

United Nations Environment Programme

Position Paper on Securing Water

Country: Spain

University: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

International Situation on Water Security

Currently, water security problem is so serious that it is affecting around 780 million people in the world, and among these people 345 million come from Africa and the majority of the rest come from least developing countries. Each year more than 3 million people die because of water sanitation or security problems, and 99% come from developing countries (World Health Organization (WHO), 2008). Therefore, water security problem is mostly the problem happening in developing countries, and there are several factors behind the problem in developing countries: First, contamination of water resources by industrial activities which are necessary for economic development and eradication of poverty, with the combination of ineffective government regulation on effluent emission; Second, insufficient and poorly maintained infrastructure for sanitization of water resources; Third, climatic reasons such as droughts, with Ethiopia as an example (CityU Model United Nations, 2013); Fourth, inadequate capacity of governments to execute plans for improvement of water accessibility, with Ethiopia as an example.

Current international efforts in addressing water security issues:

UNEP has supported the government in implementing the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) program by aiding to construct small dams for water supply, recharging ground water and building capacity of government in drought contingency planning in camps and cities. Moreover, UNEP has also adopted a screening tool to encourage humanitarian organizations to consider the environment in its planning processes. In 2011 more than half of all humanitarian projects in Sudan had some environmental components into their projects. In 2012 this screening tool was also expanded within Sudan and to South Sudan (Logan, 2012)

Position of Spain regarding water security issues:

First, UNEP should expand the efforts in Sudan and South Sudan to least developing countries which want but are unable to resolve the water security and sanitation issues, such as Ethiopia which do not have the capacity to boost water accessibility rate.

Second, corporations which intend to exploit resources or produce near freshwater resources should follow a more stringent regulation on usage of water resources and emission of effluents, and this can be achieved by signing a new convention by participating countries to require corporations who set the headquarters in the territory to follow the same set of environmental laws as in the home country; Second, monitor and report any activities which pollute water resources.

References:

World Health Organization (WHO). (2008). Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, benefits, and sustainability of interventions to protect and promote health

CityU Model United Nations. (2013). Study Guide For CityU Model United Nations Conference 2013

Logan, M. (2012). "2012 Annual Report". :UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information

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### Position Paper on Oil Spill

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#### International Situation on Oil Spill

With increasing activities of oil extraction over the sea, oil spill has occurred frequently. From 2010 to 2013, there have been 37 cases of oil spill, large and small, happening and polluting our sea, and there are still 2 cases happening uptil now. This level of frequency of oil spill has caused serious consequences for both humans and nature. First, it is the impact of human health and marine activities. In 2013, two different oil spills contaminated water supplies for 300,000 in Miri, Malaysia and 80,000 people in Coca, Ecuador. For Deep-water Horizon oil spill impacted beach tourism and fishing along the Gulf Coast, and the responsible parties were required to compensate victims(CityU Model United Nations, 2013). Secondly, oil spill can wreak havoc over the fragile ecosystem (CityU Model United Nations, 2013): In Deepwater Horizons, Eight U.S. national parks were threatened (National Parks Conservation Association, 2010). In a 2011 paper in the journal BioScience, researchers from the University of New Hampshire reported that the spill threatened 39 marine species in addition to the 14 currently under federal protection. Threatened species, the report found, ranged from 'whale sharks to seagrass'(University of New Hampshire, 2011)

#### International Efforts on Remediation and Prevention of Oil Spill

For remediation, different organizations will participate in the remediation process of an oil spill. For example, in the DeepWater Horizon, The U.S. Coast Guard has the leadership role but other agencies such as the United Nations Environment Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Health and other departments, and numerous state agencies, universities, research facilities, non-profit organizations, civic organizations, and thousands of volunteers are also participating (CityU Model United Nations, 2013). For prevention, there is the Oil Spill Prevention Containment and Countermeasures (SPCC) program by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. (CityU Model United Nations, 2013).

#### Position of Spain regarding Oil Spill

Contingency plans have to be formulated for both existing and new oil project beforehand and they have to be approved by UNEP and the government, with the most effective ways formulated according to the marine environment and ecological situation. Moreover, the coordination of organizations during an oil spill should also be negotiated and decided beforehand in each country. An agreement on resolution of

cross-border oil spill problem should also be decided as soon as possible.

References:

CityU Model United Nations. (2013). Study Guide For CityU Model United Nations Conference 2013

"Gulf Oil Spill Response". National Parks Conservation Association. Fred Short. (2011). Deepwater Horizon Spill Threatens More Species Than Legally Protected. University of Hamisphere.