

HMUN 2020

Haarlem Model United Nations

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Issue:

Preventing the problem of water conflicts in problem areas in the near future

Forum:

Your committee



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Forum:	General Assembly 1
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Position:	Deputy Chair

Introduction

About 71 percent of our precious Earth is covered by water and only 2.5 percent of it is fresh and can be used by humans without needing further purification. Unfortunately, since these sources of freshwater are limited, we are facing the probability of conflicts over water in the future. These probable conflicts will most likely take place near “transboundary” freshwater sources which are waters that pass through boundaries of different countries. The cause of conflicts over freshwater sources are generally the same, the quick loss of such sources due to climate change and other problems related with the general rise of temperature of our Earth. This scarcity of water will cause problems that will threaten human and animal life due to dehydration, weaken the economies dramatically since agriculture needs freshwater and overall hurt the country in a way that not so many of us expect to see. Although the scarcity of water isn't a problem that most countries don't take action to solve and give attention to, in the past UN Secretaries General have stated: “The consequences for humanity are grave. Water scarcity threatens economic and social gains and is a potent fuel for wars and conflict” which communicates us the issue's seriousness and probability of a conflict happening over it. Furthermore, conflicts over water have been seen in the past 551 times and are predicted to be seen again in places near Nile, Ganges-Brahmaputra, Indus, Tigris-Euphrates, and Colorado rivers. It is not hard to predict that conflicts near the stated areas, will cause great damage to concerning countries causing the loss of lives and properties. To conclude; it is very likely that conflicts will arise in the future because of water and the probability of it being scarcer, due to climate change and global warming. These conflicts will result in the loss of life and property causing serious damage to the involved countries and overall our earth.

Definition of Key Terms

Hydropolitic

Hydropolitics is a new multi-disciplinary science investigating political and judicial problems arisen by above and underground waters, natural and

artificial water resources of the basins with borders within more than one country together with technical aspects and looking for legal solutions for such problems.

Transboundary

A transboundary rivers are rivers that cross at least one political border, either a border within a nation or an international boundary. These rivers can be used by the countries that these rivers pass through but problems may occur when one of two countries prevent the other from using it.

General Overview

The United Nations and member countries are aware of the problem that water is scarce and conflicts had emerged and are emerging because of it. There is not much to do legally other than implementing new laws, regulations and international treaties concerning the involved countries.

The only aspect of the issue that countries can act on is the preservation of water. Water is scarce and globally; we use 4 trillion cubic meters of freshwater every year which indicates that these resources are used quickly in massive amounts causing freshwater resources to run out in probably 2050. Countries can try to make statistics of their own water resources and make assumptions and take action according to those results. Countries may choose to improve purification facilities, direct chemical waste somewhere other than water sources and prevent pollution of water sources in order to protect their water sources for future generations.

Although there are methods to prevent water sources from pollution and use water as much as we can, it will end one day. So, no matter how many new technologies are developed, it is very unlikely that water won't run out. The best thing for all countries around the world can do is to use their water wisely and take action concerning its presence in the future.

The wise use of water resources will decrease the tension between parties that have conflict because of water and help the issue of conflict over water get solved in the near future.

To conclude, the problem of conflicts over water in problem areas in the future can be tackled in 2 ways. First of all, measures can be taken and new laws can be implemented to protect water sources. International treaties can be made since it is quite useful as it can be seen from previous results. Most importantly, this problem should be tackled from the root; a solution should be found to use freshwater sources to the maximum capacity. These solutions may include; new methods of purification and desalinization, preventing pollution of water by directing sewage and chemical waste to another place and most importantly of all, using water wisely and not wasting it.

Major Parties Involved

World Health Organization

World Health Organization states that: "Safe and readily available water is important for public health, whether it is used for drinking, domestic use, food production or recreational purposes. Improved water supply and sanitation, and better management of water resources, can boost countries' economic growth and can contribute greatly to poverty reduction." Which can communicate us some of the reasons that conflicts may arise.

Syria

Syria, a devastating drought beginning in 2006 forced many farmers to abandon their fields and migrate to urban centers. There's some evidence that the migration fueled the civil war there, in which 80,000 people have died. "You had a lot of angry, unemployed men helping to trigger a revolution," says Aaron Wolf, a water management expert at Oregon State University, who frequently visits the Middle East. Tensions between nations are also high. Since 1975, Turkey's dam and hydropower construction has cut water flow to Iraq by 80 percent and to Syria by 40 percent. Syria and Iraq have accused Turkey of hoarding water.

Yemen

Due to the 2015 Yemeni Civil War, the situation is increasingly dire. 80% of the country's population struggles to access water to drink and bathe. Bombing has forced many Yemenis to leave their homes for other areas, and so wells in those areas are under increasing pressure.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
2002	Due to the increase in global temperature after the development of newer technologies, areas around the globe started experiencing serious water related problems.
September 2 nd , 2003	Establishment of UN-Water
March 22 nd , 2007	The first World Water Day
2007	Former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon stated: "The consequences for humanity are grave. Water scarcity threatens economic and social gains and is a potent fuel for wars and conflict." Telling the world how this problem may cause great damage.

March 2010	U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warns that increased population growth and climate change will cause nearly two-thirds of the world's population to live under water-stress conditions by the year 2025. She stated that the U.S.
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Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Nile River (Egypt-Sudan-Ethiopia)

The Nile river features significant conflict over access to and rights over the Nile water resources among its eleven riparian countries. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), founded by 9 out of 10 riparian countries in 1999 with backing from major donor institutions, has achieved some successes in its attempts to strengthen cooperation. Yet, since 2007, diverging interests between upstream and downstream countries have brought negotiations to a standstill, pitting Egypt (and, to a lesser extent, Sudan) against upstream riparians, especially Ethiopia. In 2015, trilateral negotiations between these countries over a major dam under construction in Ethiopia led to a framework agreement that may, in time, prepare the ground for a broader agreement.

Saudi Arabia

Due to its desert location, Saudi Arabia has been a true innovator for desalination techniques. Today, they make the highest production of desalinated water (water that has been filtered to remove salt) worldwide. To make their conservation even better, they have started to convert all of their desalination plants to be powered with solar energy and plan to have all plants solar powered by 2019.

Possible Solutions

Reducing use of water:

Such as by decreasing wasteful uses and increasing efficient uses; Increasing availability of clean water, such as by reducing industrial pollution and sewage contamination of water, improving sewage and wastewater treatment, and improving watershed management; designing and implementing improved methods of desalination; and expanding use of greywater which is the waste water from domestic activities.

Reducing pollution:

Countries make the poor choice of pouring their sewages in seas or rivers but this decision causes water sources to get polluted. When water sources get polluted, this contaminated material can reach other water sources and carry on the chain of pollution. This will ultimately result in the pollution of freshwater sources making them

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unusable or need further purification. To prevent this, countries can get rid of their sewage by different methods in special facilities and use other methods of putting chemical waste to use instead of pouring them in water sources.

Laws and measures to prevent conflict over water:

This solution focuses on the conflicts caused by water, not the scarcity of water. To prevent these conflicts over water, measures include: Laws and regulations at the local, state or provincial, national, or international level; proactive cooperation among nations or among states or provinces within nations; and mediation and arbitration. Internationally, there have been more than 3800 unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral declarations or conventions concerning water, including 286 treaties.

Appendix/Appendices

- <https://bigthink.com/politics-current-affairs/where-the-water-wars-will-be-fought>
- <https://unu.edu/media-relations/releases/water-called-a-global-security-issue.html>
- <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170615-why-hydro-politics-will-shape-the-21st-century>
- <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/running-out-of-water-conflict-and-water-scarcity-in-yemen-and-syria/>

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