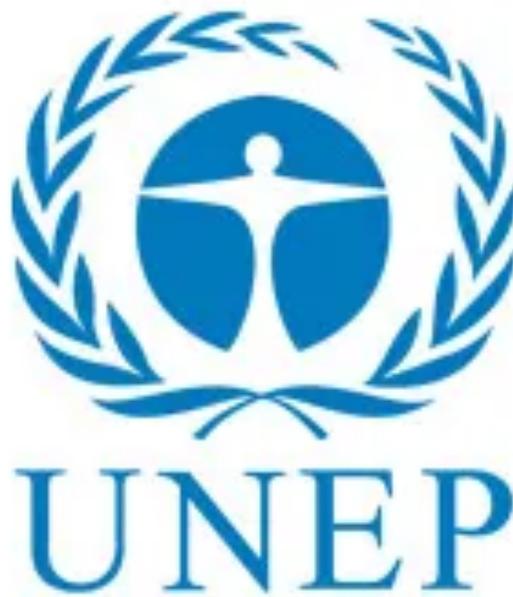


# **King's Christian Collegiate**

## **Model United Nations**

**Implementing reforestation and sequestration commitments  
at COP26**



## **Delegate Guide**

February 25-26, 2022

Emma

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to welcome you to the eighth annual King's MUN Conference: Voices of the Voiceless. Since the debut of the King's MUN conference in 2013, we have striven to create a conference that enables students to push past their comfort zones, connect with their peers, and learn more about the world around them.

Model United Nations (MUN) is a youth simulation of the United Nations where students have the chance to debate the world's greatest issues, problem-solve, and produce creative resolutions with their peers. Throughout my MUN journey, I have developed my critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, which have transferred into many different avenues of my life and which I attribute to many of my successes in high school.

We are living in a time where certain people groups are marginalized and discriminated against based on prejudice and unjust systems. At King's MUN we strive to lift the songs of those who are oppressed and listen to the stories and experiences of those whose mouths have been sealed for far too long. This year, the theme of the King's MUN conference is Voices of the Voiceless. I hope you take this to heart both during the conference and as you move forward into your future.

These past few years have, without a doubt, been ones of hardship and challenge. The COVID-19 Pandemic has built many barriers not only between countries but within countries, communities, and families. At King's MUN we acknowledge the past to live actively in the present but look to the future with hope. One thing the COVID-19 Pandemic has not taken away is our creativity and will to connect to one another. With a range of committees branching from tutorial to advanced, and real to fictional, delegates with all levels of experience have an opportunity to collaborate with peers and grow as young leaders and changemakers at King's MUN, despite the current predicaments.

Once again, I am extremely excited to greet each and every one of you at the eighth annual King's MUN conference. Myself and the King's MUN Secretariat look forward to seeing you on Friday, February 25th and Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Sincerely,  
Arianna Mastrotonardo  
Secretary-General, 2022  
King's MUN

## **Committee Origins**

Since the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972, it has been the global authority that sets the environmental agenda. In addition to setting the global environmental agenda, UNEP promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and serves as an authoritative voice on environmental issues worldwide. UNEP's mission is to inspire, inform, and encourage nations to improve their quality of life by providing leadership and encouraging teamwork for caring for the environment while creating better living conditions for future generations. UNEP works with 193 Member States and representatives from businesses, civil society, as well as other major groups to address environmental challenges via the UN Environment Assembly. They support member states by providing countries with the tools and technology needed to protect and restore the environment. UNEP categorizes its work into six broad thematic areas: climate change, post-conflict and disaster management, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances, and resource efficiency/sustainable consumption and production.

Over 100 countries have committed to the UN climate conference in Glasgow, COP26, to stop deforestation by 2030 to preserve the forests that are key to absorbing carbon dioxide and slowing global warming. Many countries in 2014 agreed to halt deforestation by 2030 at the UN climate summit. This goal however has been unsuccessful to date. The loss of forests has increased by more than 40% since the agreement took place. The most recent COP26 commitment is less determined. Country goals are to end only net deforestation (harvesting and land clearing can continue if replanting of trees keeps pace). COP 26 is also committed to focusing on improving sustainability in the trades that have historically led to deforestation.

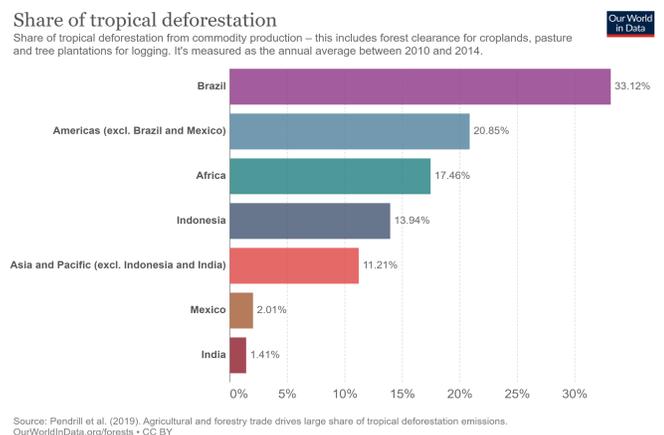
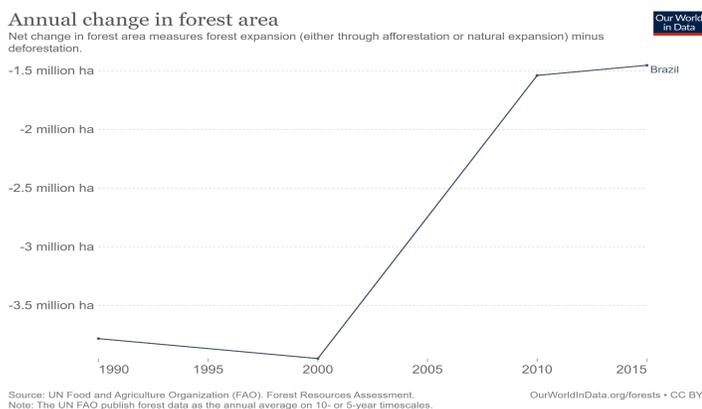
## **Topic 1: Implementing reforestation and sequestration commitments at COP26**

Recent reports have painted a grim picture of the state of the world's forests, with rising deforestation rates, more severe and more frequent forest fires and damage caused by droughts and floods. The topic of this paper is to implement reforestation and sequestration commitments at COP26. Reforestation is the process of replanting an area with trees. Approximately half of the tropical biome is in some stage of recovery from past human disturbance, most of which is in secondary forests growing on abandoned agricultural lands and pastures. Reforestation of these abandoned lands, both natural and managed, has been proposed to help offset increasing carbon emissions to the atmosphere. Forests play a vital role in both supporting biodiversity as well as mitigating climate change by soaking up and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In fact, 7.6 billion tons of carbon, roughly 20% of global emissions, have been removed due to deforestation over the last two decades. When trees are cut down, they release carbon back into the atmosphere, amplifying the Earth's natural greenhouse effect. Because of this result, there is a common misconception that the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to preserve forests. Active forest management can not only reduce carbon, but it's also more cost-effective. Since older trees can sequester less carbon over time, by harvesting older trees in existing forests and replacing them with younger trees, countries can accomplish higher levels of carbon sequestration. The same is true for other active forest management practices such as thinning, which can reduce competition within a forest and provide opportunities for the remaining trees to grow faster and reach their productivity sooner, thus increasing carbon sequestration.

An issue to be mindful of, is ensuring the type of tree planted is best suited for the environment around it. If a tree is planted in the wrong type of habitat, it will decrease the goal of carbon sequestration because it will not have the opportunity to grow properly. Why is implementing reforestation and sequestration plans so important? Due to climate change, there have been many issues worldwide regarding forest fires. For example, fires in Australia during the summers of 2019 and 2020 tore through up to 18.6 million hectares of forest as well as drought-stricken bushland in the southern regions. More than 30 people have been killed thousands of homes were destroyed, and an estimate of nearly three billion animals was killed or displaced. Australia's weather bureau warns that their climate is expected to become hotter and drier, and blames carbon emissions for the increase in extreme heat. This is significant because it

means some types of vegetation won't reach maturity and this could put ecosystems at risk. In April of 2021, British Columbia had its fair share of wildfires as well, burning 868,203 hectares in B.C. Approximately 60 percent of wildfires in 2021 were natural caused. In the first two weeks of July, an average of 40 new wildfires started every day.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world has been losing approximately 5 million hectares of forest every year. Almost all of this occurs in the tropics. Close to half of all deforestation takes place in Indonesia and Brazil. Beef production is responsible for 41% of deforestation, palm oil and soybeans account for 28%, and logging for paper and wood is another 13%. Close to three-quarters are driven by agriculture. Effective solutions will be focused on these agricultural activities and the countries where most deforestation occurs. In order to tackle the problem of deforestation, we need to understand two key questions: where we're losing forests, and what activities are driving it. This allows us to target our efforts towards specific industries, products, or countries where they will have the greatest impact. For more information on which countries are gaining/losing forest, here is a [related article](#).



Note that Brazil and Indonesia account for almost half of tropical deforestation. The charts above give helpful data on the annual change in forest area as well as tropical deforestation. For further information refer to [this site](#).

## Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals

One of UNEP's six areas of concentration is climate change/action. By providing leadership in mitigation, adaptation, technology, and finance, UNEP strengthens the ability for countries to integrate climate change responses. UNEP focuses on improving the understanding of climate science, facilitating the transition to low-carbon societies, raising public awareness, and facilitating the development of renewable energy. Another area of concentration is environmental governance. UNEP supports governments in implementing, strengthening, and establishing the necessary processes, laws, policies, institutions, and programs to achieve sustainable development on a national, regional, and global scale, and mainstreaming the environment in development planning. Resource efficiency/sustainable consumption and production is also an area of concentration. UNEP focuses on global and regional efforts to ensure natural resources are consumed, processed, and produced in the most environmentally friendly way possible. All these areas of concentration focus on controlling climate change and bettering accessibility to tools needed to achieve these goals. As stated above, by implementing active forest management plans, we can take that step closer to healthier earth and reduce the effects of climate change.



Affordable and clean energy is a vital goal to maintain. If forest fires cannot be controlled properly, we run the risk of maintaining clean air and a healthy living environment for people. One of UNEP's six areas of concentration is ecosystem management. UNEP promotes sustainable use of ecosystem services through management and restoration of ecosystems in line with sustainable development. Examples of such programs include the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities. Lastly, UNEP concentrates on harmful substances. UNEP seeks to reduce the impact of harmful substances and hazardous waste on the environment as well as human beings. UNEP uses the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) to reduce risks to human health and the environment.



**Questions to consider:**

1. How do we ensure that countries stay on track to hit discussed goals?
2. How can countries be held responsible for their effort to end deforestation?
3. How can we as a global community help each other to reach our goals?
4. If our goals are not reached, what does that mean for the environment?
5. How can we ensure every country's issues are addressed properly and respectfully?

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## **Topic 2: Preparation for more frequent extreme weather events**

One of the specific ways that climate change has already, and will continue to impact human populations, is the increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as flooding, fires, hurricanes, heat waves, landslides, and droughts. Increasing temperatures cause changes in historic precipitation patterns—higher temperatures cause higher evaporation levels in some areas which lead to an increased amount of moisture in the atmosphere; these in turn, cause extreme events like hurricanes to become more likely. For example, it is estimated that one of the most damaging hurricanes in the United States, Hurricane Harvey (2017), was 15 percent more intense and three times as likely to occur due to human-induced climate change. Extreme droughts are also significantly more likely, as the heat already trapped in the climate system causes further evaporation of moisture in the soil, and reductions in snowpack and earlier snowmelt further exacerbate drought conditions. These effects are felt worldwide, and scientists have established that human-caused climate change has increased drought severity in the Mediterranean, Western Amazon, South Africa, India and Southern Europe. With dryer conditions in many wildfire-prone areas, there is growing concern over the intense wildfire seasons already witnessed in Australia, and on the West Coast of North America in the past few years. These fires have impacted public health, the functioning of the ecosystem, and cost billions of dollars to the economy, in addition to further contributing greenhouse gases to the already-overburdened atmosphere. Projections show that with only an annual one degree increase in global temperature, some forests in at-risk zones would experience 600% increase in burn area. In 2020, record-setting wildfires in California and Oregon saw historic levels of destruction which led to weeks of dangerous air quality impacting millions. Extreme weather conditions will continue to be a priority for many countries dealing with the humanitarian and ecological fallout that often occurs after an extreme weather event.

### **Related Sustainable Development Goals**

Evidently, preparing for extreme weather events caused by climate change relates directly to SDG 13, Climate Action, with its mandate being to “Take urgent action to combat climate

change and its impacts.” It is vital that as work is done to address the extreme weather events described above, that target 13.1, “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries” remain a focus. The importance of planning ahead is emphasized in target 13.2: “Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.” Lastly, attempts to prepare to adapt to a changing climate are necessary as highlighted in target 13.3, which details the work needed to “Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.”

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. Is your assigned country at particular risk of extreme weather events connected to human-caused climate change? What measures are implemented to ensure the safety of people and ecosystems?
2. What can be done to improve awareness and education of citizens in regard to the risks of extreme weather caused by climate change?
3. How can developed countries further assist developing countries as they prepare for and adapt to a changing climate?
4. How is your country preparing to mitigate and adapt to the reality of extreme weather events?

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