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UNEP: Topic #1- Deforestation and Climate Change

YUNMUN XXXIV

As the world barrels toward a global temperature increase of 2°C relative to pre-industrial revolution levels, the UN Secretary General’s characterization of climate change as “a code red for humanity” continues to be justified.¹ Once the global temperature increases to 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial revolution levels, the likelihood of “unleashing far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves and rainfall” increases immensely.²

One of the most important barriers against the effects of climate change is the world's forests. Every year, “30 percent of emissions from industry and fossil fuels are soaked up by forests and woodlands. Yet every year the world loses 10 million hectares of forest. Deforestation and forest degradation accounts for 11 percent of carbon emissions.”³

A number of strategies to combat deforestation have been developed, ranging from the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)⁴ to the promotion of the REDD+ Green Gigaton Challenge, which aims to fund one gigaton of emissions reductions a year from forests, starting 2025.⁵

Even with these strategies, global deforestation has increased by approximately 3.6% in 2022 compared to 2021,⁶ concentrated in countries like Brazil and Indonesia.⁷ Every passing year, the threat of deforestation, and therefore climate change, poses to civilization grows. Cooperation from the international community and collaboration within it will be required to replenish the forests and slow the effects of climate change.

¹ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/climate-action/what-we-do/climate-action-note/state-of-climate.html>

² <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

³ <https://www.unep.org/resources/factsheet/deforestation>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CPF-brochure-COP26-flagship-initiatives.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/forests/what-we-do/green-gigaton-challenge>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-66013854>

⁷ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/deforestation-rates-by-country>

Here are some guiding questions for your research on the topic:

- What is your country's current stance on climate change related to deforestation?
- What measures has your country implemented to combat deforestation, and what can it uniquely contribute to the global effort to fight deforestation-related climate change?
- What is the most effective path forward for the international community regarding this issue?
- Should UNEP attempt to incentivize countries to make substantial changes in this regard, and if so, what strategies should be employed?

Keep in mind that these questions are meant to guide your research, and not to limit it. Feel free to address more questions and come up with more solutions that relate to the topic, while representing the views of your country. Additionally, make sure to cite sources that you use in your research, as all submitted papers will be run through Turn-It-In to check for plagiarism, which will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at rsapers1@mail.yu.edu. I look forward to addressing these important questions with you all!

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