



GA2 Chair Report

Topic 2: Investigating the Environmental and
Social Impacts of Developed Countries
Exporting Waste to Developing Nations



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Personal Statements

Head Chair – Ridhi Hegde

Honourable Delegates,

I am Ridhi Hegde and I am from India. I'm 15 years old and currently in the 10th Grade at the International School of Stuttgart. This is my 4th MUN Conference but will be the first time chairing. I'm really looking forward to meeting new people, having interesting debates and working with my deputy chair Diego Dreher. I look forward to meeting all of you!

Deputy Chair –Diego Dreher

Honourable Delegates,

I am Diego Dreher, and I am excited for this opportunity to be able to participate in MUNISS for the first time. I have previously attended other MUN conferences, such as MUNBW, and I will also be serving as a chair for the first time. Currently, I am attending 11th grade in Albertus Magnus Gymnasium in Stuttgart, where I will complete my Abitur. I hope to use this chance as a chair to work together with Ridhi Hegde and foster deep and thought provoking debates between all the delegations in my committee.



Introduction

The General Assembly Second Committee (GA2), also known as the Economic and Financial Committee, is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. Its primary purpose is to address global economic and financial issues, including macroeconomic policies, sustainable development, international trade, and economic cooperation among nations. GA2 plays a crucial role in shaping UN policies related to poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, and economic growth, ensuring that global financial frameworks support the broader goals of peace, security, and human rights. Through discussions and resolutions, GA2 helps guide international economic policies and promotes cooperation among member states to achieve equitable and sustainable global development.

The international waste trade, particularly between developed and underdeveloped countries, has become a major environmental and social issue. Although garbage exports are usually justified as a means of managing and recycling waste, the reality is that many poor countries lack the equipment required to adequately process waste. As a result, these imports cause health problems, environmental degradation, and financial hardship for marginalised groups.

Developed countries such as the United States, Canada, and countries part of the EU regularly export harmful, plastic, and electronic waste to Southeast Asian, African, and Latin American countries. Harmful waste dumping continues to this date due to insufficient enforcement, despite international accords such as the Basel Convention, which aims to regulate the movement of hazardous waste across boundaries. Many countries that export garbage claim that their shipments are intended for recycling, yet studies reveal that a significant amount of the material is disposed of incorrectly, resulting in pollution.

This problem's societal consequences are concerning. Waste dumping has a large impact on low-income communities, which can lead to major



public health issues such as exposure to toxics and respiratory diseases. Recycling is the primary source of revenue for informal waste pickers, who frequently work in dangerous situations with no regard for their health. This raises moral concerns about environmental fairness and the developed countries' duties to tackle their waste management problems without putting undue hardship on the Global South.

Glossary

- **Basel Convention:** It is a international treaty that “...regulates the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes and obliges its Parties to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner” (“Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes”)
- **E-waste:** Abandoned electronic equipment, such as computers, phones, and televisions, which often include dangerous elements such as lead and mercury.
- **Global South:** Poor countries in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia that bear a disproportionate burden from waste exports.
- **The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):** UN body in charge of overseeing international environmental efforts, such as waste management legislation.



Issue Explanation

The transfer of garbage from developed countries to developing countries is a major issue that affects many aspects of global sustainability. In terms of the environment, many poor countries lack the necessary infrastructure to properly process the rubbish they get, resulting in widespread air, water, and soil contamination. Hazardous chemicals, plastics, and electronic waste all include harmful substances that commonly contaminate local ecosystems, endangering human health and biodiversity.

Communities living near landfills face major health concerns as a result of garbage dumping. Long-term health risks such as cancer, skin illnesses, and respiratory ailments have all been linked to hazardous waste exposure. Furthermore, unofficial waste pickers who rely on obtaining materials from these areas operate in dangerous situations without access to safety or healthcare systems.

Economically, waste importation frequently benefits a small number of enterprises in developing countries while causing the majority of the population to suffer the repercussions. To address this issue, international coordination, regulatory enforcement, and ecologically friendly waste management techniques that do not disproportionately burden developing countries are required.



Perspectives of Parties Involved

United States: Recycling agreements with developing nations are often used as an excuse by the United States, a major exporter of plastic and e-waste. However, recent laws have sought to improve household recycling efforts.

The European Union: Even though the EU has stricter trash export regulations than other affluent nations, a number of its member states nonetheless send waste abroad. The bloc is working to tighten its rules in an effort to prevent illegal exports.

Canada: Canada has received international censure for its mislabeled garbage shipments, particularly from the Philippines. In response, the administration pledged to take stronger action against trash dumping.

China: China was the world's largest importer of plastic waste before its 2018 ban on the import of foreign trash led to waste streams being redirected to Southeast Asia.

Malaysia: Following China's embargo, Malaysia has become a significant importer of plastic waste. The administration has become more rigorous, returning illegal rubbish shipments to exporting countries.

Indonesia: Faces issues from unlawful rubbish imports, and government steps are being implemented to ensure proper waste processing and reduce environmental harm.

Ghana: Ghana has one of the largest e-waste dumping sites in Africa, particularly the Agbogbloshie scrapyards, where unlicensed people handle hazardous materials.

India: India is a major importer of plastic and e-waste, and while the recycling industry is growing, there are considerable concerns about the reckless handling of hazardous materials. Current laws aim to boost domestic recycling capacity while minimising unlawful rubbish imports.



History of the Topic

As industrialised countries sought cost-effective solutions to manage their growing trash production, the issue of garbage exports developed in the second half of the twentieth century. Garbage was first largely managed domestically, but as garbage quantities increased and environmental laws tightened, firms began to look outside for less expensive disposal solutions.

- **1970s:** As industrial waste generation and mass consumerism grew, waste management became a major concern.
- **1980s:** The initial reports of toxic waste dumping in Africa and Southeast Asia in the 1980s sparked global concern.
- **1989:** The Basel Convention was established in 1989 to limit hazardous waste exports and prevent developing countries from being exploited.
- **1990s:** Due to loose environmental regulations, exports of electronic rubbish, or "e-waste," skyrocketed, with a substantial chunk travelling to Southeast Asia and West Africa.
- **2000s:** Calls for stricter enforcement grew as investigation reports revealed that a considerable fraction of so-called "recyclable" waste was being disposed of in an unsafe manner.
- **2018:** Following the implementation of the National Sword policy, China, which was previously the largest importer of plastic garbage, barred the majority of junk imports from other nations. As a result, rubbish exports were transferred to Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.
- **2020s:** To combat illegal imports, governments in importing countries began implementing stricter rules, returning waste shipments, and strengthening local policies.



Potential Solutions for the issue:

Previous Attempts and International Agreements

Several global initiatives have attempted to address the issue of waste exports. The Basel Convention (1989) was one of the first international accords to regulate hazardous waste transportation and prevent developing countries from being exploited. Nonetheless, unlawful shipments continue to occur and demands for better laws to be placed and improved. Greenpeace and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have advocated for stricter waste trading rules and better enforcement.

Potential Solutions

- Increasing the Effectiveness of Domestic Waste Management
To lessen dependency on garbage exports, *developed countries* should give priority to domestic recycling facilities. Governments can create stronger domestic waste management regulations and provide incentives for companies to upgrade their recycling technologies in order to treat garbage in an ethical manner.
- Policies for Global Waste Reduction.
Trash exports can be significantly reduced by encouraging circular economy models that reduce waste through recycling and sustainable product design. Governments can utilise legislation to discourage single-use plastics and encourage alternate uses.



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