

Climate Engineering Teaching Module
Lesson 4: Model U.N.

Classified Information (1 per group member)

Angosia

Public Information:

Angosia is a rising world power, largely because they have used fossil fuels to rapidly expand energy production. They are suffering from the effects of climate change but have repeatedly stated that economic growth is their highest priority, and through economic growth they will become more resilient to environmental changes. Thus far, climate change has been rather mild in Angosia, so their policy has worked. Angosia has recently invested in infrastructure projects at home and in Durhan as a way of building up protections against climate change. Angosia has made no public statement on climate engineering, preferring to “wait and see”.

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Classified Information:

Angosia is developing its own renewable energy technologies but is about ten years behind Guilder (who is already leading the way in renewable energy). If they delay a switch away from fossil fuels, they can become a superpower in renewable energy, which will grow their economy. Angosia has recently invested a lot of money in Durhan. They claim it is to improve the lives of the Durhanese, but it's actually to gain access to Durhan's large fossil fuel reserves. An immediate switch over to green energy would mean those investments were wasted. Angosia is in favor of climate engineering, because they see it as a way to reduce climate change and also buy more time to develop their renewable energy technologies. They do not want to take the political risk of being the first to develop and deploy climate engineering, but they will support other countries who want to do it.

Durhan

Public information:

Durhan is one of the poorest countries in the world. They are suffering from climate change, and as a poor nation, there is not a lot they can do about it. All of the other rich nations got rich through use of fossil fuels, and Durhan believes it has the right to become wealthy quickly by doing the same. Durhan has great fossil fuel resources but doesn't have the infrastructure to mine them. Durhan believes that climate engineering is necessary to rapidly reduce the effects of climate change in their country, but they are distrustful of other rich nations deploying it, because those nations have a long history of exploiting Durhan.

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The Durhan government has not been doing a good job to address climate change and increase wealth in their nation, and the Durhanese people are frustrated, so the government is desperate. Angosia has recently spent a great deal of money and resources in Durhan to improve quality of life for the citizens and to help develop fossil fuel resources (giving a portion of the proceeds to the Durhan government), and the government is worried it is losing control of its own country. Durhan desperately wants a home-grown solution to improving wealth and quality of life for its citizens, which would help them reduce the influence of Angosia. The Durhan government believes that a rapid switch to renewable energy would solve all of their problems. Durhan is secretly developing their own expertise in climate engineering with Molvania's help in exchange for some of their fossil fuel resources. They think that climate engineering would be a rapid way of reducing climate change effects in Durhan, buying them time to implement their plans for more renewable energy.

Florin

Public information:

A long-time world power, Florin is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. It is also the heaviest user of fossil fuels in the world and thus is one of the most responsible for climate change. Although renewable energy has been on the rise in Florin, the nation's energy consumption is so great that it needs fossil fuels to maintain its citizens' quality of life. Florin is publicly opposed to climate engineering because it will cause winners and losers among the nations of the world, and the poorest nations are already having a hard enough time with climate change.

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Although Florin has long been a world power, it is losing its innovative edge and is being rapidly passed up by other nations, especially Angosia and Guilder. This problem is made worse by climate change, which is causing more and more damage in Florin. Florin wants to continue using fossil fuels because they are the surest way to maintain its wealth. However, Florin's fossil fuel reserves have been drying up, and they have had to rely more on imports from Molvania, with which they have a strained relationship. Florin needs a solution that will allow it to maintain economic strength, and they are open to all options. Florin is secretly in favor of climate engineering because it will allow them to keep climate change down while continuing to use fossil fuels, at least in the short term. But, they don't want to be the first ones to deploy climate engineering.

Tanoa

Public information:

Tanoa is a small island state that has some wealth due to tourism and being a refueling port for trans-oceanic shipping. Tanoa sits at sea level, and due to sea level rise and worsening waves from storms, the island will be uninhabitable within 20 years. Tanoa views climate engineering as the only way of rapidly reducing climate change and saving their nation.

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Although Tanoa has come to the table for a climate negotiation, they understand that nothing can be done to reverse sea level rise in such a short time period. They will have to abandon their island, and the Tanoan government believes that the rich nations which have caused climate change should pay Tanoa compensation for losing their homes. Tanoa and Guilder have negotiated privately: if Guilder can convince the world to rapidly switch over to renewable energy, Guilder will pay Tanoa the compensation they want. Tanoa doesn't actually care about climate engineering one way or the other but will use it as a bargaining chip in negotiations if they need to.

Molvania

Public information:

Molvania is rich with fossil fuels, and its economy would collapse without them. As a country in the far North, Molvania's government has long been saying that Molvania is too cold, and it will benefit from climate change due to more shipping lanes, more areas for growing food, and more jobs for mining because less ground is frozen. Molvania is arriving to the negotiations in the middle of an unprecedented heat wave that has killed at least 50 people. Molvania opposes climate engineering, arguing that we need to spend more time understanding its benefits and risks.

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Molvania is suffering the effects of climate change like many other nations, including extreme heat waves and more droughts/floods. The Molvania government needs a solution to climate change that does not negatively impact the economy and does not reveal that Molvania has been lying to its citizens about the benefits of climate change. A rapid switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy would crash the Molvanian economy. In recent years, Molvania has been exporting fossil fuels to Florin and plans to use that relationship to influence Florin to vote for increased fossil fuels. Molvania has a complicated opinion about climate engineering. On the one hand, it would make the planet colder, which would reverse all of the "benefits" of climate change. On the other hand, it would allow the world to continue using fossil fuels, which would benefit Molvania's economy. The Molvanian government is hoping that another nation proposes using climate engineering so that they can publicly oppose it but secretly support it. This is why Molvania is secretly funding climate engineering research in Durhan.

Guilder

Public information:

Guilder is a world superpower. Guilder gained much of its wealth from fossil fuels and is suffering from climate change like the rest of the world. The nation has made it their mission to lead the world in renewable energy and has already become nearly carbon neutral. Guilder is opposed to climate engineering on moral grounds and prefers more “natural” solutions that actually address the problem of climate change.

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Guilder is leading renewable energy because they and their allies are suffering from climate change, so switching away from fossil fuels is the right thing to do. But also, as the main marketer of renewable energy technologies, Guilder will make a lot of money if the world switches away from fossil fuels. Guilder has staked its future on the success of renewable energy, and if the world doesn't completely switch over to renewable energy within the next 10 years, Guilder will likely plunge into a recession. Tanoa and Guilder have privately agreed that if the world rapidly switches over to renewable energy, Guilder will pay Tanoa compensation for damages caused by climate change. In reality, Guilder cannot afford to pay Tanoa everything that they want, and will thus need other nations to chip in. Climate engineering would delay the need to rapidly move toward renewable energy, which is why Guilder is opposed to it.