

**Council: United Nations Environmental Programme**

**Topic: Securing Water**

**Country: United Arab Emirates**

**Name: Ho Chor Kiu**

**University: University of Hong Kong**

United Arab Emirates is greatly concerned by the issue of water safety. The delegation is particularly aware of the high number of deaths being caused by unclean water, sanitation and other hygiene-related causes, especially in developing countries. Our delegation recognises the urgent need to develop a set of international regulations on this regard, and hopes to achieve mutual understanding and trust with all delegations present on this matter.

The United Arab Emirates believes that water security should be improved with weighted consideration to these following aspects – 1) to develop affordable and effective methods to sanitise water, reference can be made from the experience and practice of developed countries; 2) increase countries' capacity to provide clean water; and 3) develop new international legal framework to address the water safety issues.

Suffering from water scarcity, the United Arab Emirates is currently adopting a plan to build the world's largest solar-powered seawater desalination plant<sup>1</sup>. We sincerely believe this would provide all delegations with more insights as to feasible, affordable and sustainable approaches to provide clean water.

The increase of capacity has to be done through a long-term basis. Cooperation has to be achieved between regional governments and international organisations. Also, education is essential in the international community to enhance better awareness on the issue and hence for further actions to be executed.

The United Arab Emirates is aware of the drafted articles for the Law of Transboundary Aquifers<sup>2</sup>. Our delegation recognises the importance to balance between the obligations and rights of different regions. We hope that these articles can be adopted as formal law after thorough discussions with other delegations.

The United Arab Emirates will continue to seek international coalition regarding issues of water security.

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<sup>1</sup> World's largest solar-powered seawater desalination plant planned in Ras Al Khaimahuae. (2013, Nov 26). *UAE Interact*. Retrieved from [http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Worlds\\_largest\\_solar-powered\\_seawater\\_desalination\\_plant\\_planned\\_in\\_Ras\\_Al\\_Khaimah/58487.htm](http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Worlds_largest_solar-powered_seawater_desalination_plant_planned_in_Ras_Al_Khaimah/58487.htm)

<sup>2</sup> International Water Law Project Blog. (2011, Dec 17). [Web log message]. Retrieved from <http://www.internationalwaterlaw.org/blog/2011/12/17/unga-adopts-new-resolution-on-transboundary-aquifers/>

**Topic: Precaution and response to oil spills**  
**Country: United Arabs Emirates**  
**Name: Ho Chor Kiu**  
**University: University of Hong Kong**

The United Arabs Emirates is alarmed by the potential hazardous effects that can result from oil spills. The water pollution that can be caused by oil spills, health problems that can be caused by contaminated water and the challenges that can arise in clean-up processes indicate the urge for us to tackle the issue of oil spills through international efforts.

Our delegation recognises that it is equally important to minimise the hazards that can arise from existing oil spills and also to focus on precautionary measures to prevent future oil spills.

Clean-ups of oil spills usually take significant time and effort. While international law runs the polluter-pays<sup>1</sup> principle, victims are generally protected under a developed system when redress is sought, with remedies being covered by the responsible oil companies and regional governments.

Nevertheless, the problem goes beyond identifying the blameworthy party. Currently, there is a gap of law regarding the standard required for the clean-up work to be done. Clean-up processes are inherently dangerous given the nature of oil-spills, and it is therefore essential to implement international laws regulating the standard of oil spills clean-ups in order to avoid casualties of clean-up staff.

Similarly, the gap of law regarding standards sets a barrier for effective precautionary measures. There is an undeniable need for an international convention being applied to oil spills specifically.

The current practice of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to rely on its own parties for preventing oil spills<sup>2</sup> is no longer sufficient. It is of utmost importance that an international convention for oil drills is to be in place and regulates the safety of each single drilling operation<sup>3</sup>.

The United Arabs Emirates is particularly concerned with filling the gap of law. We urge all delegations to cooperate and to set up minimum standards for oil drilling operations and clean-up works through international conventions.

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<sup>1</sup>Tormod Rafgard. (2011, May). *Tankers, big oil and pollution liability*. Retrieved from <http://www.oilpollutionliability.com/foreword/>

<sup>2</sup> Damilola S. Olawuyi. (2012). Legal and sustainable development impacts of major oil spills. *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development*, 9(1), 1-15. Retrieved from <http://www.consiliencejournal.org/index.php/consilience/article/viewFile/290/134>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.