nuclear power plants that all member states have to legally follow.

Capacity building for LEDC to handle nuclear energy

To keep LEDCs from being left too far behind from the international stage when it comes to nuclear energy development, UNEP can organise capacity building programs that provide aid to assist LEDCs in achieving this goal.

Collaboration with other UN organs to ensure international military enforcement

In the event that member states violate regulations set by the international community, UNEP can call upon other UN organs such as the Disarmament and International Security (First Committee) and United Nations Security Council to take necessary responses in the form of military or other suitable approaches.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMAS)

1. How to ensure countries are able to maintain the security of their nuclear facilities, both from internal(Safety) and external(Military) threats;
2. How to determine if a country is fit to gain access to nuclear resources;
3. How to ensure that every country's regulatory framework is effective and stringent enough; and
4. Ensuring just transitions where LEDC will not be denied progress in nuclear facilities by the international community due to enforcement of regulation.



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TOPIC 2: ENSURING A JUST TRANSITION INTO SUSTAINABILITY

OVERVIEW

One of the most important aspects of resolving environmental and social issues while fostering economic development is ensuring a just transition toward sustainability. It acknowledges that vulnerable communities, people, or industries shouldn't be left behind as we move toward a sustainable future. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has actively promoted this idea in its activities as it recognizes the significance of a just transition in achieving sustainability. UNEP believes that moving towards a sustainable future necessitates not only addressing environmental issues but also taking into account social and economic factors to guarantee a just and equitable approach.²⁹

Besides, UNEP has emphasised the significance of incorporating social justice and equity concerns into sustainable development-related policies and strategies. This involves taking into account the rights and requirements of weaker groups, such as those who work in transition-affected industries, indigenous peoples, and underserved demographics. In order to ensure that their concerns and perspectives are taken into account, UNEP emphasises that these groups should be actively included in decision-making processes.³⁰

Further, UNEP acknowledges that a just transition entails offering assistance and chances to affected communities and workers. To lessen any potential negative effects of the transition, this can include retraining and reskilling programmes, income support, the creation of jobs in sustainable sectors, and social safety nets. No one should be left behind in the pursuit of sustainability, according to UNEP.³¹ On top of that, UNEP emphasises the value of global collaboration and cooperation in ensuring a just transition. It collaborates with enterprises, civil society groups, and other stakeholders to advance capacity building, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of best practises.³² Taking into account their particular circumstances and difficulties, UNEP assists nations in building frameworks and policies that enable a just transition.

²⁹ Sustainable Development Goals - Sustainability, United Nations, Academic Impact <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sustainability>

³⁰ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 October 2019 - Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, United Nations General Assembly <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/318/21/PDF/N1931821.pdf?OpenElement>

³¹ Ibid, p 5

³² Ibid, p 5



To conclude, UNEP supports the inclusion of social justice and equity issues in environmental policies and strategies and acknowledges that a just transition is necessary for attaining sustainability. UNEP seeks to guarantee that the transition to sustainability is equitable and advantageous for everyone by promoting inclusive and participatory approaches, assisting affected communities and workers, and strengthening international cooperation.

KEY TERMS

To date, no wide terminology refers to just transition, hence deciding on a common nomenclature and key definitions is a crucial first step to advancing conversations and preventing misunderstandings.

Just Transition

A comprehensive and equitable approach to managing societal and economic developments, particularly in the context of transitioning to a low-carbon economy.³³

Sustainability

The ability to sustain resources for a long time without harming or diminishing the resources it depends on. When referring to environmental sustainability, it means using natural resources in a responsible and balanced manner to ensure their preservation and regeneration for both current and future generations.³⁴

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations adopted a series of 17 interconnected goals in 2015, collectively known as the "Global Goals." SDGs offer a blueprint for world progress and seek to resolve the most pressing social, economic, and environmental issues.³⁵

³³ Climate change and financing a just transition, International Labor Organization https://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/social-finance/WCMS_825124/lang--en/index.htm

³⁴ The Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, International Institute for Sustainable Development <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2021-04/still-one-earth-natural-resources.pdf>

³⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



MAJOR ISSUES WITHIN THE TOPIC

While UNEP has been aggressively pushing the idea of a just transition into sustainability, there are a number of important issues and challenges that must be resolved to ensure effective implementation.

Implementation Gap

Converting the idea of a just transition into actual national and local policies and activities is one of the challenges. Although the need for a just transition is becoming more widely acknowledged,³⁶ putting actual safeguards in place to protect workers and communities can be challenging and calls for concerted action from numerous stakeholders.

Inequality and Vulnerable Groups

Addressing current social and economic imbalances is necessary to guarantee a just transition. Environmental deterioration and the move towards sustainability frequently have disproportionately negative effects on vulnerable groups, such as low-wage employees, marginalised communities, and indigenous populations.³⁷ To prevent escalating already-existing imbalances, UNEP's efforts must prioritise the participation and protection of vulnerable communities.

Economic Restructuring

Both employment losses and job creation may result from economic restructuring, notably the move towards greener businesses and workplaces. Changes in sectors, technology, and practises are frequently part of the transition to sustainability, and these changes can have an impact on employment trends.

Social and Economic Stability

Involuntary migration, often driven by economic restructuring, can lead to social and economic instability. Resources can be strained and problems might arise for both the displaced populations and the regions they migrate to when communities are forced to leave their homes. It is pertinent to note that the goal of adaptation strategies is to make communities more resilient, lessen the need for forced migration, and maintain social and economic stability.

³⁶ Forest Peoples Programme, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network, Centres of Distinction on Indigenous and Local Knowledge, & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2020). Local biodiversity outlooks 2. <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/lbo-2-en.pdf>

³⁷ Ibid.

It is crucial to note that the governments, international organisations, civil society, industry, and affected communities must work closely together to address these concerns. UNEP is essential in fostering communication, knowledge exchange, and offering direction to aid in a just transition. To overcome these obstacles and guarantee a just, equitable, and socially inclusive transition to sustainability, ongoing efforts are required. Thus, given the size and importance of these environmental and employment concerns, it is obvious that the world will not have the time or resources to address them separately or in sequence. It is essential to take on them together; doing so is not a choice.

STATUS QUO

UNEP recognizes the importance of a just transition and has been actively involved in supporting countries and stakeholders in achieving it. To date, UNEP's work in promoting a just transition encompasses several key areas:

Partnership Development

To advance the just transition agenda, UNEP works in partnerships and collaborations with governments, corporations, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders.³⁸ These collaborations promote cooperation, resource mobilisation, and expertise sharing to aid in the execution of just transition efforts.

Policy Support

UNEP assists governments and stakeholders in creating and implementing fair transition policies and strategies by providing policy direction and technical help.³⁹ This includes incorporating social and economic factors into environmental regulations, encouraging inclusive decision-making processes, and encouraging collaboration among many stakeholders.

Social Equity

In the transition to a green economy, UNEP emphasises the significance of social fairness as well as decent jobs. It advocates for the protection of workers' rights, the inclusion of vulnerable groups, and the establishment of decent and environmentally friendly jobs. UNEP collaborates with partners to detect and resolve potential social repercussions, as well as to foster social discussion for equitable outcomes.

³⁸ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 October 2019 - Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, United Nations General Assembly
<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/318/21/PDF/N1931821.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁹ Ibid.

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

Various parties are involved in the just transition to sustainability by which these parties play important roles in its execution. Initiators of UNEP's just transition programmes include a number of significant stakeholders, such as:

International Organizations and Financial Institutions

International organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Bank, and regional development banks are invested in the equitable transition and provide both financial and technical assistance.⁴⁰ They provide financial channels, grants, and loans to help governments and communities manage the hurdles of transitioning to sustainable economies.

Workers and Trade Unions

Workers and their representatives, particularly trade unions, are critical players in a just transition. They advocate for the protection of workers' rights and ensure that the transition to sustainable practises does not result in job losses or unjust labour practises.⁴¹ Trade unions regularly participate in negotiations, discourse, and consultation processes to guarantee that employees are included and their interests are protected during the transition.

RELEVANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS (UN)

The United Nations (UN) finds the idea of a just transition to be extremely pertinent and in line with its larger objectives and guiding principles. Aside from the SDGs, the relevancies of the just transition to the UN are as follows:

International Labor Standards

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), a special UN body, advocates for fair labour conditions and the defence of workers' rights. The idea of a just transition is consistent with the ILO's standards and recommendations for decent work and offers a framework for handling economic changes in a way that ensures social protection, job development, and possibilities for decent employment.⁴²

⁴⁰ Just Transition Finance Tool for banking and investing activities, International Labor Organization https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_860182.pdf

⁴¹ Hannah Johnston, Chris Land-Kazlauskas., Organizing On-Demand: Representation, Voice, and Collective Bargaining in the Gig Economy https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_624286.pdf

⁴² Just Transition Policy Brief, Social protection for a just transition., International Labor Organization <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?id=57975>

Paris Agreement on Climate Change

Fighting climate change and easing the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient future are the goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.⁴³ Since the Paris Agreement recognises the need to address the social and economic repercussions of climate action, a just transition is essential to its implementation. It emphasises treating employees and communities fairly while they undergo the shift to a low-carbon economy.

Multilateral Cooperation

The UN offers a forum for global challenges-related international cooperation and discussion. Collaboration between governmental entities, global organisations, commercial entities, labour unions, and civil society is necessary for a just transition.⁴⁴ The UN offers a platform for stakeholders to come together, exchange knowledge, share best practises, and create group strategies for achieving a just and sustainable transition.

Human Rights and Social Justice

Human rights, social justice, and equality are values upheld by the UN. A just transition complies with these principles by making sure that the switch to sustainable practises does not disproportionately harm communities, workers, or vulnerable groups.⁴⁵ It places a strong emphasis on the defence of employees' rights, on inclusive decision-making procedures, and on the fair allocation of rewards and costs.

PAST ACTIONS

The goals of UNEP are driven by sustainable development concepts, which place a strong emphasis on the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic factors. UNEP strives for a more sustainable and just world by solving environmental issues and advancing sustainability. However, it is pertinent to note that the just transition (within the purview of UNEP) is an ongoing project and subject to new developments and initiatives. To name few, UNEP's past actions are as follows:

⁴³ United Nations. (2015). Paris Agreement
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

⁴⁴ UN Human Rights Council. (2019). Report by the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. A/HRC/43/53.
<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/43/53>

⁴⁵ Ibid.



Collaboration with International Organizations

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and UNEP are a few of the international organisations with which UNEP has worked to advance the idea of a just transition.⁴⁶ This collaboration has included joint research, knowledge exchange, and the creation of frameworks and standards to help nations adopt just transition policies.

UNEP's Green Jobs Initiative

In 2007, UNEP and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) jointly established the Green Jobs Initiative.⁴⁷ The initiative aims to increase chances for respectable employment in environmentally friendly industries. It centred on assisting nations in incorporating social equality and environmental sustainability concerns into their employment policies and practises.

Engaging in International Platforms

UNEP actively engages in forums and conversations held on a global scale around transitions to a green economy, climate change, and sustainable development. UNEP participates in conferences held under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),⁴⁸ for example, and promotes for the inclusion of equitable transition in international climate policies.

Environmental Assessment and Monitoring

Environmental assessments and monitoring are carried out by UNEP to offer a thorough grasp of national and international environmental challenges. UNEP offers insightful data, analysis, and scientific assessments through projects like the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) reports,⁴⁹ empowering decision-makers to handle environmental issues in an informed manner.

⁴⁶ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 15 October 2019 - Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, United Nations General Assembly

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/318/21/PDF/N1931821.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴⁷ Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world., International Labour Organization

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_158733.pdf

⁴⁸ United Nations. (1992)., United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf

⁴⁹ United Nations Environment Programme, The Global Environment Outlook., <https://www.unep.org/geo/>

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

UNEP actively supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. UNEP's work aligns with several SDGs, such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water), among others. UNEP provides guidance and support to countries in achieving these goals through its programs and initiatives.

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

UNEP-GMUN shall discuss possible solutions which include but not limited to the followings:-

Economic Diversification

Creating sustainable industries and job possibilities is a key component of a just transition, which also involves encouraging economic diversity. This can involve funding projects that support a greener economy, such as those that use renewable energy, energy-saving technology, sustainable agriculture, and other fields.⁵⁰

International Cooperation

Cooperation between nations is necessary to address global issues. Collaboration between countries, the exchange of best practises, and aid to underdeveloped nations can promote a fair transition to sustainability on a global scale.⁵¹

Social Equity

To ensure that no group or community disproportionately pays the consequences of transitioning to sustainability, a just transition must prioritise social equity⁵². Addressing historical injustices and providing marginalised populations with opportunities to profit from the transition should be top priorities.

⁵⁰ International Resource Panel. (2019). Global resources outlook 2019: Natural resources for the future we want. UN Environment Programme. <https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.



QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMAS)

1. How to prevent socioeconomic vulnerability, particularly in tackling the involuntary migration issue during a just transition;
2. How coherent policies concerning labour, economic, environmental, social, and educational spheres to be established in striving for the transition towards sustainability;
3. How to safeguard and balance both Short-Term and Long-Term Goals in economic and social concerns with long-term sustainability objectives;
4. Ensuring a just energy transition and implementing measures to address the social and economic implications of the transition; and
5. Social consensus on the goal and pathways to sustainability and implementation at all levels.



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