National Museum of American Diplomacy

CRISIS IN THE OCEANS

Sustaining Fisheries in International Waters

The **National Museum of American Diplomacy (NMAD)** offers educators immersive programs that explore the goals and practice of diplomacy, teach diplomatic skills, build global competence, and illustrate how the critical work of American diplomats impacts people's everyday lives. Lesson plans emphasize 21st century skills: creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; and communication and collaboration. These skills are keys to success for the next generation of global citizens.

The **Diplomacy Simulation Program** is the museum's premier educational tool. In a collaborative learning environment, students step into the shoes of real-life diplomats. The diplomacy simulations are designed for 15-30 participants, plus a teacher/moderator. Students receive a scenario related to a global issue, which could be real-world or hypothetical, current or historic. Within each simulation, there are five to six stakeholder groups (e.g., foreign ministries, NGOs, and international organizations), each with different perspectives and priorities. Students role-play these stakeholders in small teams of three to five. Under set time constraints, the groups are challenged to negotiate a peaceful solution to the crisis in the scenario. Students use the information provided in the simulation packet to develop their group's policy positions and defend or modify their choices in real time.

The simulations have no right or wrong actions or solutions because the process, rather than the end result, is the goal. The learning experience develops organically as the students engage in the simulation. Once the simulation has been completed, students are encouraged to express how their views on diplomacy have evolved as a result of the simulation, and to contemplate how they can apply diplomatic skills to their everyday lives.

To access the complete Diplomacy Simulation Program, including training and subject matter expert videos, please visit diplomacy.state.gov

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Diplomacy Simulations are developed and presented by NMAD as an integral component of the museum's education offerings. This document and all associated materials are intended exclusively for educational use.

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ISSUE BACKGROUND

Oceans and fisheries are a key source of protein for over 3 billion people worldwide and are vital to the economic strength of many countries. As the world's population has grown, the pressure on available fish stocks has greatly increased. Over 30% of the world's fisheries have been overfished, and another 58% are already producing their maximum sustainable harvest. The ocean cannot provide an endless supply of seafood, and our current demand and practices run the risk of depleting ecosystems that are critical to the survival of marine life. **Sustainable** solutions must be found for this multifaceted problem to ensure the future of our world's oceans and fisheries.

APPROXIMATELY

90%

of the world's fish stocks are fully or over **exploited**

Consequences of Commercial Fishing

Overfishing is not the only threat to the health of our oceans. Unintended impacts of frequently used commercial fishing methods are also problematic. **Bycatch** – unintentional catch by fishing vessels – can harm species such as sea turtles, seabirds, and dolphins that are caught and killed by fishing gear. Bycatch can also be harmful to young fish that are important to the future population of a species. Habitat damage is another consequence of certain kinds of fishing practices, including things like **bottom trawlers** dragging nets through vulnerable marine ecosystems and destroying the places where fish and other species breed and live.

International Fishing Standards and Solutions

The concept of regulating access to and use of international waters for trade and military purposes has existed for centuries. Protecting and enforcing laws regarding the health of marine life and preserving fish stocks, however, is a more recent and continuing development.

Exclusive Economic Zones

The United Nations (UN) Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) aims to cooperate in the conservation and management of shared fish resources. When the convention was created in 1982, it specified that each country would protect and control the waters off their coasts. In the first 12 **nautical miles** offshore, called the territorial sea, countries have similar rights and jurisdiction as they do in their land territories. From there to up to 200 nautical miles off their coasts, countries have the right to control access to the resources within those waters, including fish, minerals, oil, and gas. UNCLOS labeled these areas **exclusive economic zones (EEZs)**. The rest of the ocean, beyond the EEZs, is called the **high seas** and is generally open to everyone.

Most of the world's fish resources can be found within these EEZs, but some kinds of fish move freely between different territorial waters and the high seas. The establishment of EEZs, therefore, did not provide a global solution to the problems of overfishing and bycatch. In some cases, it created **high seas pockets** that present particular overfishing and competition challenges.

Compliance Agreement

In 1993, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) adopted the Compliance Agreement. This agreement sets out the obligations of countries that authorize vessels to fish on the high seas, including ensuring these vessels do not undermine internationally agreed upon fishing rules.

UN Fish Stocks Agreement

In 1995, the FAO created the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and adopted the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The UN Fish Stocks Agreement covers how nations must cooperate to manage shared fishery resources through various Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs). These international organizations bring countries together to scientifically assess the status of fish stocks, adopt legally binding rules for fishing, and coordinate monitoring and enforcement. The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which is followed by the RFMOs, spells out best practices for managing fishing and **aquaculture**, including managing fishing capacity, protecting the broader ecosystem, and basing decisions on the best available science.

Port State Measures Agreement

In 2009, the FAO adopted the Port State Measures Agreement. This agreement is the first binding global treaty designed to combat **illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing** by specifying how countries must prevent vessels from offloading IUU fish in their ports.

Illegal Fishing Challenges

As resources become scarcer, more harvesters are willing to break the rules in order to catch fish. Competition among vessels, companies, and sometimes nations can be fierce, and these interests have led to IUU fishing and a disregard for the long-term sustainability of fish and other marine life. To complicate matters further, not all cases of IUU fishing are easily condemned – some countries and fisheries are vying for resources to feed starving people or save a failing economy. Many developing countries lack the resources to monitor and control all activity in their EEZs or the tools to punish those they catch breaking the rules.

In addition, it is difficult to regulate all of the activity that occurs on the high seas. The ocean covers 71% of the Earth's surface and much of that does not belong to a specific nation. Countries must cooperate to monitor fishing. Violators of the above agreements may face a loss of fishing rights or access for their fishing vessels to ports in other countries. Countries found supporting illegal fishing risk the threat of trade sanctions. In many areas, these agreements have created effective management that has allowed depleted fish stocks to rebuild and virtually eliminate IUU fishing. The FAO and a number of **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** work to build countries' abilities to manage their fisheries sustainably, including providing technical and financial support for monitoring their EEZs, and raising awareness of the need for better laws and practices.

In this simulation exercise, you will focus on the declining fish population in the waters off the shores of the Confederated Islands of Hiroot, often referred to as Hiroot. The citizens of Uzan, a close neighbor of Hiroot, thrive on fish from the waters around Hiroot. As you try to address the issues in this situation, you will find that the stakeholders have different objectives. You will need to find common ground to solve the fish crisis, maintain jobs for the Hiroot people, and keep up with the demand for fish as food and as a marketable commodity.

SCENARIO

In a region in the Pacific, the crisis in the oceans is growing. Overfishing, bycatch, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and depletion of marine life persist. In the Confederated Islands of Hiroot, often referred to as Hiroot, coral reefs and fish supplies are threatened, especially an endangered species of tuna. With a 1.3 million square mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surrounding Hiroot, visible and effective enforcement is difficult for a small nation without large financial resources. Hiroot uses 35% of fish caught in its EEZ as local food supply, thus the fishing industry is indispensable to its food security. Exports of marine products, mainly to Uzan, account for nearly 85% of export revenues. Uzan is one of the largest consumers of tuna in the world. It relies on tuna from the South Pacific and, as a result, holds strong economic and political interests in Hiroot.

In addition, foreign fishing fleets pay more than $14 million annually for the right to operate in Hiroot's territorial waters. These licensing fees account for 28% of the Hiroot government's revenue, so the government must present visible and effective enforcement of their fishing laws. Hiroot, however, has difficulty providing fuel for the patrol boats that police the EEZ.

In hopes of further reducing overfishing, some of the region's island nations are trying to restrict fishing in the high seas pockets. The Uzanese government, however, has shown resistance to this effort because it would further decrease the supply of tuna available to its markets and citizens. As a result, recent monitoring operations have identified Uzanese vessels illegally fishing in several nations' (including Hiroot's) EEZs.

Hiroot has explored the idea of beginning aquaculture, or the domestic cultivation of fish, but the country has not yet invested in it. Uzan has a small industry of aquaculture, but the fishing industry opposes it because they fear competition to their livelihood.

The Confederated Islands of Hiroot has called a meeting to address this international crisis with Uzan and invited the U.S. Department of State, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Global Oceans Fund (GOF).

As is evident, there are many competing interests and a great number of challenges in addressing this issue. The crisis in the oceans therefore needs a **multilateral**, comprehensive, and enforceable solution. Regulating this cross-boundary exchange requires international cooperation and support in order to ensure that irresponsible fishing practices are not causing irreparable damage to our precious resources and to ensure a future for the populations in our oceans.

STAKEHOLDERS

Today's simulation involves a hypothetical scenario but deals with the real world problem of increasingly scarce fish resources. You will role play a member of a delegation at an international meeting trying to negotiate a solution. The delegations are:

Government of the Confederated Islands of Hiroot

Hiroot is a Pacific Island nation consisting of 550 small islands. Hiroot gained its independence from Uzan in 1981.

Government of Uzan

Uzan is a Pacific Island nation composed of a series of islands about the size of California. It is located along the eastern coast of Asia.

U.S. Department of State (DOS)

The DOS is an executive department of the U.S. responsible for implementing foreign policy and maintaining international relations.

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO is a specialized UN agency focused on ending hunger, improving nutrition, and increasing food security.

Global Oceans Fund (GOF)

GOF is an international NGO aiming to protect the world's oceans and marine life. It promotes sustainable, efficient environmental practices.

Located at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., the National Museum of American Diplomacy is a public-private partnership between the State Department and the Diplomacy Center Foundation. NMAD's education program connects high school and college students with the world of American diplomacy, increasing their understanding of the skills, practices, and language of diplomats. Through simulations, online resources, and the museum's annual Educator's Workshop, NMAD inspires involvement in foreign affairs and citizen diplomacy.

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