



Northwest Model United Nations – Seattle 2019 United Nations Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment – Explanatory Note

What is the United Nations Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment?

The United Nations Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment (GPE) is a planned intergovernmental conference to negotiate and adopt a *Global Pact for the Environment*, a proposed legally-binding treaty to resolve gaps in international environmental law (IEL). The motivation behind the GPE is to guide the application of existing and future environmental treaties and to bridge legal gaps where there are no applicable treaties, and a conference to negotiate the GPE would share such a goal. Additionally, the Pact builds upon the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at their 73rd session, which discussed the gaps in IEL and related framework. The primary body working on the GPE is the ad hoc open-ended working group (AHWG), which was mandated to discuss the SG report, to consider the necessity of an international instrument on IEL, and to determine during the first half of 2019 whether to hold an intergovernmental conference that could adopt an international, legally-binding instrument.

What will happen at the GPE Conference at NWMUN?

Northwest Model United Nations – Seattle 2019 (NWMUN) is simulating the intergovernmental conference that many observers expected the ad hoc open-ended working group to decide to hold. The conference was not called in the first half of 2019; while the real-world United Nations may choose to hold a conference in the future, NWMUN-Seattle 2019 will be simulating the conference this year to better understand what a legally-binding GPE might look like.

NWMUN is basing the mandate of the GPE on the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/277](#) (AHWG). Although the AHWG was intended to suggest the adoption of a legally-binding treaty to resolve gaps in international environmental law (IEL), the AHWG declined to propose the creation of a legally-binding treaty in [its final report](#) submitted to the General Assembly in May 2019, instead opting to recommend that the GA develop a political declaration (which would not be legally binding) in 2022. While the General Assembly has not acted upon the AHWG's report as of the time of the publication of this document, it is still possible for the General Assembly to call for an intergovernmental conference to negotiate the GPE despite the report.

Delegates will simulation the creation of a legally-binding treaty at an intergovernmental conference. The GPE will consist of 5 chapters – an introduction or preamble, one chapter on the principles of IEL, one chapter on rights under IEL, one chapter on duties under IEL, and finally a chapter of final provisions that determine when and how the GPE will come into force. Each of the chapters will include various articles, which delegates will write and agree to. There will be *one* single outcome document, the Global Pact on the Environment, which will be voted on for approval by the conference in its final session.

Structure of the Global Pact on the Environment

The GPE will include the following sections:

1. **Preamble:** *The draft preamble will be provided by the NWMUN Secretariat and may be amended.*
2. **Principles**
3. **Environmental Rights**
4. **Duty to Take Care of the Environment**
5. **Final Provisions:** *The draft preamble will be provided by the NWMUN Secretariat and may be amended.*

Why is NWMUN simulating the UN Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment?

Every year, NWMUN simulates an agreement body to give delegates the opportunity to experience a different dimension of international diplomacy and decision-making outside of traditional UN committees. Due to the increasing urgency of addressing environmental degradation, and the failure of existing IEL to adequately protect the environment, NWMUN chose to simulate the GPE to encourage participants to think creatively and ambitiously. The conference gives delegates the opportunity to find agreement on issues where the international community has failed previously through the development of a new document. At NWMUN, it is expected the delegates will cooperate and collaborate to develop an ambitious, but realistic, treaty addressing the issues raised in the [Secretary-General's technical report on gaps in IEL](#).



How will the GPE Conference be simulated at NWMUN?

The schedule of the GPE Conference differs from NWMUN’s other committees to ensure that the outcome document can be negotiated in its entirety, and to reflect the reality of time constraints of the negotiation process. The set agenda for the committee is as follows:

Friday, November 22: Session I	Introductory Statements and Committee Overview Preamble Topic 1 (Principles)
Friday, November 22: Session II	Topic 1 (Principles)
Saturday, November 23: Session III	Topic 2 (Environmental Rights)
Saturday, November 23: Session IV	Topic 2 (Environmental Rights) Topic 3 (Duty to take care of the environment)
Saturday, November 23: Session V	Topic 3 (Duty to take care of the environment)
Sunday, November 24: Session VI	Final Provisions Consolidation of all articles, Edits, and Amendments <i>During this time, delegates will be asked to finish final editing, submit any amendments, and wrap up all discussion.</i>
Sunday, November 24: Session VII	Final Amendments and Voting Procedures

Please note that this is a tentative schedule for the committee; topics may be discussed earlier or later than scheduled based on the pace of delegate work. The majority of drafting for each topic is expected to take place during its designated session; however, edits and revisions can take place during later sessions. Delegates are only able to discuss the topic of the current session, as it will be the only topic currently recognized on the floor.

Additional information about the flow of the GPE will be provided at the conference. This will include an overview at the opening of the committee Friday evening. Delegates are encouraged to approach the dais at any time and ask questions as needed to ensure the work and flow of the committee is clear and understandable.

What Rules of Procedure will the GPE use at NWMUN-Seattle 2019?

GPE will use the standard NWMUN Rules of Procedure, as modified by the GPE Rules Addendum. Generally, GPE will follow the Short Form and Long Form of the rules, and be facilitated similarly to the General Assembly and other more conventional committees; however, there are some differences in procedure (such as the single outcome document), and as a result we offer the GPE Rules Addendum to explain those differences. All procedure not described in the Rules Addendum will be facilitated as described in the Long Form Rules.

How do I prepare for the GPE Conference at NWMUN?

Where do I find my countries position?

1. Your country’s Foreign Ministry and/or Environmental Ministry websites.
2. Your country’s Permanent Mission to the UN website.
3. Your country’s statements made during debates in other relevant UN committees:
 - a. [General Assembly](#)
 - b. UN Environment Assembly
 - c. The ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/277](#)

What do I do if I have more questions?

If you have questions related to the process we will follow at our conference, position papers, or anything related to the conference’s simulation of the GPE Conference, please email the GPE Conference Committee Staff at gpe.seattle@nwmun.org. If your question relates to research, the sources contained in the bibliography of the GPE Background Guide are your best option; NWMUN staff members do not assist with substantive research, but we’re happy to help with everything else!

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you this November!