



**SLRMUN 25**



**UNITED NATIONS  
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**STUDY GUIDE**

# **United Nations Environment Programme**

**(UNEP)**

## **SLRMUN 2025 Study Guide**

### **Committee Mandate**

The United Nations Environmental Program or commonly known as UNEP was established in 1972 to oversee and coordinate environmental initiatives within the United Nations. Originating from the “Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment” the program was formed on December 15th through the adoption of Resolution 2997. UNEP Covers 7 thematic areas;

1. Encompassing climate change
2. Natural Disasters & Conflicts
3. Ecosystem management
4. Environmental Governance
5. Chemical Waste Environmental Review
6. Resource Efficiency

At the core of their work are the 17 Sustainable Development goals adopted by all UN member States since 2015 and service as a collective blueprint for fostering peace and prosperity.

### **Brief History of UNEP**

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 by the United Nations General Assembly, following the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden.
- UNEP was created to coordinate global environmental efforts and raise awareness about environmental issues, emphasizing the need for international cooperation.
- Its primary mission was to promote sustainable development by providing leadership and encouraging partnerships in caring for the environment.
- UNEP's mandate includes assessing global environmental conditions, providing technical assistance to developing countries, and facilitating the development of international environmental agreements.
- It plays a significant role in addressing issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and ecosystem degradation.
- UNEP is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and has a network of regional offices around the world, working closely with governments, NGOs, and other international organizations.

**Message from the chairs:**

As we gather to discuss the pressing issue of carbon emissions and the decarbonization of the global supply chain, we recognize the urgent need for innovative solutions that balance environmental sustainability with economic feasibility. This challenge requires a multi-faceted approach, integrating technological advancements, policy reforms, and international cooperation to ensure a greener future without compromising global trade and development.

At this session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we encourage delegates to engage in thoughtful diplomacy, foster collaborative discussions, and propose practical strategies that address climate concerns while maintaining economic stability.

We look forward to your active participation and insightful contributions in shaping sustainable solutions.

Your Chairs,

Rakhitha Mutucumarana & Evin Kodithuwakkuarachchi

## **CONFERENCE TOPIC**

### **Revisiting the Objectives of Marine Protected Areas Environmental Goals with Consideration to Commercial and Livelihood Interests**

#### **Background**

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are designated regions of the ocean where human activity is regulated to preserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity. These areas are essential in combating the degradation of marine environments due to overfishing, pollution, and climate change. MPAs aim to conserve marine species, protect habitats, and maintain ecological processes that are crucial for the health of oceans and coastal communities. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has long been a key advocate for the establishment and management of MPAs as part of a broader strategy to promote sustainable marine management and biodiversity conservation.

However, as MPAs become a central tool for ocean conservation, there is a growing need to address the balance between environmental protection and the livelihoods of communities that depend on marine resources. The potential restrictions placed on fishing, tourism, and other commercial activities within MPAs often raise concerns about economic impacts on local communities, particularly in developing countries where coastal livelihoods are tightly linked to marine resources.

## **Points to Consider:**

### **Environmental Conservation**

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) serve as critical tools for safeguarding marine biodiversity by protecting vulnerable ecosystems from harmful human activities such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction. By preserving coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests, MPAs enhance the resilience of marine environments against climate change, including rising sea levels and ocean acidification. These protected zones provide a safe space for endangered species to recover, contribute to maintaining the ecological balance of marine food chains, and improve water quality. A well-managed MPA not only benefits marine life but also helps sustain the natural beauty and resources that coastal communities depend on for tourism and fishing.

### **Sustainable Fisheries**

MPAs contribute significantly to sustainable fisheries by acting as breeding and nursery grounds for marine species, allowing fish populations to replenish and preventing overexploitation. By implementing no-take zones, seasonal fishing bans, and gear restrictions, these protected areas create a spillover effect where fish migrate to surrounding waters, benefiting fishermen in adjacent areas. Sustainable fisheries management within MPAs ensures long-term food security, economic

stability for fishing communities, and the preservation of marine species for future generations. Proper enforcement and scientific monitoring are essential to striking a balance between conservation efforts and the economic needs of local fishing industries.

### **Commercial Interests**

While MPAs often impose restrictions on certain commercial activities, they can also generate economic opportunities through sustainable tourism, eco-friendly aquaculture, and improved fish stocks that support long-term fisheries. Coastal tourism benefits from the conservation of marine ecosystems, attracting visitors interested in snorkeling, diving, and wildlife observation. Additionally, well-managed MPAs can prevent resource depletion, ensuring that industries such as fishing and aquaculture remain viable over time. However, it is crucial to consider the economic impact on industries reliant on marine resources and develop policies that integrate both conservation and commercial sustainability.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

effective MPA management requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including local communities, fishermen, environmental organizations, policymakers, and businesses. Engaging stakeholders in decision-making ensures that conservation efforts align with the economic and social needs of those directly impacted. Community involvement fosters a sense of responsibility, encourages compliance with regulations, and promotes local stewardship of marine resources. Transparent governance, inclusive discussions, and knowledge-sharing between scientists and

resource users can lead to innovative solutions that balance ecological protection with economic growth.

## **Monitoring & Adaptation**

The success of MPAs depends on continuous monitoring and adaptability to changing environmental and economic conditions. Regular scientific assessments help track biodiversity levels, fish populations, and ecosystem health, allowing policymakers to adjust regulations. Climate change, illegal fishing, and socio-economic shifts can impact the effectiveness of MPAs, making it essential to develop flexible management strategies. Incorporating new technologies such as satellite tracking, AI-driven data analysis, and community-based monitoring programs enhances the ability to enforce rules and measure conservation success. Adaptive management ensures that MPAs effectively achieve both environmental and economic goals over the long term.

## **Related Conventions**

- UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)
- CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity)
- BBNJ Agreement (2023)
- Ramsar Convention (1971)
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995)



## **Further Reading**

- <https://direct.mit.edu/glep/article-abstract/23/2/54/114141/The-Political-Economy-of-Protected-Area?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-63399-8\\_2?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-63399-8_2?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9994/chapter/3>
- [https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.676264/full?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.676264/full?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- [https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2024.1478023/full?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2024.1478023/full?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- <https://www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/summer-2024/articles/how-marine-protected-areas-benefit-people-who-live-nearby>
- <https://www.marinebiodiversity.ca/2024/10/dive-into-the-benefits-of-marine-protected-areas-a-blueprint-for-ocean-conservation/>