



American Model United Nations
UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Report to the The General Assembly on Environmental and Security Partnerships: Conflicts and the Environment

CONTENTS

<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Heading</u>	<u>Page</u>
	Executive Summary	1
I.	Matters calling for action by the General Assembly and brought to its attention	4
	A. Draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly	4
	I. The need to reduce environmental damage both through pre-conflict prevention as well as post-conflict environmental remediation	4
	II. The discouragement of the use of depleted uranium munitions	6
	B. Other recommendations for action by the Commission	6
II.	Environment and Security Partnerships: Conflicts and the Environment	8
	A. Deliberations	8
	B. Actions taken by the Commission	11
III.	Adoption of the report	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) is pleased to present to the General Assembly its final report on Topic 2, Environment and Security Partnerships: Conflict and the Environment. The following covers topics ranging from the environment's role in conflicts, the damage done to environments due to conflict, and recommendations of how nations may avoid conflicts that would be caused by their environment.

The first chapter includes two draft resolutions, which UNEP is submitting and recommending to the General Assembly for consideration and adoption. The draft resolution entitled "The need to reduce environmental damage both through pre-conflict prevention as well as post-conflict environmental remediation," recognizes the role that the environment and its resources plays in breeding conflicts, while also recognizing the need to reduce damage done to the environment through conflict prevention and post-conflict restoration. The draft resolution recommends educational possibilities, research, regional cooperation, and the implementation by nations to adopt environmental policy into their most prominent considerations.

The second resolution entitled "The discouragement of the use of depleted uranium munitions," calls for both the discouragement of the use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions as well as the proposal of a fund for the clean up of conflict areas affected by the use of DU munitions.

Other recommendations of UNEP which are not included in the draft resolutions as well as concerns put forth by Representatives of the body include: legal protection for biological diversity, the rewording of an article of the Geneva Convention, reiterate national sovereignty in environmental and security policy, encourages cooperative diplomacy, invitation for consideration of nuclear warfare, specific concerns dealing with humanitarian aid, deforestation, and the environmental burden on nations that host large populations of involuntary migrations and refugees.

Chapter two describes the deliberations and proceedings of UNEP that lead to the passing of these two draft resolutions. It includes actions taken by UNEP and a record of the voting for the presented draft resolution.

Chapter three presents the adoption of the report and all final voting records. This report was adopted with no amendments and 12 abstentions.

CHAPTER I

Matters calling for action by the General Assembly or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly

The United Nations Environment Programme recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft Resolution I

The need to reduce environmental damage both through pre-conflict prevention as well as post-conflict environmental remediation

To the General Assembly

Taking note of the role the environment plays in breeding conflicts and reaching viable solutions to such conflicts,

Reaffirming the important role the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) plays in protecting the environment,

Recognizing the need to reduce environmental damage both through pre-conflict prevention as well as post-conflict environmental remediation,

Affirming the belief that it is ultimately the responsibility of the national governments to deliver credible national plans for the implementation and the support of projects,

Emphasizing the role of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in preventing conflict by assessing and addressing environmental problems in conflict prone regions, such as South Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia,

Deeply concerned about the impact of modern warfare on the environment,

Recalling its efforts to limit environmental damage during conflict through the establishment of the Treaty to Ban Landmines, the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, and the Chemical Weapons Convention,

Reiterating the important role of the UNEP Post-Conflict Assessment Unit (PCAU) in identifying immediate risks to human health and livelihoods and providing recommendations on priorities for clean-up, sustainable resource use and for strengthening environmental governance in post-conflict areas,

Noting specifically the destructive impacts of internally displaced peoples on the environment,

1. *Recommends* continued funding for ENVSEC in order to prevent conflict by discussing and debating environmental problems in conflict prone regions;

2. *Further recommends* that Member States implement regional programs involving cooperation and information sharing regarding the impact of regional conflicts on the environment and to improve the state and management of natural resources;

3. *Supports* the establishment of regional cooperation to address environmental concerns within such regions in order to quell possible conflicts;

4. *Strongly condemns* the intentional destruction of natural resources as a strategy of warfare;

5. *Endorses* the creation of a special international convention on prevention of environmental damage in military action to develop and supplement the provisions of existing international legal instruments;

6. *Emphasizes* the need for UNEP to further contribute to sustainable development programmes with a special emphasis on post-conflict zones;

7. *Further encourages* UNEP to continue to provide environmental assistance to post-conflict regions in the form of both monetary and technical aid;

8. *Supports* the creation of regional-scale environment-security assessments to help the UNEP define concrete priorities for operations in various post-conflict zones;

9. *Encourages* UNEP to continue to support research on the links between the environment and security;

10. *Urges* all Member States to integrate environmental concerns in their foreign and security policies;

11. *Strongly discourages* the use of weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, nuclear warfare, and other highly destructive weaponry for their destructive effects on the environment;

12. *Calls* for the support of regions in the removal of material hazardous to humans and the environment leftover from conflict with specific concern for the preservation of natural resources;

13. *Expresses* its hope that nations recognize the need to aid displaced persons that involuntarily migrate due to the scarcity of resources caused by natural disasters and conflict;

14. *Draws attention* to the need for international support of forest protection, especially in developing countries and countries involved in conflict, where the

aforementioned conflicts cause energy withholding and citizen displacement that would lead to irreversible deforestation.

Draft Resolution II

The discouragement of the use of depleted uranium munitions

To the General Assembly

Recognizing the danger posed by the use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions to both the environment and human health,

Noting that all countries have an interest in ensuring the health of its people and its environment,

Realizing the danger posed by the use of DU in munitions to both human health and the environment,

Recognizing the potential for adverse health effects, such as kidney damage, in areas affected by the use of DU, especially in children,

Concurring with the World Health Organization (WHO) on the need for post-conflict clean-up and monitoring of areas in which DU munitions have been used (WHO FactSheet 257 January 2003),

Noting that conflict areas affected by depleted uranium often contain additional hazards, such as unexploded munitions, and that great care must be taken when cleaning up contaminated areas,

1. *Discourages* the use of depleted uranium munitions;
2. *Proposes* a fund for the clean-up of conflict areas affected by the use of DU munitions, called the Post-Conflict Depleted Uranium Munitions Program (PCDUMP), to be overseen by the UNEP and funded by Member States.

B. Other recommendations for action by the General Assembly

The Commission recommends to the General Assembly a change in the language of Article 56 of the First Protocol to the Geneva Convention. Article 56 of the First Protocol to the Geneva Convention prohibits the bombing of “installations and facilities containing dangerous forces,” namely dams, dikes and nuclear power plants. UNEP proposes to extend the definition of “facilities containing dangerous forces” under Article 56 to include “chemical plants.”

The Commission further recommends that the General Assembly work to establish legal protection for biological diversity through the establishment of a general agreement prohibiting the deliberate military targeting of certain designated areas of ecological value

and cultural heritage in times of armed conflict. Such “designated areas” will include national parks, wildlife preserves, and zoological and botanical gardens.

The Commission applauds the efforts of regional environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in their efforts to provide environmental assessments and remediation.

The Commission reaffirms national sovereignty and the creation of regional and national committees addressing environmental issues and conflicts.

The Commission further affirms that nations should avoid war when trying to resolve issues pertaining to environmental conflict, but rather choose more cooperative efforts of diplomacy.

The Commission further encourages efforts by United Nations Member States to improve the access of their citizens to food, clean water, and employment to reduce internal conflict and involuntary migration – both causes and impacts of environmental degradation.

The Commission further recommends that the General Assembly consider initiatives that address the environmental burden on nations that host large populations of involuntary migrations and refugees.

There are many nations within UNEP who express desire for the General Assembly to consider lasting effects of nuclear warfare though such nations cannot express condemnation of nuclear war as it is not on the agenda of UNEP to consider.

CHAPTER II

Environment and Security Partnerships: Conflicts and the Environment

At its meeting on 24 November 2008, UNEP considered agenda item 2, Environment and Security Partnerships: Conflicts and the Environment.

For its consideration on this item, the Commission had before it the following documents:

- (a) Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (1977)
- (b) Chemical Weapons Convention (1993)
- (c) Mine Ban Convention (1997)

A. Deliberations

The second agenda topic: “Environment and Security Partnerships: Conflicts and the Environment” was first brought to the floor by Serbia on November 24, 2008. Serbia expressed the recommendations made in Draft Resolution 2-1 for the body of UNEP to consider. Concerns were specifically expressed in preventing environmental damage caused by conflict and remediation in post-conflict zones.

Somalia described environmental issues caused by conflict in order to better inform UNEP members of personal goals and goals included in draft resolution 2-1; specifically drought, involuntary displacement of peoples, famine, and abuse of natural resources. Somalia also called for passing of resolution that centers on pre-conflict prevention by discussing environmental concerns and recommended post-environmental conflict reparations.

Armenia and Haiti expressed their concerns for deforestation to be included in an amendment to draft resolution 2-1. Haiti also expressed concern for the topic of involuntarily displaced persons to be elaborated upon. The concern for the competition for natural resources causing conflict was also mention by Haiti.

Colombia showed interest in proposing that the rebuilding of post-conflict countries with greener infrastructures.

Nigeria emphasized concern that linking the environment and security takes UNEP into the controversial issue of national sovereignty and infringes on the mandates of other United Nations bodies. Nigeria claimed that environmental degradation causes internal conflict more often than interstate conflict and recommended reframing the debate in terms of human security which is also a major cause of intrastate conflict. Nigeria also suggested that efforts made by United Nations Member States to improve the access of its citizens to food, clean water, and employment would reduce internal conflict and involuntary migration – both causes and impacts of environmental degradation. Nigeria also expressed its belief that this approach would lead to broader support for the issue

because it is in the best interests of developing nations, who make up the majority of United Nations Member States.

Syrian Arab Republic explained that it is unacceptable to specifically propose the ban of landmines as it infringes upon national sovereignty. Yet the Republic of Moldova suggested that UNEP can advise countries against nuclear warfare.

Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea strongly opposed the resolution on the basis that it crossed into the deliberations of the Security Council.

The Republic of Moldova introduced Draft Resolution 2-2 for the body of UNEP to consider. The resolution called for the discouragement in the use of depleted uranium munitions, and proposed the creation of a fund for the clean-up of conflict areas affected by the use of DU munitions. The resolution was immediately adopted by the body.

After the passing of resolution 2-2, there was a large number of nations in discontent due to the lack of representatives in the body during voting procedure. There were two separate efforts to bring resolution 2-2 back on the floor for the body to debate and revote. However both failed to receive a two-thirds majority vote necessary to bring the resolution back to the floor.

There were no dissenting opinions submitted by the body regarding discontent with resolution 2-1.

Dissenting opinions regarding resolution 2-2 are as follows:

The United States of America would like to applaud the labor of the committee for their hard work on this report. We cannot support the content matters of Resolution 2-2, concerning with the use of depleted uranium, since the United States has a large amount of this. As such, we will not discourage the use. The United States is also economically concerned with the fund mentioned in this resolution and feels that it is not in their best interest to donate to this fund.

Angola regrets the adoption of Resolution 2-2, since it does not include the views of the entire committee. Specifically, the views of most of the major players who need to implement the necessary policies required for the success of this resolution were ignored. On a formal level, Angola feels it is not diplomatically courteous to ignore countries' opinions and to disregard formal consultations. Content wise, this resolution contains several flaws. On the other hand, the first operative clause is redundant with regards to the system of Geneva Convention. Angola has doubts concerning the effectiveness of the resolution; this would automatically lead to a major obstruction for the proposed fund. Angola itself cannot participate in this fund and doubts other developing countries will be able to contribute. To conclude, Angola wants to stress the need for a cooperative approach in order to reach effective solutions.

China, though it strongly supports the vast majority of the report on agenda topic 2, is

deeply concerned with Resolution 2-2 in both content and in the manner in which it was passed. China feels that the content of Resolution 2-2 is a matter of national security, and such, is outside the preview of UNEP. That being said, China is in full support of resolution 2-2 and thus still hopes for the passage of this report.

Costa Rica is a champion of sound environmental policy and is a strong supporter of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s past work on the many complex issues the international community confronts regarding the environment. Within our borders, Costa Rica is pursuing economic development and sustainability. Having declared its goal to become climate neutral by 2021, Costa Rica hopes to serve as an example of sustainability in the developing world. It is particularly for the aforementioned reasons that we are deeply disappointed in finding it necessary to abstain from UNEP's second report. Costa Rica supports this report in every regard, save for Resolution 2-2. Resolution 2-2 was brought to the floor, debate was closed and the resolution was voted upon with such a degree of celerity that its content could not be considered in the deliberate and responsible way that characterized other workings of the UNEP. Costa Rica finds that the way in which this resolution passed should prevent it from serving as an accurate representation of UNEP's true sentiments. Such behaviors serves to exacerbate that which divides nations and prevents them from action upon those ideals and bring them to the UNEP in the first place—a fervent concern for our planet and a desire to work cooperatively for its well being.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea feels that UNEP has, in places, overstepped its bounds. In others like Resolution 2-2, the issues were not fully discussed in a manner that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea approves.

France feels that the passing of Resolution 2-2 under topic 2 was diplomatically discourteous and resulted in grievously deep dissent among members of the body of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). France strongly opposes the content of Resolution 2-2 concerning depleted uranium and therefore would have voted against this resolution; that France was denied the opportunity to consider, debate, and vote upon this resolution due to miscommunication is highly unfortunate. France would like to express its severe discontent with the discussion, representation and inclusion of Resolution 2-2 in this report while still putting its full support behind the excellent work of the body on Resolution 2-1 and the report of topic 2 in general.

The Russian Federation would like to extend its congratulations to the United Nations Environment Programme for recommending to the General Assembly Resolution 2-1. However, the utter disregard to consensus, truth, and feasibility established in Resolution 2-2 is utterly untenable. On one hand, Resolution 1 covers relevant issues pertaining to environment and security, admirably mentioning environmental consequences created by conflict, such as displaced persons, deforestation and the potential depletion of natural resources. Furthermore, the general recommendations made by the UNEP to the general assembly in this resolution regarding the potential changes that could be implemented for pre-conflict assessment are extremely necessary to prevent environmental damage caused by conflict, an issue which is not discussed in any major conflict-related document. On

the other hand, the second resolution submitted to the General Assembly, while it can be accepted by the body should be utterly and completely disregarded. The Russian Federation believes that the use of depleted uranium is legal, its health hazards are unsubstantiated, and that in regards to the clause regarding funding no action or consultation of countries that would enable this fund was taken. The complete lack of debate on this resolution has appalled not only the Russian Federation, but many other countries represented in this body. The Russian Federation cannot and will not support a resolution that we believe is false and would like the General Assembly to strongly understand this sentiment. Yet, the Russian Federation, due to its commitments to the first resolution in this report cannot both refuse the adoption of this resolution and believes that the General Assembly should accept the report in its entirety.

B. Action taken by The Commission

At its meeting on November 24, 2008, UNEP approved for recommendation for adoption by the General Assembly a revised draft resolution entitled “The need to reduce environmental damage both through pre-conflict prevention as well as post-conflict environmental remediation,” sponsored by Serbia, Somalia, Mexico, Armenia, Liberia, Finland, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Japan, Republic of Moldova, Cambodia, India, Russian Federation, and France. Before passage the resolution was amended by friendly amendments A and B which added operative clauses 13 and 14. It was then amended by unfriendly amendment A which altered the language of operative clause 11. Then it was amended by friendly amendments C, D, and E which added to operative clause 2, added preambular clause number 4, beginning with “Affirming,” and added operative clause 12. By a vote of 30 in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention, draft resolution 2.1 was passed by UNEP. (For the text of the final resolution, see chapter I, section A, draft resolution I.)

Opposed: Argentina, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom

Abstain: Lao People's Democratic Republic

Also at this meeting, UNEP debated and approved a resolution concerning the use of depleted uranium. The resolution was submitted by Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Nicaragua, Finland, Liberia, Fiji, Nigeria, Portugal, Bolivia, Armenia, Brunei Darussalam, Syrian Arab Republic, and Cambodia. The resolution passed by a vote of 13 in favor, 9 opposed, and 3 abstentions. (For the full text of the final resolution, see chapter I, section A, draft resolution II.)

CHAPTER III

Adoption of the report of this Commission on its nineteenth session

At its meeting on 24 November 2008, the draft report of UNEP was made available for consideration. The Commission considered the report, and with no amendments, adopted the report by consensus. Twelve abstentions were made in the voting process as follows: Angola, China, Costa Rica, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.