



CalsMUN 2023



Fighting Social Inequality
CalsMUN 2023

Research Report

Forum: General assembly 1

Issue: Prohibiting the Use of Natural Resources to Threaten Other Countries

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CalsMUN 2023

Personal Introduction

Willemijn

Hi! I'm Willemijn and I am currently studying at University College Utrecht for my Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Science. I've been going to MUN's ever since my third year of high school and I've actually organized CalsMUN twice as well. This year I am back as the President of the General Assembly, or, in other words, your chair. A few fun facts about me: I don't like sauteed spinach, I confuse the colors orange and purple and I like to think outside of the box for solutions (which is what you should also do during this conference). I am always happy to help with any questions you have regarding the conference (or other things) and I'm very excited to see you during CalsMUN 2023!

Lieke

Hello! My name is Lieke and I am currently enrolled at the Marnix Academie in Utrecht where I am learning to become an educator at elementary schools. This is going to be the first MUN I am going to attend and I am very excited to be doing it alongside two of my best friends. I also have some fun facts: I am severely hard of hearing (literally, hearing aids and everything), I don't like pumpkin soup and I secretly despise Willemijn (no, she doesn't x Willemijn). I'm sure the conference is going to be fun and I'll try my hardest to make sure it will be as enjoyable for all of you as for us. I look forward to seeing you all at CalsMUN!

Lisa

Hello! My name is Lisa and I'm studying law at Radboud University (which I really recommend btw) and this is going to be my 15th MUN (I think, I lost count). I have loved participating in MUN's and organizing CalsMUN during my time at Cals College, but this is most likely going to be my last one so I'm hoping to make this a memorable one! Some fun facts about me are that I refuse to cut sandwiches into pieces, and I never read my texts. Don't be afraid to speak up this MUN to ask challenging questions and make life-changing points during the debate! After all, no one will remember it in 5 years time if you mess up so it doesn't really matter anyway!

Introduction:

Natural resources such as oil, coal, natural gas and diamonds are of great importance for the economical growth and well-being of a country. These resources are used for food, fuel and raw materials and due to their extreme usefulness, they are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive. This scarcity can grant certain people or businesses a position of power that can almost be called a monopoly, which can only result in extreme wealth for those involved. Because of these very reasons, many wars have been fought and many conflicts have arisen, all to own, use or extract natural resources.



CalsMUN 2023

The usefulness of natural resources, combined with the ever-increasing demand of the growing population of people, makes these assets invaluable. These riches enable us to do things such as create products, keep cars rolling and keep our houses warm, however, with all the good that comes from it, it also leads to competition over the resources which can cause extreme violence, both between and within countries. This phenomenon is called “the resource curse” and exhibits the great issue that comes with the possibility of riches.

Due to globalisation, countries are im- and exporting now, more than ever, and these trade-alliances can change political-economic dynamics between countries. It is alarming to consider that heads of states can coerce other leaders to make certain decisions and force them into a position, all because that country relies on their natural resources, which are, for many countries, the major sources of national income.

The UNEP has estimated that in the last 60 years, 40% to 60% of all intrastate conflicts have a link (= triggered, funded and/ or sustained) to natural resources, although it is often not the sole cause of the dispute. This link, they suggest, doubles the risk of a conflict relapse within five years. They further state that since 1990, at least 18 violent conflicts have been fueled by the exploitation of natural resources. Not only does it cause us to harm each other, this exploiting actively harms the environment by destroying ecosystems ...

Two factors are particularly important:

1. The location of the resources
2. The amount of capital and technology needed to extract them

The first can determine if rebellions target a certain region or try to overthrow the government. Resources that are relatively cheap and easy to access can be another focuspoint for rebels looking for funds to finance their operations.

Definition of Key Terms:

“Natural resources”

These are resources drawn from nature and used, often with few modifications, as food, fuel, or to create products and materials. A short list of examples of natural resources are: oil, coals, natural gas, metals, stone, sand, air, sunlight, soil, water, animals and plants.



“Resource scarcity”

This occurs when the demand for a natural resource is greater than the available supply, which leads to a decline in the stock of the availability of the resource. This can lead to a rise in inequality as prices rise and necessary products become less affordable.

“Exploitation of natural resources”

Benefiting off of natural resources to achieve economic growth, often with negative results for the environment.

“The Natural Resource Curse”

This is also known as the paradox of the plenty or the poverty paradox, and is a phenomenon where countries with an abundance of natural resources experience less economic growth, less democracy and worse developments than countries with fewer natural resources. Yet, people will still fight wars in order to gain control of these same resources.

Stakeholders

International organisations have a lot of influence in mediating and helping to solve global issues and conflicts. These are a few examples of organisations that have helped resolve past issues regarding natural resources:

Mercy Corps International

A global team of humanitarians trying to lend a helping hand on the front lines of some of today’s biggest problems. They don’t limit themselves to conflicts regarding natural resources, but have helped solve these in the past.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

This is the United Nations’ lead agency on international development and supports countries and territories by helping them gain access to necessary resources. On november 6, the UN celebrates the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre)

The HD Centre works to prevent and resolve armed conflicts around the world through mediation and diplomacy.



 CalsMUN 2023

The Ecological Threat Register highlights increasing environmental stress that is leading to high levels of resource scarcity, especially interesting is that the least peaceful countries are facing the most severe levels of resource scarcity. To find out if your country faces this issue, please follow this link:

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/resource-scarcity-hotspots-which-countries-are-the-most-vulnerable/>

Previous Attempts of Resolve the Issue

*General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII)
"Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources"
New York, 14 December 1962*

This resolution was adopted with 87 votes in favour, 2 against and with 12 abstentions and called for sovereignty of peoples and nations over their natural resources as was previously stated in the Charter of the United Nations. It means that nations and their people have full ownership over the natural resources in their territory.

*Security Council resolution 1625
14 September 2005*

This resolution was created to reaffirm the need to adopt a broad strategy to prevent conflict that addresses the root causes of the conflict, within it are also a number of points dedicated to conflicts that have a link to natural resources. Especially clause 4:

- "Stresses the importance of establishing effective comprehensive strategies of conflict prevention, focused on averting negative developments in the security, economic, social and humanitarian sectors and in the field of governance and human rights in countries which are facing crises, with special attention to:
 - (a) developing quick win activities to prevent conflicts arising from competition for economic resources and to monitoring tension arising from economic and social issues"

*Statement by the President of the Security Council
"Maintenance of International Peace and Security"
25 June 2007*

The president, on behalf of the Security Council, makes a statement regarding international peace and how it is threatened. Many of these points mention national resources:

- "The Security Council recalls the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in particular the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this respect, the Security Council recognizes the role that natural resources can play in armed conflict and post-conflict situations."
- "The Security Council reaffirms that every state has the full and inherent sovereign right to control and exploit its own natural resources in accordance with the Charter and the principles of international law."
- "The Security Council stresses that natural resources are a crucial factor in contributing to long-term economic growth and sustainable development."



CalsMUN 2023

- “The Security Council recalls resolution 1625 (2005) whereby the Council adopted the declaration on strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council’s role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa, in which it reaffirmed its determination to take action against illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and high-value commodities in areas where it contributes to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict.”

For more points, please read the statement.

Possible Solutions

- Natural Resource Governance
- Creating a resolution solely about using natural resources as political and economical threat, instead of recognising it as a main reason for many conflicts
- Enforcing more transparency about natural resources
- Sending UN peacekeepers to help nations struggling with internal conflicts about natural resources, which will help settle the international market for these resources and lead to lower prices and more affordable necessary products
- Creating bigger economical unions such as the EU that take some sovereignty from countries in order to protect their citizens and create transparency

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CalsMUN 2023

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Further reading

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