



SHUMUN XXV // February 24-25

UN Oceans

Background Guide



== UNITED NATIONS ==
**OCEAN
CONFERENCE**
— LISBON —

**Chairs: Anna Thibodeau &
Kaila Engle**

Welcome to the 25th iteration of SHUMUN, Seton Hall University's flagship Model UN Conference for high schoolers! This will be an innovative two-day simulation of the United Nations for high school students hosted by Seton Hall University on February 24th and 25th. It will push them through substantive debate and academic rigor and challenge them to the depths of their creativity.

SHUMUN's Mission

SHUMUN XXV is a model United Nations conference for high school students with a long history of engaging simulations and enrichment of the delegates in attendance. Our conference offers both General Assembly and Crisis-style simulations. SHUMUN aims to promote public speaking and collaboration skills among high school students while fostering an engaging environment to expand students' interests in international affairs. We seek to provide delegates with an educational and entertaining weekend acting as member-states in United Nations bodies, other multinational bodies, or as individuals in creative problem-solving crisis simulations.

Seton Hall University is a large proponent of their student body's interest in Model United Nations and also has a competitive collegiate team, SHUNA, in addition to SHUMUN. Many Senior Secretariat and Dais members also compete with our nationally ranked team, SHUNA, and we pride ourselves on our large amounts of Model UN experience. However, we also pride ourselves on our diversity of conference staff and the ability of individuals of all interests and experience levels to join and participate in running our conference.

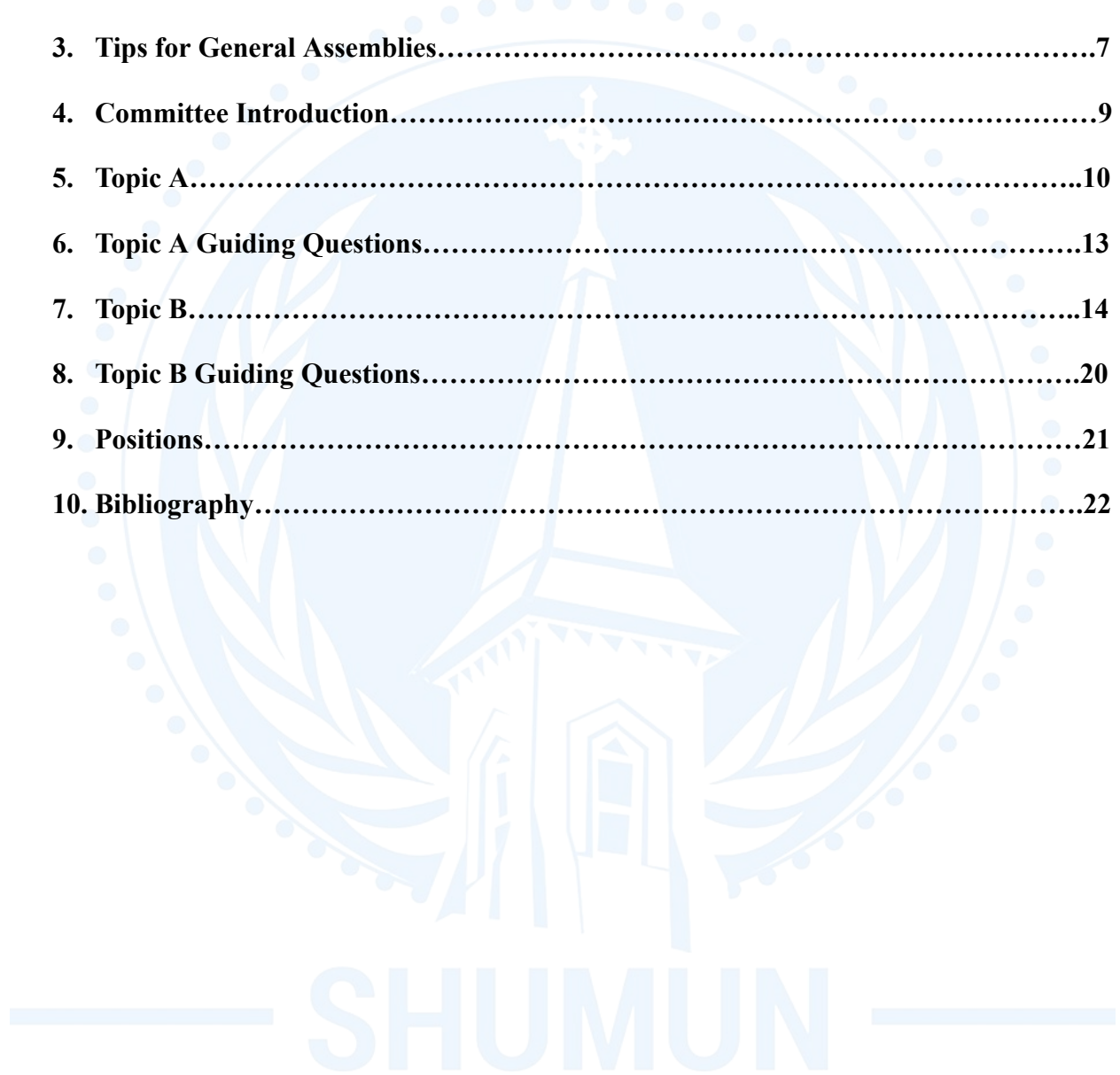
Hosted on Seton Hall University's campus in South Orange, New Jersey, SHUMUN is a constantly evolving conference looking to provide the best experience to delegates year after year. Since 1999, SHUMUN has been a staple of Seton Hall's Model UN scene which also includes a competitive collegiate team, SHUNA.

Our entire staff is more than excited to see delegates respond to crisis updates and navigate their curiosities for international affairs!

— SHUMUN —

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Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to SHUMUN XXV at Seton Hall University! Our names are Kaila Engle and Anna Thibodeau and we are thrilled to serve as your co-chairs for the United Nations Ocean Conference 2022.

I, Kaila Engle, am a third year in the 3+3 Law Program double majoring in International Relations and Philosophy and minoring in Spanish. I am originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and have been involved with Model UN since my freshman year as a delegate and a member of the Eboard. I also served as a vice chair last year for SHUMUN XXIV. I am also Vice President of external affairs and career development for Seton Hall's Pre-Law Society, Vice President of events for The Women's Network, and director of the undergraduate leadership podcast.

I, Anna Thibodeau, am a junior double majoring in International Relations and French and minoring in Journalism. I am originally from Omaha, Nebraska and have been involved with the Model UN team since my freshman year as a delegate, and this year as your USG of General Assemblies. I am also the International News Editor for our International Affairs student publication, *The Diplomatic Envoy*.

We are excited to serve as your chairs for the 25th SHUMUN conference. The 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, held in Lisbon, was co-hosted by Portugal and Kenya. The goal of the UN Ocean Conference is to scale up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water.

SHUMUN XXV
UN Oceans

This committee will focus on structural transformation and shared solutions addressing ocean pollution. Our debate will focus on either oil pollution or plastic pollution, two of the largest contributors to ocean pollution. Be sure to have research prepared for both topics, although the weekend will only focus on one. Care for the environment is an ever-growing concern for world powers and younger generations. This committee is an opportunity to look into solutions for real-world problems that affect you. Good luck and we look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,
Kaila Engle (she/her)
Anna Thibodeau (she/her)
kaila.engle@student.shu.edu
anna.thibodeau@student.shu.edu



Notes on Procedure

1. SHUMUN will be utilizing Google Docs and Gmail for the conference. For any questions contact our email: shumun.sec@gmail.com. Delegates will communicate in-room with paper notes.
2. SHUMUN uses Parliamentary Procedure (often abbreviated as Parli Pro) to run committees. A Google search will give you more than enough information on how this is used in Model UN, and any other questions can easily be addressed in committee.
3. SHUMUN has a **zero-tolerance policy regarding bullying, offensive remarks, harassment, discrimination, or anything of the sort**. Model UN should be a fun activity for delegates to participate in and no one should feel excluded at any point during the weekend. If at any point the Senior Secretariat is notified of any violation of this policy, the delegate and advisor will be contacted and the issue will be discussed, potentially resulting in expulsion from the conference or disqualification from awards. In general, if you think even for a second that something would offend someone, do not do, or say that thing.
4. **Position papers are required for General Assembly Committees**. You can find your chair's email on the website and in the background guides of each committee. Position Papers will be accepted until the beginning of Committee Session 1 on February 24th. Failure to turn in position papers will hurt awarding prospects. **For IACHR, please email position papers to the chair anna.thibodeau@student.shu.edu.**
5. Profanity is prohibited.
6. Pre-writing is defined as any notes or directives written outside of committee time and is strictly prohibited. Delegates are allowed to bring research into committee, but not pre-written notes or papers. Engaging in pre-writing will result in immediate disqualification from award consideration.
7. **Technology is only permitted during unmoderated caucuses or at the discretion of the chair**. Research must be done prior to the beginning of committee sessions. Any usage of cell phones or laptops in the committee is grounds for disqualification.
8. If you need to use the restroom during committee, you do not need to raise your hand or ask permission.
9. Session will begin with roll call followed by a primary speakers list to debate which topic will be discussed. Delegates will then vote on the motion to set the agenda after the chair decides enough debate has been conducted. After the agenda is set, a secondary speakers list will be created and delegates will have the opportunity to present motions at the chair's discretion.

Tips for General Assemblies

Bloc building and the politics behind it:

1. Your bloc in General Assembly Committees is influential and will be an important factor in determining if your papers will pass and how you will get additional opportunities to speak
2. Begin building connections as soon as debate is opened to get your name out there and start building your presence in room. Do this by sending notes and networking before the session begins.
3. Once you have your bloc, **DO. NOT. BURN. BRIDGES.** with the other people in your committee because you may need their support later on with merges and you want to maintain the image of someone everyone wants to work with
4. **REMAIN AWARE** of which school each delegate comes from because even if the delegates aren't going to openly sit next to each other or are working on the same drafts, they will still maintain that connection and will definitely talk about their blocs and ideas outside of committee
 - a. Especially in committees where you are the only person from your high school, you may not have that same advantage but you can be aware of it and try to limit the other people's power with your knowledge

Draft working paper mergers and author's panel deliberation:

1. When finishing draft papers, the topic of presentations or Q&A speeches may come into play, and this will also almost certainly happen during mergers as you start to work on draft resolutions
2. In regard to speaker deliberation, it gets awkward and unformattable really quickly, and for those of us who are nonconfrontational, this is definitely one of if not the hardest parts of general assemblies committees
 - a. Based on your skills and contributions to the paper, decide for yourself first what your first priority is:
 - i. It truly varies by bloc and committee whether presenting the paper or responding to Q&A will be better for you
 - b. Don't be afraid to be sneaky and be self-aware of the stances and image of the people in your bloc

- i. The page limits, the amount of people who get to speak, the amount of people who get to stay sponsors and those that move to sigs, be aware of all of this so that you can first decide for yourself on what is best for your and second decide what is best for your blocs positions
- ii. You need backing when nominating yourself which is where your substance contributions to the paper come into play in addition to speaking skills, being able to *eloquently explain* your work and what you want to say and have the support of others
- iii. This is also where being a positive and *respectful* member of your bloc comes into play as oftentimes when speaker deliberation goes to a vote, people won't vote for the delegates who have been annoying or rude

Mergers and Unmods

5. Be aware of the **conflicts of interest** between *content* and *competitors*
 - a. Content: for the sake of cooperation, you want to merge with papers that either have similar ideas to yours OR touch on other sectors that are different than yours so that they can naturally flow together
 - b. Competitors: if someone in your bloc comes from **the same school** as another bloc you are trying to merge with, be aware that those people's loyalties are now can be split between their school and your bloc
6. **THESE ARE THE UNMODS** that count, this is where to speak up and show your diplomacy skills because the chair and committee staffers will notice
 - a. Even just for the sake of an argument and presenting a new perspective, share what's on your mind so that the merger can get attached to you
7. Always be on the move, do not stay settled within your bloc once you get there, when working on draft working papers you should already be starting to think about mergers etc. etc.
8. This stuff takes time to learn and feel good about so **RELAX. Actually have FUN!!** That's what matters at the end of the day so if you aren't enjoying it and feel like you aren't getting anything out of it, **prioritize fun and yourself over everything else.**

Committee Introduction

The United Nations has always been at the forefront of addressing and discussing solutions to pressing world issues, including oceanic health. The UN has prioritized addressing the conservation of oceanic life and health in its 14th sustainable development goal, which is based on protecting ocean health and addressing core problems plaguing the health of wildlife and oceanic organisms¹. Mainly working to address the impacts of pollution. The purpose of the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal, is to focus on SDG 14 by exploring the impacts of oceanic pollution. This conference is hosted in Lisbon, Portugal, and is going to specifically focus on plastic and oil pollution in oceans.

As two of the largest pollutants affecting ocean life, both plastic and oil deserve a prominent feature in plans to protect ocean health, however, their presence in oceans is caused by different sources and has different effects on ocean life. They must be handled in different ways, both of which have the possibility of disrupting markets and incomes of countries in this committee.

¹ “Oceans - United Nations Sustainable Development.” United Nations. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/#:~:text=Goal%2014%20is%20about%20conserving,existence%20and%20life%20on%20Earth.>

Topic A - Combatting Plastic Pollution in Oceans

From the popular movie Happy Feet to the viral Save the Turtles VSCO girl trend, plastic pollution has been a recurring issue presented in modern-day media. It has also been a problem plaguing wildlife for decades and has been extremely detrimental to the health and well-being of oceanic ecosystems.

A 2015 World Wildlife Fund report in a CNN article says, “There are 250,000 metric tons of plastic in the oceans. Plastic harms smaller fish that bigger fish rely on for survival and may also harm larger fish and mammals who become tangled or trapped, resulting in suffocation.”² Plastic makes up 80 percent of all marine debris from surface waters to deep-sea sediments, and it can be found along the shorelines of every continent. The main sources of plastic debris in the ocean are land-based, but they end up in the water through stormwater runoff, sewer overflows, littering, inadequate waste disposal and management, industrial activities, tire abrasion, construction, and illegal dumping. Oceanic-based debris mainly comes from the fishing industry.³

Plastic pollution affects more than just ocean health. It has direct impacts on human health, tourism, and climate change as well. Plastic pollution is weakening marine ecosystems, and killing marine life by entanglement and strangulation. Many other marine animals die from ingesting plastic which causes lacerations, infections, and reductions in the ability to swim. Floating plastics can also transport harmful bacteria, further threatening marine life.

Microplastics can be found in all of the world’s oceans, but they are also found in things like tap water, beer, and salt. Commercially caught fish are also found to have large amounts of

² CNN, By Jennifer Gray. “Report: Marine Life Has Taken Devastating Hit over 40 Years.” *CNN Digital*, 17 Sept. 2015, www.cnn.com/2015/09/17/world/oceans-report/index.html.

³ IUCN. “Marine Plastic Pollution.” *IUCN*, Nov. 2021, www.iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/marine-plastic-pollution.

microplastics in them. It is becoming increasingly unavoidable for humans to ingest microplastics, which are made with carcinogenic materials. Plastics have also affected the beauty of oceans and beaches which cannot keep up with the efforts to stay clean. This hurts tourism in places where beaches and the ocean are a large part of their draw.

Worryingly, marine pollution is reaching extreme levels, with over 17 million metric tons clogging the ocean in 2021, a figure set to double or triple by 2040. Plastic is the most harmful type of ocean pollutant. Sustainable Development Goal 14 is to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources because healthy oceans and seas are essential to human existence and life on Earth.⁴ Right now the ocean is in a state of emergency, which Goal 14 has multiple goals in order to combat, including more regulations, education, and ocean clean-up efforts.

Right now countries should be looking to create and strengthen legislation, which regulates plastic pollution. There are already the 1972 Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter (the London Convention), the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention (the London Protocol), and the 1978 Protocol to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). There is also a strong push towards more ocean research, which can help redesign products for more sustainable alternatives and monitor ocean health.⁵

Some countries are also encouraging citizens to aid in the prevention of plastic pollution by encouraging reductions in plastic use and organizing beach and ocean cleanups.⁶ However, many countries lack the resources to prevent plastic pollution, such as sanitary landfills;

⁴ Martin. "Oceans." *United Nations Sustainable Development*, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/#:~:text=Goal%2014%20is%20about%20conserving.

⁵ IUCN. "Marine Plastic Pollution." *IUCN*, Nov. 2021, www.iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/marine-plastic-pollution.

⁶ NOAA. "A Guide to Plastic in the Ocean." *Noaa.gov*, 27 Jan. 2017, <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/hazards/marinedebris/plastics-in-the-ocean.html>

incineration facilities; recycling capacity and circular economic infrastructure; and proper management and disposal of waste systems. This can lead to ‘plastic leakage’ into rivers and oceans.⁷

Now, more and more countries are joining the UN Clean Seas campaign, launched in 2017, to fight plastic pollution and marine litter. This campaign asks countries to pledge to reduce or eradicate single-use plastics, invest in more national recycling facilities, and promote action plans to prevent harm to coastal and marine environments.⁸

Plastic pollution is the largest ocean polluter, which greatly threatens marine life. This committee aims to look at current and past legislation and assess what can be done better in order to ensure safe and healthy oceans. Ocean health is extremely important to human existence as well as efforts to combat climate change. This committee should look at how plastic harms oceans and how countries play a role in aiding or preventing that harm.

⁷ IUCN. “Marine Plastic Pollution.” *IUCN*, Nov. 2021, www.iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/marine-plastic-pollution.

⁸ UNEP. “How Countries Are Turning the Tide on Marine Plastic Pollution.” *UNEP*, 12 July 2021, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-countries-are-turning-tide-marine-plastic-pollution.

Topic A - Guiding Questions

1. How can the conference work to make the use of plastics more sustainable?
2. What avenues can be pursued to remove current plastic pollution from the oceans?
3. How can the United Nations, as an organization, take more of an active role in protecting oceanic health?
4. How does the fishing industry play a role in oceanic plastic pollution? What other things are leading plastic pollutants?
5. Are there plastic alternatives that are safer for marine life in industries that affect ocean health? What are they and are they cost-efficient? Why are people not using them already?
6. How have current legislations been effective, how have they not, and what could they change?

Topic B - Accountability for Oil Pollution in the Oceans

In 2019, the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services determined that “between half a million and one million species are threatened with extinction globally, and extinction rates have accelerated sharply in the past century.”⁹ This report was put together and written by biological and ecological professionals and experts that represent 50 countries. These dire extinction rates are a result of a variety of factors, a large contributing factor being oceanic pollution, specifically oil pollution. Oil pollution occurs in the form of oil spillage, which results in ocean pollution and allows harmful chemicals to impact the health of the animals, organisms, and ecosystems living in and dependent upon the health of the ocean.

In regards to oil spills themselves, the oil starts as crude oil, which, according to the U.S. Environment Protection Agency, is a “mixture of hydrocarbons that exists in liquid phase in natural underground reservoirs and remains liquid at atmospheric pressure after passing through surface separating facilities.”¹⁰ Oil spills occur in small quantities through refueling a ship, and are harmful but not as dangerous as large, major oil spills from something major, such as a pipe bursting or improper drilling operations. When those large-scale spills occur, the effects the contamination has on the ecosystem can be felt by the wildlife and organisms for decades after the spillage.¹¹ In 2022, The International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPFL) reported that there were six major oil spills in 2021, equating to about 10,000 tons spilled¹². The ITOPFL also reported that “this figure is higher than the previous two years but remains a

⁹ Kubiak, Lauren. “Marine Biodiversity in Dangerous Decline, Finds New Report.” Be a Force for the Future, May 6, 2019.

<https://www.nrdc.org/bio/lauren-kubiak/marine-biodiversity-dangerous-decline-finds-new-report>.

¹⁰ EPA. Accessed November 26, 2023.

<https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/tool/definitions/crude-oil.html>.

¹¹ “Oil Spills.” NOAA, August 1, 2020.

<https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/ocean-coasts/oil-spills>.

¹² Itopf. “Tanker Spill Statistics 2021.” ITOPF, January 13, 2022.

<https://www.itopf.org/news-events/news/tanker-spill-statistics-2021/>.

fraction of the 1.7 billion tons of oil that is transported by sea each year.”¹³ Oil spillage can also occur from leaks from the improper disposal of drilling muds, shipping traffic accidents, depot leakage, and failure in oil pipelines¹⁴.

These spillages have long-term effects on oceanic ecosystems, including exposing mammals to chemicals that cause them to develop chronic health effects such as cancer and result in a gradual decline of oceanic wildlife and organism populations. In regards to the consumption of oil spillage, herbivorous animals are consuming vegetation contaminated by oil, carnivorous animals are feeding on organisms that have been exposed to oil sediments, and top predators are becoming vulnerable to the effects of large quantities of pollution through bioaccumulation¹⁵. Direct absorption and inhalation of oil also harm sea animals by making them susceptible to an extensive number of health issues, such as organ damage, skin infections, and respiratory inflammation¹⁶. Also, oil exposure deteriorates the coating of fur-bearing sea mammals and the water repellency of birds' feathers, which makes living in their current ecosystems more difficult and makes them less adaptable to their ecosystems¹⁷. This effect is especially dangerous to mammals living in cold climates, such as polar bears and sea otters, because they can develop hypothermia as a result of decreased fur insulation¹⁸. These are all

¹³ Itopf. “Tanker Spill Statistics 2021.” ITOPF, January 13, 2022.

<https://www.itopf.org/news-events/news/tanker-spill-statistics-2021/>.

¹⁴ Nriagu, J. “Oil Industry and the Health of Communities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.” *Encyclopedia of Environmental Health*, 2011, 240–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-444-52272-6.00736-4>.

¹⁵ Nriagu, J. “Oil Industry and the Health of Communities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.” *Encyclopedia of Environmental Health*, 2011, 240–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-444-52272-6.00736-4>.

¹⁶ Nriagu, J. “Oil Industry and the Health of Communities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.” *Encyclopedia of Environmental Health*, 2011, 240–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-444-52272-6.00736-4>.

¹⁷ US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “How Does Oil Impact Marine Life?” NOAA’s National Ocean Service, March 14, 2019.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/oilimpacts.html#:~:text=Oil%20destroys%20the%20insulating%20ability,mammals%20will%20die%20from%20hypothermia>.

¹⁸ Global Marine Oil Pollution Information Gateway • FACTS • Effects of oil on Marine Wildlife. Accessed November 26, 2023. <http://oils.gpa.unep.org/facts/wildlife.htm>.

adverse effects directly correlated to increased oil exposure and contamination, and the oil contamination in our oceans needs to be addressed before all oceanic life is found extinct.

In regard to global accountability for oil pollution, a crucial aspect of global accountability for oil spillage involves the development and adherence to international regulations and standards. Collaborative efforts, such as those facilitated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC), play a pivotal role in establishing guidelines for the safe and responsible handling of oil. These frameworks set the stage for nations to adopt uniform protocols, ensuring that companies operating in the oil industry adhere to best practices and face consequences for negligence. Such protocols established by the IMO include operational guidelines on sunken and submerged oil assessment and removal techniques, aerial observation of marine oil spills, use of skimmers in oil pollution response, and what to do in the event of a spill.¹⁹

The IOPC is based on two international conventions: “the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992 (1992 Civil Liability Convention) and the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992 (1992 Fund Convention), together with the Protocol of 2003 to the 1992 Fund Convention (Supplementary Fund Protocol)”²⁰. The IOPC also includes financial regulations, rules of procedure for governing bodies, and internal regulations²¹. Effective international standards not only promote responsible behavior but also provide a basis for holding entities accountable when breaches occur.

¹⁹ “Oil Spill Response.” International Maritime Organization. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/Pages/Oil-Spill-Response.aspx>.

²⁰ “Legal Framework.” IOPC FUNDS | Legal Framework. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://iopcfunds.org/about-us/legal-framework/>.

²¹ “Resolutions, Regulations and Other Documents.” IOPC FUNDS | Rules and Regulations. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://iopcfunds.org/about-us/structure/rules-and-regulations/>.

Furthermore, fostering global cooperation in response and cleanup efforts is crucial for minimizing the environmental impact of oil spills. The interconnected nature of oceans and seas means that a spill in one region can have far-reaching consequences. Establishing an international framework for swift and coordinated responses to oil spills involves the sharing of resources, expertise, and technologies. Through collaborative initiatives and agreements, nations can pool their resources to deploy specialized equipment, personnel, and financial support to affected areas. This shared responsibility ensures that the burden of response is not disproportionately borne by the nation where the spill occurred, promoting fairness and equity in addressing the aftermath of such incidents.

This is seen through the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which addresses various forms of marine pollution produced by ships²². There is also the London Convention and Protocol on Dumping of Wastes at Sea, also known as the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, which is an international treaty where the dumping of wastes at sea is addressed²³. The protocol imposes explicit restrictions on the dumping of oil and oily wastes at sea, emphasizing the need to prevent marine pollution from these substances and promoting measures for their effective control. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a comprehensive international treaty that governs the use of the world's oceans and seas²⁴. While not exclusively focused on pollution, UNCLOS establishes a legal framework for the protection and preservation

²² "International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships (MARPOL)." International Maritime Organization. Accessed November 26, 2023.
[https://www.imo.org/en/about/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-\(MARPOL\).aspx](https://www.imo.org/en/about/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-(MARPOL).aspx).

²³ Ocean dumping: International treaties | US EPA. Accessed November 27, 2023.
<https://www.epa.gov/ocean-dumping/ocean-dumping-international-treaties>.

²⁴ "Overview - Convention & Related Agreements." United Nations. Accessed November 26, 2023.
https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm#:~:text=by%20%22*%22,-The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on%20the%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea,the%20oceans%20and%20their%20resources.

of the marine environment. Part XII of UNCLOS specifically addresses the prevention, reduction, and control of marine pollution from various sources, including land-based activities. It addresses oil spillage in this area by establishing a legal framework to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution from various sources, including oil. UNCLOS requires states to take measures to prevent and control such pollution, promotes international cooperation in responding to oil spills, and emphasizes the liability of states and entities responsible for pollution.

Corporate accountability also plays a pivotal role in the global response to oil spillage. Multinational oil companies must be held to high environmental standards and should be subject to legal consequences for negligence or violations of established regulations. International pressure and scrutiny can encourage corporations to prioritize safety, invest in spill-prevention technologies, and transparently report their activities. Additionally, establishing mechanisms for financial responsibility, such as mandatory insurance or compensation funds, can ensure that companies are held accountable for the full extent of the environmental and economic damages resulting from oil spills.

The Exxon v. Valdez case in 1989 is a prime example of corporate accountability. The spill occurred when the Exxon Valdez oil tanker, operated by the Exxon Corporation, struck a reef off the coast of Alaska, releasing approximately 11 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound. The environmental impact was devastating, causing widespread damage to marine life and coastal ecosystems. The spill killed approximately 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 otters, 300 harbor whales, 250 bald eagles, 22 killer whales, and billions of salmon and herring eggs²⁵. In the aftermath, Exxon faced intense legal scrutiny and public backlash. The company was held

²⁵ "Exxon Valdez: Oil Spills: Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program." Exxon Valdez | Oil Spills | Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program. Accessed November 26, 2023.
<https://darrp.noaa.gov/oil-spills/exxon-valdez#:~:text=The%20spill%20affected%20more%20than.2%2C800%20sea%20otters>

accountable for the spill's ecological and economic consequences²⁶. In 1994, Exxon agreed to pay \$1.1 billion in restitution and cleanup costs and an additional \$100 million in criminal fines.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill is a more recent environmental disaster that involved corporate accountability. The offshore drilling rig, operated by BP in the Gulf of Mexico, suffered a catastrophic blowout, leading to the release of millions of barrels of oil over a period of 87 days²⁷. The spill not only caused extensive environmental damage, harming marine life and coastal ecosystems, but also had severe economic and social implications for the Gulf region. BP, along with other companies involved, faced significant legal consequences. In 2016, BP agreed to pay over \$20 billion in settlements to cover environmental damages, economic losses, and restoration efforts. The Deepwater Horizon incident underscored the importance of stringent regulations, safety measures, and corporate responsibility in offshore drilling operations to prevent and mitigate the impact of such catastrophic events.

Overall, this Convention of the Ocean is gathered to address key issues plaguing the world's underwater ecosystems. Although the United Nations has limited enforcement power it is up to the nations gathered for the conference to find a sustainable plan to ensure accountability for the oil spillage in our oceans and the avenues to prevent present and eliminate future spillages.

²⁶ "Exxon Valdez: Oil Spills: Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program." Exxon Valdez | Oil Spills | Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://darrp.noaa.gov/oil-spills/exxon-valdez>.

²⁷ "Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Deepwater-Horizon-oil-spill>.

Topic B - Guiding Questions

1. In what ways can current pollution legislation be used to further the agenda of this convention?
2. How can current legislation, protocols, and legal frameworks be expanded upon to increase global accountability for oil pollution?
3. What barriers to sovereignty can deter the creation of more accountable legislation? What role does business autonomy play in the making of pollution legislation?
4. How can new agreements be enforceable or made acceptable to a variety of different countries, especially countries whose economy depends heavily on oil?
5. What role do state-specific agencies play in the development of anti-pollution stances and documents?
6. To what extent is marine life impacted by oil spillage, and does the use and risk of oil outweigh the impact on Marine life? How do companies or states respond to oil spills and what supplemental steps can be taken to further support current or new legislation?

Positions

1. Algeria
2. Angola
3. Argentina
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63. The Philippines
64. Trinidad and Tobago
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