



MUN BRIEFING PAPER

Are We Drowning?

Welcome to the NBHS Model United Nations Conference 2018. My name is Lewis Greenwood and along with Holly Ferguson we will be chairing the Environment Committee for this year's MUN. We are looking forward to welcoming all the delegates from many different schools to North Berwick and come to a conclusion on today's important environmental issues. We ask that each country prepares a position paper detailing their country's view on each issue to be discussed. This need be no more than a brief paragraph of around 50 words. Please email this position paper to nb13greel@edubuzz.org. We also suggest you prepare some resolutions to bring along on the day which express what actions your country would want the UN to take on the topic. This will allow you to become more involved in the debate throughout the day and gives you the opportunity to participate fully. Good luck and we look forward to seeing you on the day of the conference.

Please contact me on the event of any query or problem you find.

As the title suggests my topic for this year's conference is based around the rising sea level and the effect it will have on the worldwide displacement of population. Although the issue may not seem very pressing to most of us, many are already feeling the impact of this. In the last century sea levels have risen 8 inches, most of which has taken place within the last 2 decades. To many countries this may seem an insignificant, yet globally it has unprecedented significance. For example, the island nation of the Maldives has a population of over 430,000, yet its highest point is only 2.4m above the sea level. Following current estimates this nation will be engulfed by the ocean within 100 years. Bangladesh, one of the world's most populated and densely packed countries, is made up of 80% floodplain. While this currently causes severe seasonal flooding, it will soon lead to a full disappearance of land altogether, which of course links to the largest consequence of my topic; refugees.

A Cornell University report estimated that due to the large concentration of people living on coastlines and the ever increasing rate at which the sea is rising, as much as 1.4 billion people could be climate change refugees by the year 2060. By the year 2100 this number is expected to rise to 2 billion, which at this point will be 20% of the world's population. This will be the one of the largest worldwide issues ever faced, as a growing population and a shrinking land mass collide to create one major problem.

So, how to fix it? There are multiple ways this problem can be tackled, however whether or not it is too late for it be defeated is still unknown. One idea is to solve the problem at its core, climate change. The rise in sea level is caused by the melting of our polar ice caps. These have been reducing at a ridiculous rate, with the Greenland ice cap reducing by almost 250 cubic kilometres of ice between 2002 and 2006. The cause of this is obviously the temperature increase our world has been facing due to carbon emissions, the other topic



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for the Environment Committee this year. However to solve this issue would require the largest amount of international cooperation the world has ever seen, and when some of the world's biggest powers don't seem all that interested the idea falls flat. Another possible solution could be the widespread introduction of permanent flood defences. Many countries already have some in place, such as the Netherlands, of which much of their country is reclaimed ocean. However in many developing countries the flood defences are often rudimentary, and as these nations have a higher chance of a population concentration around coastlines.

Points to consider:

- Your country's reaction to climate change?
- Are there flood defences in place?
- Elevation of country, and where the largest concentration of your population is?
- How should the problem be solved?

Useful Links

- <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/06/170626105746.htm>
- <http://www.floodmap.net/> (An interesting way to visualise flooding)
- <https://climate.nasa.gov/>
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266794121_Sea-level_rise_and_its_impact_on_wetlands_water_agriculture_fisheries_aquaculture_public_health_displacement_infrastructure_and_adaptation
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2017/nov/03/three-degree-world-cities-drowned-global-warming>