



Florida High Schools Model United Nations

FHSMUN 33

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME THE GLOBAL COMPACT: CARING FOR CLIMATE

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“If the whole world comes to Copenhagen and leaves without making the needed political agreement, then I think it’s a failure that is not just about climate. Then it’s the whole global democratic system not being able to deliver results in one of the defining challenges of our century. And that is and should not be a possibility. It’s not an option.”

— *Connie Hedegaard, president, United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15), 2 October 2009.*¹

“We've come a long way but we have much further to go.”

— *U.S. President Barack Obama, speaking on the results and overall impact of COP15, December 2009.*²

Abstract

It has been said that institutions and regimes are only as strong as those who choose to operate within them, and that if countries are not interested in enacting real change to tackle serious issues, the frameworks they craft as a response to said issues will lack teeth. There has to be a sense of serious incentive for a country to act upon something that affects its version of the status quo. Arguably, this logic can be applied to two issues of environmental policy that have arisen in the past twenty-five years: those of ozone depletion and of climate change. Despite the fact that both issues are important environmental concerns that require transnational cooperation and coordination in order to be addressed in an effective manner, two vastly different outcomes arose during the debate and subsequent adoption of their key legislative frameworks, the Montréal and Kyoto protocols.

The Kyoto Protocol is set to expire at the end of 2012; accordingly, United Nations member-states have been working to establish frameworks to continue the fight against climate change. With the United Nations Change Conference in Copenhagen being held from December 7 to 18, 2009, United Nations member-states drafted the Copenhagen Accord, much to the ire of staunch environmentalists as the finished product was a non-binding resolution simply

¹ von Bülow, Michael, “Failure in Copenhagen is not an option,” COP15 United Nations Climate Change Conference Copenhagen 2009, <http://en.cop15.dk/news/view+news?newsid=2257>.

² BBC News, “Copenhagen deal in quotes,” 19 December 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8421910.stm>.

committing to continue the work developed under the Kyoto Protocol instead of proposing binding cuts in emissions to mitigate rises in global temperature as was previously hoped.³ Jose Manuel Barroso, then-president of the European Union Commission, openly stated that he was “disappointed” in the outcome of COP15 and that the Copenhagen Accord “falls far short of our expectations.”⁴

This guide is in two parts: the first looks at previous, wide-scale international legislation and frameworks to deal with climate change as well as what some member-states are currently doing to cope with climate change while the second looks at other factors that impact both the climate and biodiversity but do not necessarily receive the same amount of attention as climate change in general.

Learning from the past

The Montréal Protocol, first ratified in 1987,⁵ has been hailed as a success in the effort to reduce the emission of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and to reduce the size of the hole in the ozone layer.⁶ In contrast, the Kyoto Protocol, which came into force in 2005 and was designed to reduce carbon emissions, has not been very successful in achieving its goals.⁷ The reasons behind the differences in effectiveness will be examined, with a focus on how the United States of America played a vital role in both pieces of international law. Cass Sunstein, a legal scholar, argues that given the United States’ relative position as a dominant power in the world, it played a major role in influencing the relative gains of each treaty, and that it can be held accountable for the success of Montréal and the failure of Kyoto.⁸

Montréal Protocol

CFCs were developed in the early 20th century and quickly became ubiquitous due to their versatility and their practical applications. During the 1970s, however, scientists discovered that CFCs were potentially very damaging to the environment and specifically affected the ozone layer. Publicity surrounding the negative effects of CFCs — especially including the possibility of an increase in skin cancer rates due to a depleted ozone layer — increased in the United States as a result, and consumers showed their distaste for environmentally harmful products by refusing to buy goods that contained CFCs.^{9,10} As the majority of the offending goods were aerosol products that were not necessary for daily use, their producers needed to find some alternative means by which they could manufacture their wares to make sure people would still

³ Copenhagen Accord (2009).

⁴ BBC News, “Copenhagen deal in quotes.”

⁵ Pamela S. Chasek, David L. Downie, and Janet Welsh Brown, *Global Environmental Politics*, 4 ed., Cambridge, Mass., Westview Press, 2006: p. 110.

⁶ D.W. Fahey, “Twenty Questions and Answers about the Ozone Layer: 2006 Update,” appendix to *Scientific Assessment of Ozone Depletion: 2006*, Global Ozone Research and Monitoring Project — Report No. 50, World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, Switzerland: 2007, p. Q34.

⁷ Chasek, et. al., pp. 122 — 126.

⁸ Cass R. Sunstein, “Montreal vs. Kyoto: A Tale of Two Protocols,” AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies, 2006: p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰ Chasek, et. al., p. 108.

buy them. By 1978, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), emboldened by the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, which allowed it to ban the production of any substance it deemed to be environmentally hazardous,¹¹ was able to place a ban on the production and usage of CFCs except in specific circumstances.¹²

Because the United States, which was a leading producer of CFCs, had prohibited their usage and fabrication (relatively speaking) before discussion of an international ban took place, there was a massive financial incentive for the United States to support a ban. The CFC industry had been virtually phased out in the country by that time, with replacement industries already having been formed to take the place of CFCs. If other nations were forced to ban CFCs, they would have to find an adequate replacement chemical as soon as possible. Since the United States already had had to adopt a new technology when it phased out CFCs, it could profit greatly from selling the rights to these new procedures to other countries — perhaps even to the tune of paying for the overhaul itself.

Other countries, who had continued producing CFCs after the United States banned them, were understandably not as keen on the idea of outlawing an entire chunk of their industry on outcry due to science that was not fully substantiated at that time. Some developing countries were against a ban as well because they wanted to cash in on the production of CFCs, as they were a very profitable industry.¹³ Early negotiations surrounding ozone protection reflect this, as the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer says nothing about banning or even reducing the level of CFC emissions, though the United States included a caveat to conduct further negotiations if a threat to the ozone layer was found.¹⁴

This threat was discovered not soon after in the form of ozone depletion (commonly referred to as the “hole in the ozone layer”) over Antarctica roughly the size of the United States.^{15,16} As a result, the countries that previously blocked any type of ban on CFCs from coming into effect became suddenly amenable to taking action, and the Montréal Protocol was signed in 1987, “[reducing the] production and use of the five most widely used CFCs by 50 percent.” The Protocol was strengthened in 1990, being amended to ban the production of CFCs by the year 2000.¹⁷ Additionally, a financial incentive was given to India, China, and other developing nations in the form of the Montréal Fund, which gives money for countries to invest in CFC-free industries and productions.¹⁸

The Montréal Protocol proved to be effective because there was a great financial incentive for the United States to comply with its provisions simply because it had already

¹¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, “Summary of the Toxic Substances Control Act,” <http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/tsca.html/>.

¹² Sunstein, p. 9.

¹³ Chasek, et. al., p. 108.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁵ Sunstein, p. 11.

¹⁶ Fahey, p. Q22.

¹⁷ Chasek, et. al, p. 110.

¹⁸ Michael Faure and Jürgen Lefevere, “Compliance with Global Environmental Policy,” *The Global Environment*, 2 ed., Regina S. Axelrod, David Leonard Downie, Norman J. Vig, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005: pp. 170—171.

accepted most of them into domestic policy; as a result, the cost to retrofit industry to conform to international law was minimal at best. In addition, because the United States had acted as the spearhead for the prohibition of the production of CFCs, it was the first to develop alternatives to the chemicals, and licensing them to other countries would provide a financial windfall if no one was able to use CFCs any longer.

Kyoto Protocol

In contrast, though, the Kyoto Protocol provided no clear financial incentive for the United States to join. Ratified in 1997 and having been entered into force in 2000, the Kyoto Protocol is an international piece of legislation that mandates that developed countries reduce¹⁹ their overall carbon emissions based on the levels that they emitted in 1990.

At first, the United States appeared to be very amenable to the idea of reducing carbon emissions. During the initial negotiations of the Kyoto Protocol, the Clinton administration agreed to a reduction of carbon emissions by seven percent of the levels emitted in 1990, to be achieved by 2008. The United States Senate, however, unanimously passed a resolution in response stating that it would not ratify any treaty on climate change that did not hold developing countries accountable to the same standards as the United States — something that Kyoto was lacking.²⁰ Due to this development, the Clinton administration did not send the Kyoto Protocol through to the Senate for ratification, practically knowing that it would never pass. Neither the subsequent Bush nor Obama administrations have proposed ratifying the Kyoto Protocol.

The United States is the second-largest emitter of carbon in the world and emits more carbon per capita than any other nation on Earth.²¹ Given these statistics and the fact that the country is a developed country built upon industries that are heavily reliant upon carbon, the cost for the United States alone to cut its carbon emissions would be astronomically high, whereas another major polluter like China may not see as great of a cost given their current development. The Department of Energy estimated in 2002 that adopting the Kyoto Protocol would mean that the gross domestic product of the United States would shrink by \$14 billion in 2010 and that the economy would lose anywhere between \$32 billion to \$62 billion by 2010 and a figure between \$46 billion to a whopping \$102 billion by 2020.²² While these or similar figures may have been slightly palatable during the Clinton administration, as the economy was growing, they certainly do not have a luster now given the current economic crisis and/or sluggish recovery. Additionally, as the timeframe for the Kyoto Protocol is set to expire, the United States does not plan on ratifying it.

The stated goal of the Kyoto Protocol was for countries to reduce their overall emissions targets based on 1990 levels. While some countries have been able to achieve this goal, carbon

¹⁹ There are a few exceptions to this rule, as countries such as Iceland and Norway were allowed to *increase* their total carbon emissions based on 1990 levels.

²⁰ DeSombre, Elizabeth R, "Understanding United States Unilateralism," *The Global Environment*, 2 ed., Regina S. Axelrod, David Leonard Downie, Norman J. Vig, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005: p. 185.

²¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/International Energy Agency, p. 11.

²² United States Department of Energy, "Kyoto—Comparing Cost Estimates for the Kyoto Protocol," 16 July 2002, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/kyoto/cost.html/>.

emissions globally are rising faster than ever. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's International Energy Agency reports that

“the 2005 concentration of CO₂ (379 [parts per million by volume]) was about 35% higher than a century and a half ago, with the fastest growth occurring in the last ten years (1.9 ppmv/year in the period 1995 — 2005).²³”

Such figures do not bode well if the successes of the Kyoto Protocol were trying to be measured; in fact, they would point to a protocol that, while good intentioned, did not live up to its promise of reducing carbon emissions on a global scale.

From Copenhagen to Cancun and beyond

After the supposed dismay at the lack of action taken during the COP15 conference in Copenhagen — and ever cognizant of the impending expiration of the Kyoto Protocol — United Nations delegates pledged to work harder at their follow-up summit in Cancun in 2010. Echoing steps taken with the development and implementation of the Montréal Protocol, Cancun established a Green Climate Fund to assist less-developed countries (LDCs) with funding initiatives and strategies to combat climate change, with the Fund being designed by 40 member-states, 25 of which must be LDCs.²⁴ Following its design, the Fund will be managed by 24 member-states; of those 24, a mix of LDCs and developed countries is desired though no quota is set in stone. Cancun also creates a set of adaptation framework to assist countries in living with the effects of climate change, both in short- and long-term projections, and a logistical network to provide for information and technology sharing for new green initiatives and developments to mitigate climate change.

Emissions management can be left to market operations as well. Some countries and supranational organizations like the European Union have created vibrant emissions trading schemes. These schemes cap the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted from within the country's borders and requires polluters to hold permits to allow them to emit a set amount of gases; if the polluter emits more than its permits allow, it must purchase permits from those firms that are emitting below their caps. This is sometimes referred to as cap-and-trade.

Another means of dealing with emissions (CO₂ especially) is by implementing a Pigovian-type of tax²⁵ on emitters. By taxing emissions at a flat rate per ton, it incentivizes producers to find new, more environmentally-friendly ways to produce their goods because the subsequent emissions reduction acts as a tax cut. In some instances, such as the carbon tax recently approved in Australia, this type of scheme is used as an intermediary before shifting to a full cap-and-trade mechanism. Australia's carbon tax, which will be introduced during the summer of 2012, puts a price of 23 AUD on every ton of carbon emitted; by 2015, the scheme

²³ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/International Energy Agency, p. 7.

²⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Transitional Committee for the design of the Green Climate Fund,” http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/green_climate_fund/items/5869.php.

²⁵ A Pigovian tax taxes negative externalities, or deleterious side effects of doing something positive, such as manufacturing products; in this instance, the emission of greenhouses gases such as CO₂ is considered a negative externality of production.

will evolve into a full emissions trading scheme.²⁶ However, this indirect form of taxation is not always popular with consumers, who may face increased costs when purchasing goods produced by industries that produce large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions — a nonscientific poll conducted by the *Melbourne Herald Sun* showed nearly 82% of respondents were opposed to the introduction of a carbon tax in Australia, or with lawmakers who do not support government intervention in the market — Australia’s tax passed in the lower house of parliament with 74 members of parliament in favor and 72 against.²⁷

A time of war, a time of peace²⁸

When examining the issue of caring for the Earth’s climate, warfare has to be taken into consideration as a factor that can severely impact ecosystems; detrimental changes to an area’s biodiversity may impede efforts to stop or reverse climate change. During the United States’ involvement in Vietnam from 1961 to 1971,²⁹ for example, defoliants were sprayed from aircraft over Vietnamese rainforests with the intended purpose of eliminating cover for combatant forces; later, during the American-led “War on Drugs,” similar herbicides and defoliants were sprayed over Colombian forests suspected of growing illicit substances. The substances, such as Agent Orange in Vietnam and a variant of the commercial herbicide Roundup, are admittedly effective in their aims of defoliating areas, but also present great ecological hazards to the areas that are treated.

Roundup is an herbicide manufactured by the Monsanto Company, an American-based multinational agricultural sciences corporation and is available to consumers for lawn maintenance. The active ingredient in Roundup is glyphosate, a chemical considered to be “dangerous for the environment” as well as “toxic to aquatic organisms, [and] may cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment” according to the European Union.³⁰ Additionally, the United States Environmental Protection Agency states that

“In developmental toxicity studies using pregnant rats and rabbits, glyphosate caused treatment-related effects in the high dose groups including diarrhea, decreased body weight gain, nasal discharge and death.”³¹

While scientific data has not conclusively stated that glyphosate can be directly harmful to humans beyond mild skin irritation and conjunctivitis, anecdotal evidence states that ingesting large quantities of the chemical would be lethal.

²⁶ “Carbon tax gets green light in Senate,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 2011,

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/carbon-tax-gets-green-light-in-senate-20111108-1n4rp.html>.

²⁷ Hudson, Phillip and Matt Johnston, “Protesters disrupt Question Time after carbon bills pass lower house,” *Melbourne Herald Sun*, 12 October 2011, <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/carbon-tax-bills-pass-lower-house-of-federal-parliament/story-fn7x8me2-1226164570957>.

²⁸ Ecclesiastes 3:8.

²⁹ Geoffrey York and Hayley Mick, “‘Last ghost’ of the Vietnam War,” *The Globe & Mail*, 12 July 2008, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/archives/article697346.ece>.

³⁰ European Union, “Safety Data Sheet — Roundup Ultra 3000,” 3 August 2009.

³¹ Environmental Protection Agency (United States), “R.E.D. Facts: Glyphosate,” September 1993.

Even though doubts exist as to the carcinogenic nature of glyphosate, the scientific consensus overwhelmingly agrees that the dioxin-based chemical that serves as Agent Orange's base can cause cancer in humans;³² dioxin is perhaps more well-known in modern times as being the substance used to poison then Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushenko during his successful campaign, causing him to require extensive hospital treatment and leaving pockmarks on his face.³³ Over the course of the War, the United States sprayed over 12 million gallons — the equivalent of 18 Olympic-sized swimming pools³⁴ — of Agent Orange over Vietnamese fields.³⁵ Independent research has indicated that children born in affected areas are more likely to suffer from polydactyly (having more than five fingers or toes on each hand or foot), mental retardation, cleft palates and hernias. While, over time, the dioxin degrades and no longer becomes a threat to flora and fauna, some areas in Vietnam continue to show high levels of dioxin in the topsoil used for growing and cultivating crops; accordingly, the food chain remains contaminated and higher levels of cancers have been shown in those who live, work and eat in the aforementioned regions.³⁶

All is not lost, however. While at times we tend to look at environmental damage after it is too late to stop them from happening, opportunities have arisen to attempt to nip such degradation in the bud. The Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire, herein DRC) is the fourth most populous nation in Africa, with over 66 million residents. Located in Central Africa, it is bordered by countries such as the Republic of Congo, Angola and the Sudan. The area around the Congo River delta is home to many national parks and the country's five World Heritage sites as designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (herein UNESCO) because of their stunning scenery and massive biodiversity.

The Second Congo War, beginning in 1998 and nominally ending in 2003 (though conflict is still rife in the area), caused all of the DRC's World Heritage Sites to be added to the list of sites under threat. For example, many of the employees located at Virunga National Park, who were in place mainly to guard against poaching and illegal logging, were unable to handle the influx of refugees into the DRC from Rwanda as a result of the atrocities committed there. Lacking pay and adequate infrastructure, the park's employees were powerless in preventing refugees seeking food and shelter from knocking down much of the park's forests, as well as damaging the ecosystem of Lake Edward by overfishing and using the lake as the main source of water.³⁷ As a result, an already fragile ecosystem was strained as a result of the War, both in part from damage to the surrounding areas and also from an increase in population in the area, potentially beyond its original carrying capacity.

³² National Toxicology Program, Department of Health and Human Services (United States), "Committee Recommendations: 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD)," <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/index.cfm?objectid=D3D7DB18-F1F6-975E-716813304ED78D8B>.

³³ "Annual Review 2004/05: Russia and Ukraine," BBC World Service, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/us/annual_review/2004/russia.shtml.

³⁴ Calculations made using Wolfram|Alpha, <http://www.wolframalpha.com/>.

³⁵ David Pellow, "Resisting Global Toxins," MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2007.

³⁶ "Agent Orange blights Vietnam," BBC News, 3 December 1998, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/227467.stm>.

³⁷ "Virunga National Park," <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/threats/>.

Due to continuing struggles in the country, increases in refugee populations and a lack of logistical and technical support, the national parks of the DRC remain under threat. UNESCO and various partners created a project in 2000 entitled “Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict: Conserving World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo” to serve as a test of how adequately these World Heritage sites could be protected in the midst of war and other strife. The project’s first phase ran from 2000 — 2004, and its second phase from 2004 —2008 after funding was secured to ensure its continuation. UNESCO states that

“the goal of the project is ensure the conservation of World Heritage Sites in the DRC both during periods of civil unrest and the long term, by mobilizing financial, logistical, technical and diplomatic support at the regional and international levels, to strengthen the conservation of the sites and ICCN (Institut Congolais de la Conservation de la Nature) as a whole. The project will also function as a learning process to inform efforts and develop mechanisms to conserve similar sites in conflict regions elsewhere in the world.³⁸”

The project has been seen mainly as a success, thanks in part to contributions provided by various governments (including the DRC’s former colonial rulers Belgium) and funding provided by the United Nations Foundation. Different organizations within the United Nations System are working together to monitor the DRC’s World Heritage sites, including officials from the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environmental Programme and peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission to the DRC, or MONUC.

UN System Actions

The UN System, with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serving as the lead Specialized Agency, continues to address climate issues both in terms of large-scale multilateral treaties and agreements and grassroots, village-level development initiatives. From the end of November through the middle of December 2011, Durban, South Africa will host the Durban Climate Change Conference, also known as COP 17/CMP 7.³⁹ The Durban Climate Change Conference comes directly on the heels of a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that stated that extreme weather conditions and events around the world can be traced at least in part to climate change.⁴⁰

One of the goals of the Durban Climate Change Conference will be to raise billions of dollars per year for the Green Climate Fund, a development that the government of China recently pointed to as perhaps being imperiled by the continuing financial crises facing many developed country governments.⁴¹ Developed countries are contributing far less than the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference targets but there are significant ongoing private and public investments in climate mitigation policies and technologies in the developing world; the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) estimates that approximately \$97 billion USD is being invested

³⁸ “World Heritage Centre — Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict: Conserving World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/congobiodiversity>.

³⁹ Delegates may wish to visit the official site of the Durban Climate Change Conference. <http://www.cop17-cmp7durban.com/>

⁴⁰ Justin Gillis, “UN Panel Finds Climate Change Behind Some Extreme Weather Events” *New York Times* November 18, 2011.

⁴¹ *Washington Post*, “China urges progress on financing for \$100 billion climate change fund” November 22, 2011.

annually in developing countries for climate change mitigation, with \$55 billion USD coming from private lenders, another \$39 billion USD from public budgets and multilateral development banks and international financial institutions (IFIs), and less than \$3 billion USD stemming from carbon offset markets and private philanthropy.⁴² While official pessimism seems to remain the prevailing attitude regarding the likely efficacy of the Durban Climate Change Conference, Mark Lynas, an advisor to the Maldives, one of the countries likely to be the most immediately impacted by climate change effects including rising sea levels, points to progress being made by the Cartagena Dialogue, a group of over 30 countries, as a potential hopeful sign for progress in Durban.⁴³ Delegates to UNEP will want to follow the debates, discussions, and final documents from the Durban Climate Change Conference as it serves as a prelude to 2012's United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, site of the seminal 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).⁴⁴

Looking toward the future

The Montréal Protocol succeeded in part thanks to a strong leadership effort by a superpower — the United States. The United States had a vested interest in reducing CFC emissions from an economic standpoint, as domestic companies like DuPont were losing sales as consumers shied away from products using CFCs. In a sense, this preliminary backlash benefited the United States in the long run, allowing it to develop new replacement technologies that could then be marketed when other countries or institutions sought to ban CFCs. In contrast, there was little financial incentive from the get-go for the United States to sign onto the Kyoto Protocol; in fact, it would have been quite economically detrimental, not to mention counterintuitive given the fact that developing countries were not held to the same standards. While it is hypothetical to suggest that the United States' lack of participation directly affected the overall viability of the Kyoto Protocol, it could be argued that a stronger effort on its part — like that seen with the Montréal Protocol — may have given the world some more fresh air.

Future agreements for mitigating climate change will require not only the active leadership and cooperation of the United States but also of China, India, and other societies that are becoming increasingly energy intensive and more industrialized. Forging cooperation amongst these governments as well as their respective private sectors will require an ongoing commitment to "protection of [the] global climate for present and future generations of mankind."⁴⁵ Delegates must bear in mind, though, that not everything is bleak; the sun has not been completely blotted out by smog and other airborne pollutants. As time wears on without a permanent solution, though, the window for action continues to narrow, and governments, businesses, and civil society representatives must be ever cognizant of this reality.

⁴² *The Economist*, "He who pays the paupers" November 5, 2011.

⁴³ Andrew Revkin, "An Island Adviser Sees Promise in Durban Climate Talks" *New York Times* November 16, 2011.

⁴⁴ The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) is commonly known as Rio + 20. Delegates may wish to visit the official site at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=14>

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution 65/159 (A/RES/65/159) March 4, 2011. Found at: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/522/08/PDF/N1052208.pdf?OpenElement>

Guiding Questions:

How strong is the environmental ministry or department in your country? Are environmental regulations relatively strict or relatively lenient? What recent actions has your government undertaken to reduce carbon emissions and/or incorporate climate issues into legislation and government policies?

Did your country accede to the Kyoto Protocol? If so, how successful has it been in reaching its emissions targets? If not, has it taken other steps to reduce emissions?

Does your country stand to gain economically from global climate change, perhaps in the form of new shipping routes or more arable land? Does your country stand to suffer from global climate change due to its location or its industries?

Has your country adopted emissions trading schemes or carbon taxes? How have they been received?

Has war or other civil conflict impeded your country's ability to make progress in mitigating the effects of or preventing climate change?

How likely is your country to contribute to the Green Climate Fund? If your country already contributes, is it willing to increase those contributions to reach the levels agreed to in Copenhagen in 2009? If your country is likely to receive Green Climate Fund grants and disbursements, how will it ensure that those funds are dedicated to climate mitigation activities and programs and how will it ensure that those funds are properly accounted for throughout the disbursement process?