

## **Saving the Trees One Vote At a Time**

**By: Halen White**

Millions of dollars have been spent trying to solve the global problem of deforestation, yet there are still many disagreements and debates about how we should handle this problem. This week at MUNSA, the largest student-run Model United Nations conference in the Western Hemisphere, highschool students discussed the problems of global deforestation in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization committee room.

One of the first things discussed was that global warming is an effect of deforestation. The delegation of Saudi Arabia stated that “deforestation has been plaguing our world for a very long time” and that we were being careless. Saudi Arabia proposed a solution to this problem could be to send firefighters from nearby countries to help contain large fires. The rest of the countries thought that this idea wasn't very realistic. France made the point that we should instead not have to contain the fires, but stop them from happening in the first place.

In the second session, Ethiopia proposed a solution and got other countries like Mexico in agreement with them. Ethiopia suggested planting and growing more trees to replace the ones being cut down. Other countries said that it would take too long and there wouldn't be a way to replace the trees as fast they were being cut down. Another said that “People cut down trees for fuel,” but then suggested building wind turbines in the ocean-facing countries that need fuel and energy. Ethiopia suggested another solution that would allow certain regions to make it illegal to cut down trees. Some countries agreed to this but others made the point that this has also been a job for people so that they can support their families. With all of these solutions being proposed, Nigeria asked how less developed countries would keep up with these regulations. Denmark replied, “They should send their own people to help the least developed countries.” Saudi Arabia added to that by stating “Tax the countries that were doing well, but we wouldn't take much just a little bit from each.” Spain spoke up and asked, “Why should we do this? It is not our problem.” Nigeria said they agree with both but however there also needs to be a balance.

One of the larger solutions that were talked about was proposed by India. It was to “Take advantage of social media and to reach out to influencers,” to help solve deforestation. Mexico thought it would be better to encourage the nations' people to help on social media instead of influencers. The countries discussed that it would be hard to have a lot of influencers come together to solve this global issue. They also asked what to do about the countries that don't have access to social media. Mexico said to send a PSA to those countries. Although there were many different solutions being discussed we were not able to see them come to a conclusion.

In UNESCO this year at MUNSA XXIV delegates discussed global deforestation by sharing causes, solutions, and problems connected to it. In the many opinions they shared, between planting trees, using social media to raise awareness, and using ocean wind turbines to generate clean energy, one theme was very common; the deep care for the environment and future UNESCO Delegates has was always common.