GAUCHO MUN XVI

UNITED NATIONS: ENVIORNMENT PROGRAMME

General Assembly

General Assembly: United Nations Environment Programme

A WORD FROM SECRETARIAT

GauchoMUN XVI has a conference-wide zero-tolerance policy for any forms of bigotry, including but not limited to homophobia, sexism, racism, and xenophobia. Be mindful of this as you research, speak, and write. It is our duty as global citizens and students of diplomacy to ensure our views are unbiased, fair, and equitable.

The mandate of this committee includes the discussion of developing global political situations, parts of which may be considered sensitive and personal to your fellow delegates. In accordance with our zero-tolerance discrimination policy, we ask that delegates be mindful in the ways they approach these topics in their research and in committee session. If you are unsure or confused about how to navigate within our policies, please feel free to contact your Dais or Secretariat, who are happy to provide you with direction.

Land Acknowledgement

GauchoMUN XVI and UCSB Model United Nations would like to acknowledge the land that we currently occupy as students of University of California, Santa Barbara. This is the homeland of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Native Americans. We recognize that the Barbareño Band of Chumash Native Americans, as well as many others, were forcibly removed from their rightful land and that the consequences of this forced removal still continue to affect Indigenous communities.

Gaucho MUN XVI and UCSB Model United Nations honor the resilience, strength, and enduring presence of Indigenous people across the country and around the world. As students of UCSB, we continue to reflect on our University's ties with colonial occupation, and strive to educate ourselves and uplift Indigenous cultures, issues, and histories. During GauchoMUN XVI, we ask that everyone reflect on the repercussions of global colonial development and forcible occupation and strive to support Indigenous and other affected communities throughout their actions in committee this weekend. For more information, please visit their website: www.bbc-indians.com.

Letter from the Under-Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

I hope you are all excited for GauchoMUN, we are so thrilled to be hosting all of you. My name is Ryan Ramirez and I will be the USG of the General Assembly at GauchoMUN XVI. Our chairs have put in so much work and I have had an amazing time working with them; we hope to foster a safe and fun conference.

I am a first year Political Science major at University of California Santa Barabara, and I have been a part of Model United Nations for 7 years now. I am originally from Orange County and I began MUN in the 7th grade and I have enjoyed it ever since. Throughout the years I have been both a GA and Crisis delegate and I love the community that it has formed and the engaging conversations it has started. I am very excited to hear all of the innovative and unique solutions created through this weekend. Outside of Model United Nations, I enjoy hanging out with friends, trying new things, and going to the beach. I am currently working as a server at one of our on campus restaurants.

I hope you all have a great time this weekend and just remember to do your best and if you have any concerns do not be scared to reach out.

Sincerely,
Ryan Ramirez
USG of GA | SBIMUN XV
ryan_ramirez@ucsb.edu

Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the United Nations Environment Programme at GauchoMUN XVI! My name is Kirra Moore, and I am honored to serve as your Chair for this session.

As your Chair, my primary goal is to create a productive, inclusive, and engaging environment where every delegate feels comfortable to voice their perspectives and contribute meaningfully to the debate! Whether this is your first or fifth conference I am honored you have chosen this committee and plan to make this committee a fun and engaging experience for all.

A little about myself: I am currently a graduating second year at UCSB and I am studying Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations. I have been involved in MUN for 10 years now! Throughout my MUN journey, I have participated as a delegate, chair, head delegate and even an advisor. Outside of Model UN I love going to the beach and spending time with friends. At UCSB I have presented my independent research in a national conference, am in a sorority, have been accepted to graduate school and studied abroad! If you have any questions about that feel free to find me outside of the committee!

In preparation for the conference, I encourage you to thoroughly research your country's position, familiarize yourself with the committee's rules of procedure, and develop well-rounded arguments and solutions. Remember, the quality of our debate depends on the effort and dedication you bring to the table.

If you have any questions or need assistance before or during the conference, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at kirramoore@ucsb.edu. I am here to support you and ensure that your experience at GauchoMUN XVI is both enriching and rewarding.

I look forward to witnessing the creativity, passion, and diplomacy that each of you will bring to the committee. Together, let's make this an unforgettable and impactful session.

Warm regards,

Kirra Moore

Letter from the Co-Chair

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to be serving as you Co-Chair for our UNEP committee! My name is Haven Fricke-Smyth and I am a third year Sociology and Political Science double major from Humboldt County California. I am incredibly passionate about politics, but I have many interests outside of school, including riding horses, hiking, and doing basically anything that involves an adventure.

This is my second year in MUN, and I am excited to say that I think I've found my "thing." It has pushed me to do things I never thought I would, and built my confidence in a way I didn't know possible. Through MUN I have found that my passion lies in politics and debating, and I have learned so much more than a class could ever teach me. Not to mention the incredible group of people I have come to call my friends.

I am so excited to see how you all tackle this committee and how you will work together to promote the health of Antarctica. I encourage you all to read the background guide thoroughly and do additional research on your own. The more familiar you are with the topics, the committee, and the procedures, the more creative you can be. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out, I am happy to answer any and all questions.

I am so excited to see what you all come up with and I look forward to working with you all. I hope this committee will both challenge and inspire you.

All the best,
Haven Fricke-Smyth,
Co-chair for UNEP | GauchoMUN XVI
havenfricke-smyth@ucsb.edu

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Committee Description

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was founded in 1972 and its mission is to solve global environmental challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. It provides research, supports policy development, and works with countries to promote sustainable development and environmental protections. This committee will run as a standard General Assembly Committee. It will use all procedures specific to the General Assembly including but not limited to Points, Motions and Speaker's list. This committee will be composed of single delegate countries and will begin with a primary speaker's list to decide on a topic to be debated upon. The committee and topics are styled after the United Nations Environment Programme but will function as though it were the General Assembly. At the end of the committee we expect to have multiple full resolution drafts to vote on. The committee will run standard voting procedures.

Topic A: Environmental Protection of Antarctica in the Face of Climate Change

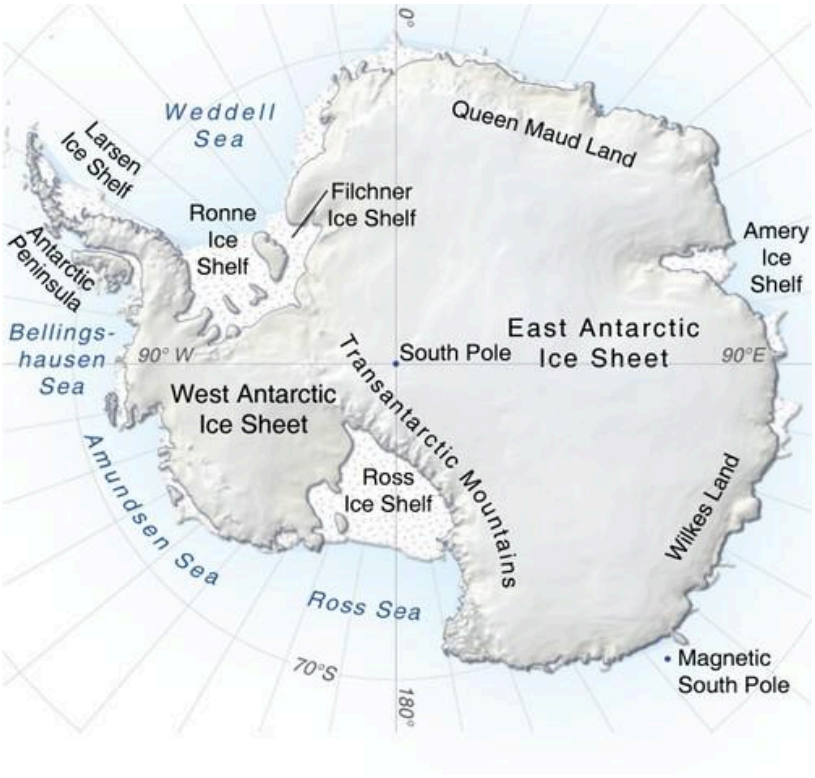
Key Terms

1. Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC): Very strong current which circulates water around the globe in a clockwise direction.
2. Upwelling: the process by which cold dense water from the bottom of the ocean gets pushed upwards by currents and winds, bringing rich nutrients to the surface.
3. Global Warming: the rapid increase in global temperatures since the mid 1900s, as a result of human activity.[1]
4. Greenhouse gasses: gasses in the earth atmosphere that trap heat, allow radiation from the sun in, but not out. The most prominent of these gasses are Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Methane (CH_4), and Nitrous Oxide (N_2O). The overproduction of these gasses as a result of human activity has contributed significantly to global warming.
5. Land Ice: any ice that sits on the landmass of Antarctica. This includes ice sheets, glaciers and ice shelves.

[1] education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/global-warming/

6. Sea Ice: frozen sea water that forms on the surface of the oceans surrounding antarctica. This floating ice is seasonal, forming in the winter and melting in the summer. This ice also includes icebergs, which are floating masses of broken off ice.
7. Ocean acidification: The ocean has a natural pH which was about 8.29 pre-industrial revolution. This is slightly alkaline, the opposite of acidic. When the ocean absorbs carbon dioxide (CO_2) it dissolves and is converted to carbonic acid (H_2CO_3), making the ocean more acidic. The ocean now has a pH of 8.1, though small this drop is incredibly harmful to natural ecosystems.[2]
8. Carbon sink: a process by which an object, typically a plant or organism which photosynthesises, absorbs more carbon dioxide than it releases. In Antarctica this includes algae, kelp, and more.

[2] https://www.asoc.org/learn/ocean-acidification/



Background

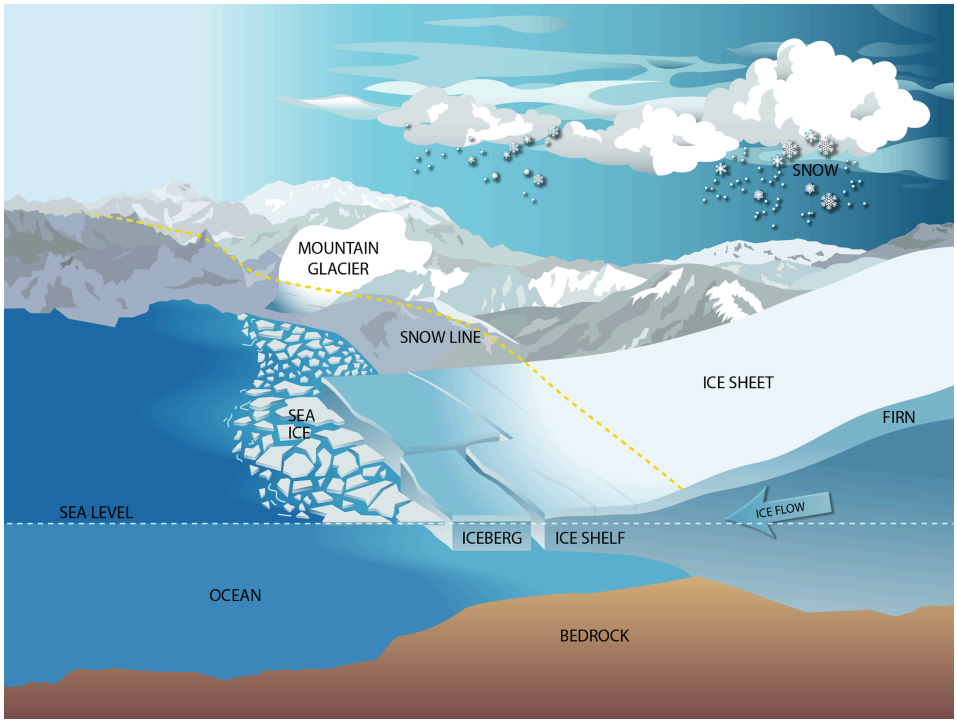
Antarctica has a remarkably diverse ecosystem that plays a vital role in regulating global climates. It consists of a large landmass, extensive ice sheets, and the surrounding Antarctic Ocean. It is one of the largest deserts on Earth and a hub for groundbreaking scientific research. Climatologists use ice cores from Antarctic ice sheets to track Earth's climatic history, while astronomers utilize it for the clearest view from space on Earth.[3] Each part of Antarctica is unique and has a specific role in global regulations.

[3] https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/antarctica/

The Antarctic ocean, or Southern ocean, plays a very important role in regulating the global climate. The Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC) helps temperature regulation, as it distributes heat around the globe by pushing hot water from the equator towards the poles, ensuring that the earth's overall temperature remains stable. The ACC also spreads nutrients which support healthy and diverse ecosystems throughout the world. In addition to the ACC, the Antarctic Convergence is a factor which contributes to a healthy ecosystem. This is where the Antarctic and Atlantic oceans meet, and it is home to one of the most productive ecosystems on the planet, which contains everything from phytoplankton and krill, to seals and whales.[4] The Antarctic Ocean is also very important in the regulation of greenhouse gases. Due to a process known as upwelling, phytoplankton and other microorganisms are brought to the surface of the water and absorb harmful Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere, converting it into oxygen (O_2) through photosynthesis. This process is responsible for supplying about ½ of the oxygen we breathe, and absorbing about 26% of human generated CO_2. This upwelling allows marine life to flourish, which is not only good for all ocean ecosystems, but also for humans who rely on the

[4] https://www.asoc.org/learn/welcome-to-the-southern-ocean/

ocean for food and industry. [5] Although incredible for regulating greenhouse gasses, the oceans ability to absorb CO_2 can also lead to ocean acidification which is incredibly harmful to the ocean ecosystem. In the winter time this ocean freezes, nearly doubling the size of Antarctica.



Antarctic ice is another vital component of the world's ecosystem. There are two types of ice in Antarctica, land ice, and sea ice. Land ice covers the rocky and mountainous terrain, and contains the Antarctic ice sheet, the largest piece of ice in the world.[6] Land ice is also made up of Glaciers, which are large masses of ice and snow that slowly flow downhill, eventually reaching the ocean. Land ice is also made up of ice shelves, which are floating masses of ice connected to the ice sheets. Sea ice forms in the winter and floats on the ocean's surface. It is very important for reflecting heat, protecting ecosystems, and ocean circulation. The massive expanse of white

[5] https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/marine-biodiversity-and-ecosystems-underpin-healthy-planet-and-social-well-being
[6] https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/antarctica/

sea ice reflects around 50% of the solar radiation that reaches it, whereas ocean water reflects only 5%. Sea ice also provides a habitat for a wide variety of species both under the ice and on top of it. It is especially important for colonies of emperor penguins who require solid sea ice for around 9 months of the year. In this time the emperor penguins breed, lay their eggs, and raise their young, and too much or too little ice can be deadly for the colonies.[7]

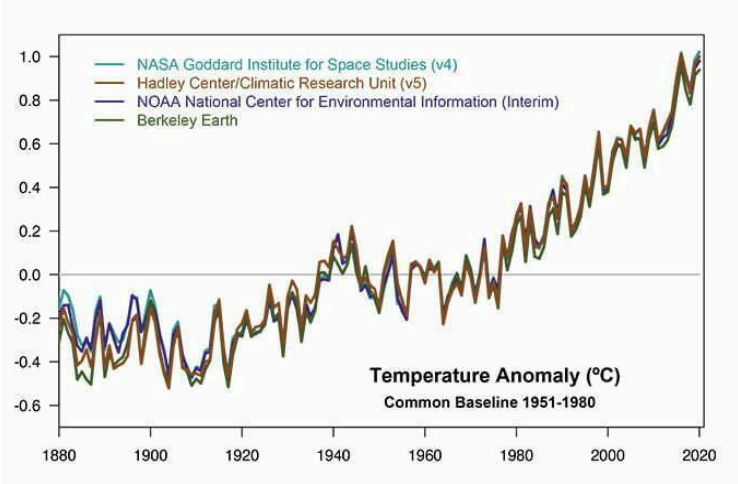
Antarctic ice plays an incredibly important role in minimizing global warming. The ice sheets reflect around 90% of the solar radiation that reaches, which helps keep the planet cool and regulate global temperatures. It also holds around 70% of the world's freshwater. Due to greenhouse gases and global warming, these ice sheets are shrinking rapidly, which results in rising sea levels, and loss of this freshwater. On top of that, ice shelves are important because they act as brakes to stop glaciers from sliding into the ocean. When these ice shelves melt, the huge rivers of ice flow directly into the sea.[8]

Antarctica is also home to many diverse flora and fauna despite the frigid temperatures. This includes lichen, mosses, and algae, as well as both land and ocean dwelling animals. The ocean also holds some of the most diverse life on the planet, including phytoplankton, krill, whales, and seals. Leopard seals are one of the top predators, especially to penguins, a staple of Antarctica.[9]

[7] https://www.asoc.org/learn/antarctic-ice/
[8] https://www.asoc.org/learn/antarctic-ice/
[9] https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/antarctica/

What has been happening? What are the effects of global warming?

While Antarctica is vital in regulating world ecosystems, climates, and more, it is also in grave danger. Global warming affects Antarctica more dramatically than the rest of the world. Over the last 50 years the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula has been the fastest warming place on earth.[10] Winter temperatures have increased by 10.8°F since 1960 and the Larsen Ice shelf disintegrated drastically between 1995 and 2002 as a result of rising air temperatures.[11] The air temperature has increased by 5.4°F, five times the mean rate of global warming reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC).[12] The ACC is also heating up faster than the rest of the ocean.



[10] https://www.asoc.org/learn/climate-crisis-in-antarctica/
[11] https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctica/Climate
[12] *https://discoveringantarctica.org.uk/climate-change/impacts-of-climate-change/*

The impacts of this warming include changes and decreases in sea ice, which has detrimental effects on creatures that live in Antarctica. As a result of lost sea ice, krill, a vital member of the food chain, have dropped by 80% since 1970. The krill rely on this ice as breeding as well as eating grounds. Not only that but other animals, including whales, seals and penguins rely on krill for food, when the krill disappear, so do the rest of the animals. Penguin colonies are also directly affected by changes in sea ice, as they live, eat, and breed on it for around 9 months out of the year.[13]

Due to the Antarctic ocean's ability to absorb CO_2, ocean acidification (see key terms) is a huge problem. “Since the industrial revolution the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has almost doubled,”[14] resulting in the ocean working double time to absorb it. As a result of this acidification process shelled organisms are threatened, as well as coral, as well as the entire food chain. The acidic waters dissolve calcium carbonate, which is what shells are made out of, and this threatens Antarctic clams, snails as well as coral. All of which are essential to a healthy Antarctic ecosystem. Acidification also changes trace metal concentrations which have a large impact on ocean plant life and can lead to changes in carbon sink (see key terms). The change in trace metals can affect plants' ability to grow and photosynthesize and reduce the amount of CO_2 they are able to absorb, leading to faster increases in CO_2 in the atmosphere. All of these negative effects on the intricate web of the food chain could result in the collapse of the ecosystem all together. [15]

[13] *https://discoveringantarctica.org.uk/climate-change/impacts-of-climate-change/*
[14] https://www.asoc.org/learn/ocean-acidification/

[15] https://www.asoc.org/learn/ocean-acidification/

Global warming also results in rising sea levels, which can be detrimental not only to animals but to humans. As temperatures heat up, water stored on land in ice melts and flows directly into the ocean. This effect has been rapidly increasing in the past few years. In the 1980s Antarctica was losing 40 billion tons of ice per year, in 2022 it was losing 252 billion tons per year.[16] Between 1993 and 2022 the ocean had risen 4 inches. Just a 1 inch increase in sea levels, results in an estimated 8.5 feet of lost coastline.[17] Sea level rise results in more coastal flooding, which can be deadly for coastal communities, as well as flooding at high tide, erosion and more.

[16] https://www.asoc.org/learn/climate-crisis-in-antarctica/
[17] https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/147435/taking-a-measure-of-sea-level-rise-ocean-altimetry#:~:text=While%20a%20few%20millimeters%20of,flooding%2C%20even%20on%20sunny%20days.

Past International Involvement

The first international action taken in regards to Antacrica and its environment occurred on December 1, 1959 when the Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington D.C. This treaty stipulated how research and international cooperation should proceed in antarctica. According to this treaty all military actions in Antarctica were prohibited, and it was declared that no country could claim territorial sovereignty in Antarctica. This was put into effect on June 23, 1961. In 1982 the agreed measure for the conservation of Fauna and Flora was put into action. This measure worked to protect the plants and animals by prohibiting actions that may cause harm to any native antarctic plant or animal life. This looked like banning dogs and firearms near wildlife, and establishing protected areas as well as species. In 1978 the Convention of Conservation of Antarctic Seals attempted to ensure the protection of seals by prohibiting the killing or capturing of any seals in or Around Antarctica. In 1982 the Convention of Antarctic Marine Living Resources put into action the preservation of Antarctic marine life, by preventing overfishing and minimizing irreversible climate change. The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctica Treaty, or the Madrid Protocol was put into force in 1998. This protocol covers a wide range of issues, intended to prevent negative effects to the environment, climate, air, water, species and more. Since this protocol there has been repeated action taken by the international community, including the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR).[18]

[18] https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=eb78cec7f5e34c40a2ee13732c4bf805

Country Blocs:

Asia-Pacific Bloc:

This bloc includes active research powers like China, Japan, India, and South Korea, which emphasize the need for scientific exploration and technological innovation in Antarctica. While Australia and New Zealand champion environmental conservation and strict adherence to the Antarctic Treaty, countries like China and India advocate for access to Antarctica's resources for sustainable use. Smaller nations in the region focus on equitable participation in Antarctic governance and the global climate agenda.

European Bloc:

European nations remain steadfast in their commitment to environmental conservation and the Antarctic Treaty System. This bloc prioritizes transparency, robust environmental regulations, and international collaboration. Norway, as a claimant state, seeks to balance its territorial interests with broader conservation efforts. Many EU nations, including Germany and Sweden, push for stronger scientific cooperation and expanded funding for Antarctic research to address the climate crisis.

Latin American Bloc:

This bloc features claimant states like Argentina and Chile, which advocate for regional cooperation and emphasize the Southern Hemisphere's unique perspective on Antarctic governance. They aim to balance sovereignty claims with compliance to the Antarctic Treaty. Tourism is also a growing priority for this bloc, as it is a key economic driver for several member states. The bloc stresses the importance of preserving Antarctic ecosystems to ensure sustainable tourism and food security through marine conservation.

Western European and Other States Bloc:

Led by the United States, this bloc champions the principles of peace, scientific research, and environmental protection enshrined in the Antarctic Treaty. They focus on strengthening international agreements, enhancing climate research, and opposing territorial claims. Key members such as Canada, the UK, and France push for innovative solutions to combat climate change, including stricter regulations on greenhouse gas emissions and expanded funding for Antarctic conservation initiatives.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions may include strengthening pre-existing international agreements, forming administrative bodies or task forces, and expanding global climate regulations.

A potential solution for environmental degradation through human action could include building on previously established frameworks such as the Madrid Protocol. This could look like updating the protocol to include stricter climate-focused regulations and expanding protected marine areas in the Southern Ocean to safeguard vital ecosystems. Enhanced enforcement mechanisms, such as an Antarctic Climate Task Force, could ensure compliance and provide regular assessments of environmental risks.

A possible solution for slowing the rate of melting ice could look like creating new international agreements with more ambitious commitments focusing on reducing the production of greenhouse gasses. This could include harsher bans on fossil fuel industries, global carbon taxes, and better allocation of resources. Additionally this could be used to protect marine life in Antarctica and work to reduce ocean acidification as well as support native wildlife. This could

look like enhancing restrictions on fishing, shipping activity, and anything that could harm the wildlife.

Another route could be to focus research projects on ways to limit global warming and its effects on the ocean and ice in Antarctica. This could include developing new technologies to mitigate global temperature rise, to protect the wildlife, and to prevent the melting of Antarctic ice. This could be done through a UN task force whose role is to encourage and oversee these operations and ensure the effectiveness of these efforts.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the international community be united on stopping climate change?
2. What steps can be taken to support the health of ocean ecosystems?
3. How does sovereignty play a role in managing the health of the Antarctic climate, ocean, ice etc?
4. What impact does the rest of the world have on the environment in Antarctica, even those who have no claim?
5. How can regulations be made more effective, how does legislation result in action?

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Topic B: Territorial Claims and Governance in Antarctica

Key Terms

1. Biological Prospecting: systematic and organized search for useful products derived from bioresources including plants, microorganisms, animals, etc., that can be developed further for commercialization and overall benefits of the society[19]
2. Tourism: the practice of traveling for fun or recreational purposes
3. Enforcement: to carry out or implement, usually refers to laws or regulations
4. Carbon Footprint: the amount of greenhouse gases produced by a person by doing an activity, can also refer to an organization
5. Marine Life: Marine life refers to all the animals, plants and organisms that live in Earth's saltwater seas and oceans. From the smallest plankton to the largest whale, all organisms play a role in the healthy function of these amazing, complex ecosystems.[20]
6. Biodiversity: Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world [21]

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19 https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/bioprospecting#:~:text=Bioprospecting%20is%20defined%20as%20a,and%20Vegetables%20from%20Africa%2C%202017

20 https://genv.org/marine-life/#:~:text=Marine%20life%20refers%20to%20all,of%20these%20amazing%2C%20complex%20ecosystems.

21 https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/what-is-biodiversity

Background

Antarctica holds a plethora of natural resources, research possibilities and peaks into our past. Territorial claims over Antarctica date back to 1821 when British-American Captain JOhn Davis landed on the continent[22]. From there, the claims have only grown: so much so that today we have in place the Antarctic Treaty. This treaty is an agreement that established Antarctica as a demilitarized zone to only be used for peaceful purposes. These purposes include scientific research, environmental protection, and prohibits the disposal of radioactive waste. In addition to this the Antarctic Treaty set aside the sovereignty disputes that had been common within the continent, creating a stipulation for no new claims being created as well as setting aside those that had been made in the past to ensure the protection of Antarctica in the future.

The treaty was signed by the nations of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States and Russia, formerly known as the USSR. In doing so these states agree that the continent cannot be the subject of international strife or conflict. This created a unique agreement to create a truly 'neutral' continent in which the only purpose is once of academia.

To ensure its continuation, the treaty allows for any member of the United Nations to sign onto this idea, thus keeping Antarctica both relevant in international politics and safe. Since being signed the Antarctic Treaty has been recognized as one of the most successful international agreements as problematic differences have been fully set aside and demilitarized.

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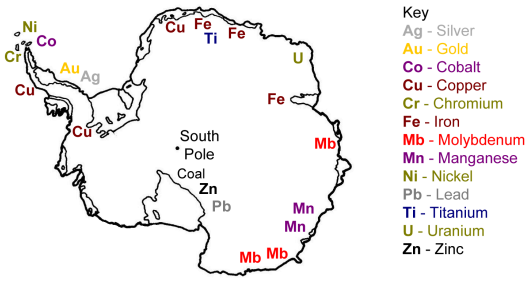
22 https://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/History/discovery-of-antarctica.php#:~:text=The%20first%20claimed%20landing%20on,the%207th%20of%20February%201821.

While historically this treaty has been one of the most successful international agreements as cited before, that does not mean the treaty is without its faults. Currently the Antarctic Treaty faces three key issues that this committee is requesting you and your fellow delegates address: tourism, resource exploitation and enforcement.

Tourism has become a rapidly growing industry in regards to Antarctica. With tourism beginning in the late 1950s with Chile and Argentina, it has quickly become a booming industry. The treaty does currently regulate the amount of tourists, the carbon footprint these travelers leave behind is extensive to say the least. Getting to Antarctica, taking multiple planes and ways of transportation leave a bigger footprint than many other travel destinations. In addition while tourism is regulated the damage that has been done by tourists, disturbing wildlife and accidentally bringing invasive species on their clothes cannot be ignored. These are threats to the biodiversity found in Antarctica. In addition to these logistical issues, a popular attraction for tourists to visit Antarctica are penguins! These penguins, while adorable, have suffered at the

hands of tourists. With all the annual visits, scientists have found evidence of certain penguin species changing their reproductive social behaviors[23].

Following tourism, finding a way to cease resource exploitation is key. A major cause of resource exploitation on the continent has been biological prospecting. Biological prospecting is the process of searching for biological compounds in nature to create pharmaceuticals or cosmetics. It can cause severe environmental damage through over-harvesting and habitat destruction if not regulated properly. As of now other mineral collections have a low likelihood for exploitation as the risks involved in the icy tundra of Antarctica are high and the rewards are minimal. However, with advancing technology the question has to be asked: will Antarctica soon see foragers searching for basic elements such as tin, zinc and iron?



Mineral map of Antarctica showing mineral occurrences

23 https://iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/impacts-tourism-antarctica#:~:text=On%20the%20other%20hand%2C%20Antarctic,their%20reproductive%20and%20social%20behaviours.

To round out the issues that Antarctica is currently facing today is the idea of enforcement. While the Antarctic Treaty hints towards how jurisdiction can be created in Antarctica, it never explicitly states how civil and criminal law can be enforced on the continent itself. As of today, the signing countries have often relied on themselves as individuals for enforcement. With no clear nation or court system in charge of the continent the nations involved have relied heavily on a classic honor system. While this may have worked in the past, the nature of the issues facing Antarctica today call for a stronger system to be set with the ability to enforce.

Past UN Involvement

Thus far the United Nations has not needed to debate the topic Antarctica extensively as the Antarctic Treaty existed and provided. The United Nations has supported the Antarctic Treaty throughout its existence and around 52 countries have become signatories on the document. In addition to this the United Nations has done extensive research on Antarctica and some of its climate challenges. For example a UN Coordinator explained the dark reality Antarctica faces with climate change and rising temperatures. The United Nations also created the CCAMLR Convention. This is the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine

Living Resources. This convention aims to protect marine live in Antarctica by managing marine resources and conserving their ecosystems. Aside from the protection of marine life and concern for Antarctica in regards to climate change the United Nations has generally stayed away from the governance issues we are asking you to tackle today.

There are other organizations involved in Antarctic governance including scientific governance bodies such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)[24] and Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)[25].

[24] https://academic.oup.com/icesjms/advance-article/doi/10.1093/icesjms/fsae163/7909349#:~:text=Noted%20on%20the%20organization's%20website%20(https://scar.org/)%2C%20the,region%20in%20the%20Earth%20system%20(Summerhayes%202008).

[25] https://www.asoc.org/learn/antarctic-governance/

Country Blocs:

African Bloc

This bloc focuses on equitable access to Antarctica as a global resource, emphasizing its environmental protection and addressing the impacts of climate change. While limited in direct research contributions, they advocate for technology transfer, capacity building, and greater representation in Antarctic governance.

Asia-Pacific Bloc

With active research powers like China, India, Japan, and South Korea, this bloc prioritizes scientific exploration. While some nations emphasize environmental protection, others, such as China, focus on resource access and geopolitical interests. Australia and New Zealand lead within the bloc on adherence to Antarctic Treaty principles.

European Bloc

The European bloc is strongly in favor of environmental conservation and the Antarctic Treaty System. They emphasize international cooperation, transparency, and non-militarization. Countries like Norway also safeguard territorial claims while supporting strict governance.

Latin American Bloc

This bloc includes active claimant states like Argentina and Chile, which balance sovereignty interests with Antarctic Treaty compliance. In addition these are key proponents of tourism. The bloc advocates for South-South cooperation and inclusivity in decision-making processes.

Western European and Other States Bloc

This bloc, led by the United States, Canada, and key European powers, champions the Antarctic Treaty's principles of peace, science, and conservation. All members strongly oppose sovereignty claims and support robust scientific cooperation to combat climate change.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions may include, frameworks, regulations, the creation of administrative bodies and an overarching branch of the United Nations. For the purpose of this committee we are not asking for an additional treaty or the rewriting of the Antarctic Treaty.

A potential solution for tourism management may look like the strengthening of regulations and limiting the amount of annual visitors with quotas. Each nation signing onto the Antarctic Treaty that engages in tourism sales must report each tourist allowed entry into Antarctica with a maximum passage of 1,000 tourists per year. In addition to this, each nation requesting the privilege of tourism in Antarctica must agree to strictly adhere to a set of regulations and rules aiming to protect the wildlife and biodiversity from human interference. Each tourism company is subject to random investigation to ensure compliance with the list of regulations provided.

In addition to tourism this solution may be implemented to solve enforcement issues. In order to create stronger enforcement regulations in Antarctica, the creation of an overarching body of the United Nations to oversee various stipulations from the original Treaty and any additional stipulations determined by this committee is key. This body will be composed of

representatives from various countries on a rotating basis as well as scientists with specializations in Antarctica.

A potential solution to resource exploitation is a temporary ban on biological prospecting until a council or committee of scientists accurately describes the potential risks and rewards that comes with biological prospecting. In addition any and all resource collection is to be limited to the very outskirts of Antarctica, no more than 50 KM inland, with boundaries to be redefined annually to make room for melting ice and shifts in habitats.

Questions To Consider

1. Without the creation of an additional treaty, how can countries come together to work on the governance issues found in Antarctica today?
2. How can tourism be set up and managed so as to not disturb animals and the ecosystem found in Antarctica?
3. What can governance look like for Antarctica in today's society?
4. Is Antarctica staying demilitarized and without any territorial claims realistic?
    a. If not, what should it look like instead?
5. How can we regulate biological prospecting while still promoting scientific advancement?

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