

Committee: United Nations Environment Program

Topic: Addressing the consequences of the Amazon rainforest deforestation and the preservation and restoration of the forest

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Introduction

In 2019, the world underwent a horrific event. From January to August, there were sporadic fires in the Amazon Rainforest, which spread rapidly. The fire lasted for 8 months, threatening biodiversity and people's foundation of life. During this calamity, more than 87,000 cases of fire were reported, and the damaged area was about 40,000 square kilometers. The main reason was the excessive securing of farmlands and developing natural resources.

The United Nations, to solve the environmental issues, co-sponsored a new project, also known as 'Millennium Development Goals'. One of the aims of the project was to conserve and better manage the Amazon Basin countries' economically important forests and wildlife. This project was developed into 'Sustainable Development Goals' which also aims similar values. Also, G7 countries, numerous environmental organizations, and numbers of individuals are supporting financially and materially for the restoration of the Amazon Rainforest.

The Amazon Rainforest is an important ecosystem that feeds more than three million species of living things and is home to more than one million native people. Additionally, usually called 'the lungs of the planet', Amazon Rainforest is the world's largest rainforest which helps slow down the rate of global warming. Therefore, the influence, which the Amazon rainforest has on the Earth, shouldn't be ignored since it takes up almost half of the Earth's rainforest and provides over 20% of the Earth's oxygen output.

For past decades, our Earth's ecosystem is facing unprecedented hazards. Uncautious development and ignorant human actions are aggressively damaging the environment. Especially forests are speedily being destroyed by mankind. Thus, this is an

important task for the countries which share the Amazon basin. However, not only for the countries mentioned above, but also this is a serious issue for the countries which are not directly involved in the Amazon forest deforestation. All nations should actively react, rather than being aware of the seriousness.

Definition of Key Terms

Deforestation

Deforestation is every act of destroying and removing the forests in such ways as mining, burning, lumbering, and more. Especially in the Amazon Rainforest, the slash-and-burn farming method is primarily used, which can easily cause a forest fire. Immediately after the fire, the land becomes fertile to a certain extent because of the ashes and the intelligence of the land itself, which makes it possible to rely on these nutrients without fertilizing them.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity means diversity among plants and animals. Normally, when people want to know better about biodiversity, they will probably research about the Amazon Rainforest. The Amazon Rainforest contains millions of species, most of them still undescribed, and some of the world's most untouched wildlife. Surprisingly, there are over 40,000 plant species, 3,000 freshwater fish species, and more than 370 types of reptiles in the Amazon Rainforest.

Restoration

Restoration is the act of restoring or state of being restored, as to a former or original condition, and place. Normally, we use restoration for forest, water, and ecosystem.

Rubber Boom

Due to the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century, the demand for rubber began to increase rapidly. As a result, rubber was taken without permission from a rubber tree in the Amazon.

Rio Declaration of Environment and Development

The Rio Declaration Environment and Development, which are normally shortened as Rio declaration, was released with the goal of establishing a new and equitable global

partnership through the creation of new levels of co-operation among States, key sectors of societies, and people.

Background Information

2013~2019 Amazon Rainforest fire

Since 2013, there have been continuous forest fires in the Amazon. However, abnormally, more than 40,000 fire cases occurred in the Amazon Rainforest region in 2019, destroying 9,060 square kilometers. The primary cause of the fire is blamed for farmers setting fire to the forest to make a fireplace, which is a method called the Slash-and-burn farming. Besides, due to global climate change, Amazon's dry season, between April and September, began relatively early this year. Therefore the fire did not subside easily due to its arid climate.

Actually Amazon fires were an annual event. Along with the dry season fires, Amazon forests have been reduced every year due to the slash-and-burn method, pasture, logging, and mining. Also, as Brazil is the world's no.1 exporter of soy and meat products and the world's largest producer of beef, more and more rainforests are being cleared for pasture to meet growing demand. "The main cause of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest is the expansion of the livestock industry," the international environmental group Greenpeace researcher Romulo Batista told AFP (Agence France Presse). "More than 65 percent of the damaged areas have turned into cattle grazing lands."

In July, scientists at Brazil's National Space Research Institute released satellite images, pointing to increased fires in the Amazon basin than usual. In August, scientists from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) raised awareness by releasing satellite images that darkened the sky in Sao Paulo, a Brazilian metropolis more than 1,000 kilometers away from the Amazon forest fire. Through satellite image analysis, the INPE (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais) revealed that 80,000 fires occurred in Brazil this year, up by 77% from last year, and 40,000 fires in the Amazon basin, up by 60% from last year. The whole world was shocked in front of clear video evidence and data.

Brazil governmental movement

For the past decade, Brazil's federal government has been taking steps to prevent the destruction of tropical forests, including fines. However, President Bolsonaro, who became the president of Brazil, criticized the fine system and significantly reduced the supervision of the Amazon rainforest, including the seizure of timber and the conviction of environmental crimes. The budget for the Environmental Management Program has been reduced, resulting in a 95 percent reduction in the national policy budget for climate change. Also, the federal protection budget of the Chico Mendes Institute for Biological Diversity Conservation under Brazil's Environment Ministry has been cut by more than \$45 million. Important councils for the supervision and planning of environmental policies, such as the Brazilian National Environmental Regulatory Commission (CONAMA), have become virtually nominal, and the government's frequent pressures on the Brazilian Institute of Environmental and Natural Resources (Ibama) have continued.

After all, these measures are fueling the Amazon fire. Also, President Bolsonaro has been in constant friction with the international community to this day, emphasizing South American countries' sovereignty over the Amazon rainforest. To prove his argument, he held a summit meeting with Amazon basin countries such as Peru, Columbia, and Uruguay.

Timeline Of Events

Date	Description of event
April 22, 1500	The first Portuguese explorer arrived in the Amazon basin.
1879-1912	<p>Rubber Boom</p> <p>Due to the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century, the demand for rubber began to increase rapidly. As a result, rubber was taken without permission from a rubber tree in the Amazon.</p>
1992	<p>The Rio Declaration of Environment and Development was produced at the Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The declaration contains a guideline in future sustainable development. There are 27 principles in this declaration. The principle that contains the entire content is principle no.27.</p> <p>(UNCED) Principle 27:</p> <p><i>States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfillment of the principles embodied in this</i></p>

	<i>Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.</i>
July 27, 2005	<p>In 2005, the United Nations progressed a new project named Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 8 goals of the project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</i> 2. <i>To achieve universal primary education</i> 3. <i>To promote gender equality</i> 4. <i>To reduce child mortality</i> 5. <i>To improve maternal health</i> 6. <i>To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases</i> 7. <i>To ensure environmental sustainability</i> 8. To develop a global partnership for development
April 2012	<p>Brazil's Forest Law has been revised. Brazil assembly passed a revision to the Forest Law in April 2012 to reduce the mandatory area of forest conservation for landowners. Under existing laws, Amazon landowners were required to preserve 80 percent of land forests and 20 percent of forests elsewhere. However, the revised law exempts 80 percent of forest protection obligations.</p>
April 2014	<p>Rock in Rio had launched a social and environmental project "Amazonia Live" in combination with the Instituto Socioambiental (ISA), the Global Environment Facility(GEF), the World Bank, and more. Also, The Ministry of Environment (MMA) joined the project in 2016. They become responsible for recovering protected areas in the Amazon rainforest with million trees. Due to this partnership, Amazon Live has already secured more than 3 million trees. Many donations, such as public donations, were made during the 2017 Rock in Rio de Janeiro. Thanks to this, thousands more trees could be secured in the Amazon rainforest, totaling 1,600 hectares.</p>
January 1, 2019	<p>Jair Bolsonaro became the 38th president of Brazil. Since he was a candidate, he was famous for his radical expressions and outspoken remarks. As if to prove this, Bolsonaro implemented controversial policies. He has weakened restrictions on damaging the environment, including deforestation of the Amazon forest. He has also reduced the budget for environmental management programs by 95 percent with his pledge to develop the Amazon rainforest. Also, the Federal Reserve's budget for conservation of biodiversity under Brazil's environment has been cut by more than \$45 million.</p>

	Besides, he is carrying out large-scale development projects such as mine development, road and dam construction, and deforestation.
January~ August 2019	There were enormous fires that occurred in the Amazon rainforest. By the unpredictable flame, 40,000 square kilometers of rainforest were burnt. The size of smoke caused by the fires is as huge as the total size of the European Union. The smoke impacted the wildlife and the people living nearby. The main cause of this disaster is the clearing of land for logging and cattle raising.
March 2020	The National Institute for Space Research (INPE) announced that 796 square kilometers of forest were logged during the first 3 months of this year.

Possible solutions

Predictable Problems

First, the Earth will lose its largest source of oxygen. As known, the Amazon rainforest produces 20% of the world total oxygen production. This means, one single rainforest could massively affect the entire Earth's ecosystem.

Next, it will deal a severe blow to pharmaceutical manufacturing. In the Amazon, thousands of plant species are distributed. As various plants serve as raw materials, many medications and medical supplies are manufactured. If the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest continuously accelerates, the medical industry won't be safe. Additionally, in the Amazon, there are yet undiscovered plants and herbs, so there are infinite possibilities to discover new materials for the new medications.

Last, the hydrologic cycle will deteriorate and will not support the ecosystem. The Amazon Rainforest supplies 20% of the world's freshwater. If massive amounts of freshwater are damaged and contaminated, all life on the Earth will be negatively affected. The various species of animals and plants living in the Amazon Rainforest will be endangered.

Government and Global action

The Amazon Basin countries need to tighten regulations and laws on environmental degradation within the country. The government's strong intervention is required to solve the problem. Imposing fine, land seizure, and more could be an example of strict government involvement. Also, the government could launch the tree-planting project to encourage restoration and run environmental campaigns cooperating with NGOs or other organizations. Globally, the world should draw continuous attention to the Amazon rainforest. The country, also the association could individually support by aiding or providing restoration facilities. Also, by launching a campaign about the Amazon rainforest could encourage its citizens to volunteer restoration programs in Amazon.

Financial aid, Facility support

Disaster aid and relief supplies are desperately needed to restore the Amazon. The support could be given by the charity, individually, or country to country. The aids and facilities will be used to restructure edifice and restore the rainforest.

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