



ANKU COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020

COMMITTEE: GA 3: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural

ISSUE: Taking immediate action towards the recent forest fires occurring worldwide

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POSITION: President Chair

Distinguished Delegates of GA3,

I address you as the President Chair of the respective committee. In this committee, you are expected to write a resolution on each topic by cooperation, creativity, and knowledge. To write a resolution you need elaborate research on the topic. This study guide is prepared to guide you on your research. It covers key details that you should know. Note that this research paper is just a guide on the matter. It involves remarkable points that the situation revolves around and the committee is going to be emphasizing on. It doesn't narrow your research space and you are encouraged to do further research. Nevertheless, I wish you all an enjoyable conference and fruitful debates.

Çağın Efe Günaydın

INTRODUCTION

Forests have been a crucial part of the ecosystem since the beginning of the earth and are responsible for 75% of the gross primary productivity of the Earth's biosphere and contain 80% of the Earth's plant biomass. Therefore, the loss of forests and deforestation make significant impacts on the ecosystem and biosphere. The loss of forests is majorly caused by wildfires. In recent years, wildfires have increased significantly and have come to a point that urgent actions have to be taken. The pace of these actions will determine the future of humankind and earth. For that reason, immediate actions have to be taken.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Forest

In contrast to its common usage, there is no universally recognized precise definition, with more than 800 definitions of forest used around the world. The most common acceptance is "a large area of land that is covered by trees." Forests are the major element in which the issue is going to be revolving around. All aspects of forests and forest fires are going to be examined in the report. Therefore, it is crucial to have a stable definition of the word forest.

Wildfire

"A wildfire, wildland fire or rural fire is an uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation occurring in rural areas." Wildfires majorly take place in forests. There could be two methods that a wildfire may occur: naturally or by human engage. Wildfires that are caused by human engage generally are due to carelessness and irresponsibility. However, in some parts of the world, some wildfires are started deliberately to increase the production rate of the soil or to cleanse it. In infrequent cases, wildfires can start by natural effects such as dry climate or sun's heat. The research report will take both aspects in hand en detail.

Climate Change

"Climate change refers to significant, long-term changes in the global climate". In recent history, climate change is commonly used with global warming. Since these two elements are major components of naturally occurring wildfires, they are going to be analyzed in the research report.

OVERVIEW

Wildfires or forest fires are not unusual to nature, there were always wildfires in the world. However, in recent years wildfires have gradually increased and commenced to cause significant harm to ecosystems, wildlife, and settlements. They were generally caused by the irresponsibility of humankind whether it is to directly influence the cause of the blaze or to indirectly affect through global warming.

Wildfires can be seen approximately in every section of the world. However, there are some parts of the world that the wildfires are substantially more frequent compared to others. Australia, Central Africa, and Asia are examples of these sections. Although wildfires are a part of the natural cycle in these regions, the gradual increase in blazes have affected the wildland and the ecosystem of these regions. In the last 20 years, Australia has suffered from 8 major wildfires. The numbers for Asia and Central Africa are 9 and 8. At this rate, it is undeniable that wildfires have started to pose a threat to these regions.

Causes and Effects

"Human beings are the number one cause of wildfires in the world. Many of these wildfires are caused by cigarette butts being left on the land, campfires that have been left unmonitored, as well as intentional acts of arson." However, that is not the only way that humans can be involved in wildfires. Human involvement in wildfires can be through increasing global warming as well. "Climate warming from increasing greenhouse gas emissions is forecast to dramatically increase the risk of very large, damaging wildfires over the next several decades." As the climate gets warmer and dryer wildfires occur before their season and cannot be controlled. Therefore, all the acts that have an impact on global warming also have an impact on wildfires. From that perspective, any action towards solving global warming will also affect wildfires as well.

The effects of wildfires vary from taking away settlements, harming the soil, taking away wildlife and vegetation, loss of human lives to causing air pollution. Day by day the presence of these effects has been more significant and will gradually be more significant in the future.

Evaluation of Other Issues

It is necessary to address global warming since the solution to this issue will generally be through decreasing global warming. The relation between global warming and wildfires is that global warming causes climate change which leads to climate being dryer and warmer day by day. For this reason, wildfires started to occur before their season and the control of these blazes became rigorously harder.

RELEVANT ACTORS AND BODIES:

United Nations

As an organization that harbors most countries around the globe, the United Nations has a big part in finding solutions to worldwide issues. In recent history, the United Nations was highly successful in addressing climate issues. Whether it is to take necessary precautions or to take urgent actions, the United Nations was always sensitive and rapid on this matter. If there are going to be solutions to wildfires and accordingly climate change,

the United Nations and the related bodies have to be involved in satisfying the requirements for this.

Economic and Social Council

As the United Nations' main body in engaging with nature and climate-related issues, the Economic and Social Council has the power to bring large groups around the world together and to make them take action. In taking precautions and signing treaties, the Economic and Social Council has always been a major factor. Therefore, in the long-term solution of this issue, the Economic and Social Council must take an active role in cooperation with the United Nations to create an international community and to sign a worldwide agreement.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

"The overall goal of FAO's program in forest fire management is to help build national capacities and to support member countries to reduce adverse effects of fires such as loss of human lives and property, the destruction of vegetation cover, loss of valuable natural renewable resources and degradation of habitats for plants and animals leading to threats to biological diversity, soil erosion, smoke, haze atmospheric pollution and contribution to forestry and climate change."

"Over the past years, FAO has provided support to some member countries in strengthening policy dialogue, the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data, exchange of information and know-how, and the development of methodologies and strategies related to early warning, prevention, management, control and remedial action and rehabilitation following forest fires. FAO works in close collaboration with, and through, national institutes in member countries, and with concerned international partners. FAO's mandate and role is not to participate in forest fire fighting work properly, although the Organization can support emergency action by national and other international agencies or mechanisms more suited to carry out such work, but through the provision of logistical and technical guidance, as applicable."

TREATIES AND INITIATIVES:

- "The Inter-Agency Task Force Working Group on Wildland Fire, together with the Global Fire Monitoring Center, has published a document on the Status of Building Regional Wildland Fire Networks (Goldammer 2002).

- The first such a Regional Wildland Fire Network which was formally launched was 'Afrifirenet', which was initiated in July 2002. Sixteen countries and several NGOs are actively engaged in policy dialogue through this network.

Other Regional Wildland Fire networks were launched in South-East Asia, North America, the Baltic, South and Central America, Austral-Asia, Europe, the Balkans, and Central Asia. (2002)"

SPECIFIC ANALYSIS ON RELEVANT CONFLICTS AND PROBLEMS:

Wildfires have devastating effects on wildlife, settlement, and human lives. All of these effects will be analyzed in this section.

Loss of Wildlife and Vegetation

"In the months after a fire, wildlife populations can suffer substantial losses due to habitat alteration and destruction. Since their habitat has been destroyed, wildlife becomes displaced and must spend more time searching for food, water, and shelter. Displaced wildlife may travel to areas not affected by the fire, which puts stress on the displaced wildlife, as well as the wildlife that was already there, due to increased competition for available food, water, and shelter."

High and sustained temperatures that are caused by wildfires are likely to result in plant mortality. Generally, trees are able to survive the fire. However, the injuries that are inflicted by the fire generally result in the plant to get infected by insects or fungus due to their decreased resistance.

Damage in Settlements and Loss of Human Lives

Due to their uncontrollable nature wildfires tend to spread to nearby settlements. Generally, these flames can be diminished before it spreads to any settlement. However, in extreme burnings wildfires take away settlement and human lives. For example, in Moscow 2010, 130 people lost their lives as a result of a single wildfire.

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

July 2002	The launch of the first Regional Wildland Fire Network
2002	The launch of other Regional Wildland Fire Networks in different regions
October 2003	The beginning of Cedar, which is a human-caused fire that took away 273,246 of land, 2,820 structures, and 15 human lives
6 July 2017	The beginning of the record-breaking 2017 wildfire season in British Columbia
July 2018	The start of the Mendocino Complex, a fire that burned 459,123 acres of land and destroyed 280 structures as well as taking a human life.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There is not an immediate solution to wildfires due to their nature. However, in the long term, the number and the effects of such disasters can be reduced through education and various environmental precautions. The education aspect of the solution is that every single individual must know the actions that must be done in case of such a disaster. Furthermore, these individuals should know the causes of human-related wildfires and avoid any action that may cause the fire to start. The precautions must be taken towards the placement of settlement and decreasing naturally caused wildfires as much as possible. The settlements must be in places that a wildfire cannot reach or if it is in such a spot the inhabitants must be alert at any time. As stated before in the report, any action that is towards global warming and climate change has an impact on wildfires. From this approach, humankind should take natural issues more important and must come up with long term solutions to decrease global warming and the greenhouse effect.

USEFUL LINKS AND SOURCES

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/natural-disasters/wildfire.htm>

<https://warmheartworldwide.org/climate-change/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAvJXxBRCeARIsAMSkAp>

<https://news.un.org/en/news/topic/climate-change>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8OrmGAlqI4>
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<https://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/natural-disasters/wildfire.htm>
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<https://news.un.org/en/news/topic/climate-change>
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<http://www.fao.org/3/XII/0820-B3.htm>
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<https://www.thewildlifemuseum.org/exhibits/burning-for-wildlife/negative-effects-of-wildfire-on-wildlife/>
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