21 March International Day of Forests

IDF 2017 STUDENTS DEBATE

Debate resolutions and background information

The theme for the International Day of Forests 2017 is *Forests and Energy.* This year's student debate aims to raise awareness on the importance of forests and its roles in contributing to the world's energy management. Below are the four resolutions for the debate; to help clarify each resolution, we have also provided brief examples of possible pro and con arguments (however debaters are free to develop these or other arguments):

1. Forests are the future of sustainable energy

   Forests are the future of sustainable energy because wood (also referred to as biomass) provides the world with more energy than solar, hydroelectric or wind power, accounting for roughly 40 percent of the current global renewable energy supply. It plays an important role in both developing countries and in some industrialized countries. However, there are many reasons why forests are not the future of sustainable energy. For example, wood is intensive to produce, and can lead to deforestation.

2. Wood energy helps to reduce rural poverty

   Approximately 883 million people in developing countries are employed in the wood energy sector on a full or part-time basis. Modernizing the wood energy sector can help revitalize rural economies and stimulate enterprise development. However, wood energy currently does not reduce rural poverty in many places because the benefits from wood energy businesses are unequally distributed and the rural poor do not receive any benefits and this rural poverty is not reduced.

3. Wood energy mitigates (lessens) impacts of climate change

   Although burning wood and biomass does release carbon dioxide into the air, if those fuels come from a sustainably-managed forest, those carbon releases can be offset by replanting. Indeed, if managed properly, forests can supply bioenergy virtually without contributing any greenhouse gas to the atmosphere. However, the overwhelming majority of wood energy consumption is the traditional use of wood and charcoal in developing countries (such as in inefficient cook stoves). Due to the low efficiency of such use and the often poor quality of associated resource management, much woodfuel consumption is unsustainable and does not mitigate impacts of climate change.

4. Greater investment in sustainably managed forests is the key to increasing renewable energy sources

   Greater investment in technological innovation and in sustainably managed forests is the key to increasing forests' role as a major source of renewable energy. However, greater investment in sustainably managed forests is not the key to effectively increasing renewable energy because the return on investment will be slower than investing in other kinds of renewable energy.

Below are background documents and links to some reference materials for debate teams for their preparations. Teams are encouraged to take further research for their own preparation.

1. FAO IDF 2017 page: www.fao.org/international-day-of-forests/en/

2. Assessing woodfuel supply and demand in displacement settings - www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/b113da0f-88f8-418c-9f7d-a42cdf505ee2/

3. FAO Forestry Paper 177: Forestry for a low-carbon future - www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/45619457-bbf1-4fda-964b-d24dcdefbadf/

   RECOFTC ForInfo resource kit - www.recoftc.org/project/forinfo/static-landing/forinfo-resource-kit

4. Harvesting bamboo as a renewable energy source and improving livelihoods – a win-win solution for farmers in Lao PDR - https://recoftc.wordpress.com/2014/10/29/harvesting-bamboo-as-a-renewable-energy-source-and-improving-livelihoods-a-win-win-solution-for-farmers-in-lao-pdr/

5. Money Can Grow on Trees: Teak assets in Northern Laos - www.recoftc.org/article/money-can-grow-trees-teak-assets-northern-laos

6. Practical Action. 2015. Gender and Livelihoods Impacts of Clean Cookstoves in South Asia

7. FAO State of the World's Forests 2014