

**Committee: UNESCO**

**Topic: Protecting Indigenous Cultures Affected by Deforestation**

**Report of the Chairs**

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### **I. Theme of the Conference**

Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA) is a conference dedicated to fostering authentic and passionate debate amongst delegates in order to generate solutions to current global issues. The theme of *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* encapsulates our mission to urge delegates to foresee a future in which these problems have been dissolved. With collaboration in mind, delegates from every committee are encouraged to visualize innovative resolutions and a prosperous world to come. Together, we will propel ourselves into an age in which brilliant ideas converge to transform our world and address its most paramount issues.

### **II. Rationale**

This committee aims to prioritize the protection of indigenous cultures affected by deforestation. In 2018, the world lost 30 million acres of forest.<sup>1</sup> This issue has affected many countries and regions around the world, including parts of Sudan, Mexico, Russia, Indonesia, Peru, Brazil, the Philippines, Ghana, and many more. Brazil has lost more than 1.3 million in total of forested area, and Ghana has lost 60% of its total forests.<sup>2</sup> This committee aims to create a future in which indigenous communities are protected from the effects of deforestation and more precautions are taken in regard to deforestation of inhabited areas.

### **III. Background of the Topic**

Nearly 500,000 indigenous people live in the Amazon basin, and these people depend on the dense jungles for subsistence. Two of the largest tribes living in the area, the Yanomami and Kayapo, have populations of around 35,000 and 1,000, respectively.<sup>3</sup> As of August 2019, it is estimated that around 17 percent of the Amazon's forested areas have been lost due to fires. This, in tandem with deforestation in the name of urban expansion and agriculture, can and will prove to be life-threatening to these people who reside in this area.

The United Nations Global Compact has been making efforts to sustain indigenous populations by attempting to get them involved in business ventures such as being suppliers, contractors, and employees in a variety of industries. In terms of deforestation, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has said that it is possible to stop all deforestation with the right mix of policies, social action, and political will. Also, the FAO has discussed the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which could halt deforestation and increase forest cover.

#### **IV. Contemporary Evidence of the Topic**

Although the Amazon has been seriously affected by deforestation, it is not alone in its deforestation issues. For instance, Russia, a country that contains around 25% of the world's untouched forests and 70% of the world's boreal forests, is losing around two thousand miles of woodland each year simply due to human population growth<sup>4</sup>. Russia also is host to a number of indigenous populations who inhabit these forested areas; and while these people only make up about 0.2% of their population, they inhabit nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of Russia's territory.

In 2011, the United Nations released a mobile app that would allow users to see their carbon footprint and how they could reduce it in order to protect the environment. In September of 2014, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that the deforestation of the planet's mangroves resulted in economic damages of nearly \$42 billion annually.

In terms of indigenous peoples, the UN voted on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which delineates and defines the individual rights of indigenous people, including their ownership rights to cultural and ceremonial expression, identity, and language, among other things<sup>5</sup>. It's important to form solutions for this issue due to the fact that it promotes a healthy environment and upholds the world's cultural diversity.

#### **V. References and Research Resources**

1. Hays, B. (2019). Earth lost nearly 30 million acres of tropical forest last year. Retrieved August 21, 2019 from

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2. Gibbens, S. (2019). This map shows millions of acres of lost Amazon rainforest. Retrieved August 21, 2019 from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/04/three-million-acres-brazil-rainforest-lost/>.
3. WWF. (2015). Amazon People. Retrieved on August 28, 2019 from [https://wwf.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/where\\_we\\_work/amazon/about\\_the\\_amazon/people\\_amazon/](https://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/amazon/about_the_amazon/people_amazon/)
4. Mills, N. (2018). Which Countries Are Most Affected By Deforestation? Retrieved on September 2, 2019 from <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/which-countries-are-most-affected-by-deforestation/>
5. UN. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved on September 3rd, 2019 from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>.

## **VI. Note to the Delegates**

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to MUNSA XXIV: Envision! We have high aspirations for our committee this year, and can't wait to see the brilliant solutions brought to the table at the conference. We're very excited to have you all participate and we look forward to a fantastic MUNSA conference.

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