



EEG

مجموعة عمل الإمارات للبيئة
EMIRATES ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP



23rd Inter College Environmental Public Speaking Competition Concept Notes

Teachers / Professors are expected to guide the students in conducting research on global, regional, and national level perspectives and to present this research with facts and figures in their original presentation.

1. Environmental Policies and Regulations: Are they Enough?

Humanity has been aware of its environment surroundings far longer than there have been laws to protect it. Environmental law is a term that is used to explain regulations, statutes, legislations and treaties that were drafted and implemented with the purpose of protecting the environment from anthropogenic damages. These laws are often designed to tackle local, national and international issues, depending on the locality and to explain the legal consequences of non-compliance by governments, private entities or individuals.

After the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States of America in 1970, the federal and state governments have passed numerous laws and created a vast network of rules and regulations regarding environmental issues. Today each country has its set of own environmental laws in place. Moreover, international organisations and agencies have also contributed to environmental rules and regulations. Environmental policies have gradually evolved since the late 1970s.

While earlier efforts addressed distinct issues such as pollution of air and water in the national context and among international neighbours, more recent concerns such as the greenhouse effect, carbon neutrality, the destruction of the ozone layer, climate change, climate change induced disasters and the loss of biodiversity that transcend national boundaries were addressed.

The latest **AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** found that, despite progress in policies and legislations around climate mitigation, there is still a significant gap between governments' climate plans and pledges and the scale and pace of action needed.

At the very moment, are climate policies enough to achieve the climate goals agreed upon in 2015 in Paris? Are these policies enough to reach Net Zero goals? Or biodiversity preservation goals? Is it only by defining rules, that governments can reinforce the credibility of regulations? Create a predictable investment climate plan? Strengthen the rule of law and good governance? and support revolutionary action for climate?

Have the existing laws actually helped environmental sustainability? Have they hindered entities that seeks monetary gains through the destruction of natural ecosystem? Have they prevented lobbyists from influencing political representative votes?

The SD Goals that are addressed under this topic are: #10, #13, #16 & #17

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2. Rising Energy Demands: Satiated with Renewable Energy or Oil Indispensable

The Lifeblood of the industrialised nations – Oil; has been the world's most important source of energy since the mid-1950s. While the International Energy Agency (IEA) projects increasing use of renewables, improved energy efficiency and a shift towards electric vehicles; oil and natural gas still continue to meet the rising demands for petrochemicals in all industries, including all the transport industry .

In its 2021 report, 'Stated Policies Scenario', the IEA forecasts that the total global energy demand is expected to increase 21% by 2040. Global demand for natural gas is expected to increase by 28% and global demand for oil will increase by 17% by 2050. The OPEC projects global oil product demand to reach 109 million barrels per day by 2045, with transportation fuels such as gasoline and diesel expected to remain the most consumed products.

The Latest edition of the IEA's World Energy Outlook - the energy world's most authoritative source of analysis and projections, states that the world is in the midst of the first global energy crisis. The global energy crisis has triggered unprecedented momentum behind renewables, with the world set to add as much renewable power in the next 5 years as it did in the past 20. This global energy crisis is driving a sharp acceleration in installations of renewable power, with total capacity growth worldwide set to almost double by 2025.

Despite the massive increase in renewables, the contribution of oil to the world's energy mix has been dominant. They account for more than 80% of energy consumption. Can the world achieve its low – carbon energy targets or is oil indispensable? Can renewable energy production's efficiency be improved to meet the rising energy demands?

The SDGs targeted are: #7, #8, #10, #12, #13, #17

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3. **Multinational Corporations:** *Compelling Economic Growth or Environmental Degredation?*

Multinational corporations have emerged as major actors in our economy and the international society is becoming increasingly concerned about their impact on the population and the environment. At the same time, it is also true that, by leveraging on their magnitude and global reach, they can exert a catalyst role in driving a shift of business paradigm towards sustainable development.

The Decade of Action demands that leaders at the helm of the most globally influential companies adopt the SDGs holistically, integrating SDG targets within their core businesses so as to make it advantageous to both the MNCs and the world. Responsible business practices are not just a question of doing good for the planet, but of corporate survival.

As per World Economic forum, only 21% of CEOs report a contribution to the delivery of the SDGs. We need to halt and reverse our current trajectory of runaway climate change, environmental degradation and widespread biodiversity loss immediately otherwise the global economy will suffer negative consequences on its own.

It is not 'saving the planet' that will kill growth. Rather, the accelerating destruction of nature will undermine not only the global economy, but it would eventually threaten many life-forms on earth, including our own species.

Therefore the question is, where should we draw the line in terms of leveraging natural resources on the interest of economy? Have corporations been given unchecked control over the use of resources? Are multinational corporations important in the modern world? Is the monopolisation of the market by few entities leading the unchecked environmental consequences?

The targeted SDGs under this topic are: #8, #9, #11, #12, #13, #16 & #17

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4. The Omnipresent Microplastics: *The Unseen Pandemic*

From the deepest points of the ocean to the food and water we consume, microplastics are a growing threat to the plants and animals – including humans – both on terrestrial settings and in aquatic environments. Microplastics have been found even in human blood. The annual global production of plastics is approaching 350 million tonnes, and some estimates suggest that this figure could reach as much as 33 billion tonnes by 2050, if the current consumption rates continues.

UNEP's 2021 report "From Pollution to Solution: a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution" shows that there is a growing threat in all ecosystems from source to sea. The assessment provides the strongest scientific argument to date for the urgency of collective actions on plastic waste management, and a lack of consensus on solutions.

Given their pervasiveness in everyday household items, finding answers to microplastics' complex threats is a critical and pressing challenge. Immediate reduction of plastics and a transformation across the whole plastic value chain is indispensable. A shift to a circular approach is necessary, including sustainable consumption and production practices, accelerated development and adoption of alternatives by businesses and increased consumer awareness to enable more responsible choices.

What are your thoughts on plastic pollution? Can this global issue be resolved? Are there alternatives which are both economical and sustainable? Is there any research done in your college/university to address and find solutions? What is the role of governments, corporations, academia and consumers? Can plastic be used sustainably?

The SDGs targeted here are: #4, #11, #12, #13, #14 & #15

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