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Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (2060)

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Topic A: Human Rights Violations

Topic B: Environmental Repercussions and Decreasing Reserves

Topic A: Human Rights Violations

Introduction

The mission of The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is to “coordinate and unify petroleum policies among member countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum produces; an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry.”¹ OPEC was created to unify oil prices without dramatically affecting the global market at any given time. OPEC promotes a secure and steady supply of oil, encourages sustainable development, and inspires dialogue and cooperation so that member nations, and the rest of the globe, profit from politically, socially and economically from the organization’s work.² Despite its focus on global resource, it is important to remember that OPEC is much more than an economic organization.

While human rights may seem to be the jurisdiction of United Nations

committees such as the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization, and the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, OPEC also has a responsibility to protect human rights. As a part of the larger United Nations, the committee of OPEC must facilitate the general principles and priorities of the organization. The UN as a whole strives to encourage international peace, protect human rights, facilitate sustainable development, maintain international law, and provide humanitarian aid. Thus, OPEC must also aim to honor these standards. In other words, fair petroleum prices cannot come at the cost of human rights and human dignity.

Unfortunately, the organization and its members do not have a positive record with regards to respecting human rights. The Freedom House analyzes each country in the world with regards to certain freedom variables (such as accessibility of education, religious freedom, rule of law) and categorizes a country as free, partly free, or not free.³ Free countries include the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and most of Western Europe.⁴ Countries such as

¹ “Brief History,” *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2016, Web 30 Aug. 2016.
http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm.

² Ibid.

³ "Methodology," *Freedom House*, n.d. Web. 15 July 2016.
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology>

⁴ "Freedom in the World 2016." *Freedom House*, n.d. Web. 15 July 2016.

Mexico, Turkey and Ukraine have partly free statuses.⁵ A vast majority of OPEC members are not considered free: Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Libya.⁶ The committee holds over 85 percent of global oil reserves while countries ranked as free own a mere 9 percent of the world's total oil supply.⁷ Furthermore, they in fact have historically been the most corrupt countries in the globe. The 2002 Global Corruption Report of Transparency International ranked Venezuela, Indonesia, and Nigeria with corruption rates unparalleled across the globe.⁸

The Bottom of the Barrel report outlines the correlation between petroleum exporting countries and their poor human rights regimes.⁹ The petroleum industry creates large profits resulting in even larger appetites, so countries rich with oil expand their petroleum industries well beyond reason. In order to grow profits, transparency decreases as corruption increases. Governments see large profits and continue to chase for even larger ones so they use the wealth from oil to borrow and confound oil revenues. Priorities shift, personal agendas take charge, and non-oil

sectors collapse.¹⁰ This cycle perpetuates as fraud, embezzlement, and sheer indifference to the general country's public manage to bring in exorbitant amounts of wealth for a few in power.¹¹ The human rights violations at the hands of the global oil industry occur on such a large scale and so frequently that it would be impossible to discuss all, or even most, of the instances.¹²

A difficult question is how to balance between the responsibilities of the organization while respecting the sovereignty of individual members. OPEC was created primarily for economic reasons, but must adopt humanitarian responsibilities because of its place in the United Nations. Because the responsibility is indirect responsibility, human rights are rarely a priority in OPEC's proceedings. Furthermore, while it may be clear that OPEC has some responsibility to protect human rights, it is not clear to what extent or how this must be executed. The petroleum industry is one of the most corrupt in the world and the atrocities it incites require attention from member states and to become a priority for the organization as a whole.

Historical Background

In the 1960s OPEC was established in the midst of a rapidly changing global economy and highly unpredictable political landscape including decolonization and the birth of many new independent states in the developing world. At this time, the

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "The Geopolitics of Oil." *Institute for the Analysis of Global Security*, n.d. Web. 15 July 2016.

<http://www.iags.org/geopolitics.html>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Watts, Michael J. *Righteous Oil? Human Rights, The Oil Complex, and Corporate Social Responsibility*. (Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, California), 18 Jul. 2005. Web. http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GreenGovernance/papers/Watts_RighteousOil.pdf

¹⁰ Watts, Michael J. *Righteous Oil? Human Rights, The Oil Complex, and Corporate Social Responsibility*. (Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, California), 18 Jul. 2005. Web. http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GreenGovernance/papers/Watts_RighteousOil.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

international oil market was essentially monopolized by the multinational “Seven Sisters” of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (United Kingdom), Gulf Oil (United States), Royal Dutch Shell (Netherlands/United Kingdom), Standard Oil of California (SoCal), Standard Oil of New Jersey (Esso) (United States), Standard Oil Co. of New York (Socony) (United States), Texaco (United States).¹³ Other dominant members utilized centrally planned economies - such as the former Soviet Union. OPEC established the “Declaratory Statement of Petroleum Policy in member countries” in 1968, which emphasizes the “inalienable right of all countries to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources in the interest of their national development.”¹⁴

After a decade, in the 1970s, OPEC established an international stronghold as its member countries gained power over domestic petroleum industries and controlled the pricing of crude oil on world markets. In the unpredictable oil market, oil prices shot up as result of two events: the Arab oil embargo in 1973 and the beginning of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. In order to improve the development and stability of poorer nations, OPEC established the OPEC Fund for International Development in 1976 and by that time there were 13 member countries. Although the early 1980s reached record levels in oil pricing, prices crashed in 1986 in response to an oil surplus caused consumers to move away from oil resulting in drastic economic difficulties for many OPEC nations. Towards the end of the

decade, prices rose but only to half the levels of the earlier part of the decade as OPEC spirited a group production ceiling between its member countries and a Reference Basket for pricing through improvements in dialogue and cooperation.¹⁵ Despite Middle East hostilities in 1990-91, OPEC prevented any massive price changes as seen in the 1970s and 1980s; nonetheless, price weakness characterized the decade due to the South-East Asian economic fall and the mild Northern Hemisphere winter of 1998-99.

Though the early 2000s indicated stabilized crude prices, market forces and speculation drove oil prices up in 2004 until in 2008 where the global economic recession drove prices to record highs. In response to the 2008 economic crisis, OPEC played a significant role in representing the oil sector. Increased social unrest throughout the world in the early 2010s impacted the supply and demand of the oil industry, yet prices remained stable between 2011 and mid-2014. Unlike the rise in prices in 2004, speculation and oversupply drove the prices to fall towards the end of 2014.

The economy of many of the member countries is highly dependent on the oil market. The oil and gas sector accounts for 35 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Algeria, 45 percent of the GDP and 95 percent of exports in Angola, 60 percent of the GDP and 95 percent of exports in Kuwait, 60 percent of the GDP and 95 percent of exports in Libya, 35 percent of the GDP and over 90 percent of exports in Nigeria, 55 percent of the GDP in

¹³ Watts, Michael J. *Righteous Oil? Human Rights, The Oil Complex, and Corporate Social Responsibility*. (Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, California), 18 Jul. 2005. Web. http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GreenGovernance/papers/Watts_RighteousOil.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Watts, Michael J. *Righteous Oil? Human Rights, The Oil Complex, and Corporate Social Responsibility*. (Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, California), 18 Jul. 2005. Web. http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/GreenGovernance/papers/Watts_RighteousOil.pdf

Qatar, 50 percent of the GDP and 85 percent of exports in Saudi Arabia, 40 percent of the GDP in the United Arab Emirates, and 25 percent of GDP and 95 percent of export earnings in Venezuela. From these numbers, it is evident that the economies of many of the member countries are highly dependent on the production and export of oil. Saudi Arabia, actually, contains 18 percent of the world's petroleum reserves and is classified as the largest exporter of petroleum. Petroleum, in fact, has made Qatar one of the fastest growing and highest per-capita income countries while the discovery of oil in the UAE has dramatically helped the country shift into a modern state with a high standard of living.¹⁶

Many international human rights violations in OPEC can be attributed to fighting over the "natural resource curse" of oil reserves spurred by religious differences and geopolitical tension in these oil-rich regions.¹⁷ Various international events within the OPEC countries have not only disrupted oil supplies and elevated prices temporarily, but they have also created instabilities within OPEC's long-term cooperation and cohesion as well as negatively impacted human rights. In the Yom Kippur War of 1973, a war fought mainly between Syria and Israel over territories occupied by Israel and the question of reopening the Suez Canal, OPEC countries of Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait dispatched thousands of soldiers

¹⁶ "Member Countries," *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2016, Web 28 Aug. 2016.

http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/25.htm.

¹⁷ Palley, Thomas I, "Lifting the Natural Resource Curse" *Foreign Service Journal* Dec. 2003, Web 29 Aug. 2016.

<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052213-040359>.

to Syria and experienced many casualties by the end of the war. On October 17, 1973 in response to U.S. support of Israel, Saudi Arabia led the other member countries of OPEC to instate a 5 percent reduction in oil production and an embargo against the U.S. leading to the 1973 energy crisis.¹⁸ Due to a long history of border disputes and rising fear that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 would inspire an uprising of Iraq's long-suppressed Shia majority, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 pitted the two countries against each other and resulted in over 1 million soldiers and civilians with no changes in borders. The two countries often fought over oil refineries, even though both are founding members of OPEC, with the oil refineries in Kirkuk, Iraq being a popular target. In fact, Iran destroyed two Iraqi oil terminals in 1980 which greatly hindered Iraq's oil export.¹⁹ As members of OPEC, Iraq and Iran benefit the most through cooperation and strategic negotiation when it comes to production and price issues; however, the Iran-Iraq War worsened relations between the two countries, something an organization like OPEC cannot afford economically.

The September 11th, 2001 attacks, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the call for the War on Terror are all linked to massive human rights violations committed by member countries of OPEC including Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Led by an Islamic extremist group based in Afghanistan known as al-Qaeda, 19 militants, a majority from Saudi Arabia,

¹⁸ Charles D, Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Bedford, 2006), 329.

¹⁹ Efraim, Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980:1988* (Osprey Publishing, 25 April 2002).

committed the 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil.²⁰ Saudi Arabia, like Iraq and Iran, is home to fundamental Islamic extremist groups and the 9/11 attacks were a representation of extremist Islamic ideologies of a holy war – a war between Islam and Christianity (as seen in the United States). Islamic extremism in these three OPEC countries has oppressed, and is continuing to oppress, its citizens for decades – persecuting citizens for their faith, severely limiting freedom of speech and fueling hatred of everyone else around the world who holds beliefs other than those the extremist militant leaders support. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, as Iraq’s leader Saddam Hussein was linked to al-Qaeda, and the War on Terror led by the United States was a response to terrorism in an effort to bring democracy to and improve the wellbeing of the citizens of Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.²¹

Beginning in December 2010 in Tunisia, the Arab Spring was a revolutionary uproar of demonstrations and protests (non-violent and violent), riots, and civil wars in the Arab world including several OPEC members such as Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.²² The Arab Spring demonstrated an effort by the people of the affected countries to bring down their authoritarian regimes. In other words, these protests and riots were a call for liberating these countries and introducing the western-

²⁰ “September 11 Attacks,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 17 May 2016, Web 01 Sept. 2016.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/September-11-attacks>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “How to Understand ISIS,” *New York Review of Books*, 23 June 2016. Web 01 Sept. 2016.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/06/23/how-to-understand-isis/>

style liberal democracy.²³ Pressures from within the Arab world instigated the Arab Spring – citizens were dissatisfied with the rule of local governments and general issues such as large gaps in income levels, dictatorship and absolute monarchy, human rights violations, political corruptions shown via Wikileaks diplomatic cables, economic decline, unemployment, and extreme poverty.²⁴ In terms of corruption, these Northern African and Persian Gulf countries have seen the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few autocrats in power for decades and lack of transparency of the distribution of wealth. In fact, the majority of protestors and rioters were youth refusing to accept the status quo set up decades ago.²⁵

The Libyan Crisis, picking up after the Arab Spring in 2011, is an ongoing conflict in Libya that has seen the First Libyan Civil War, foreign military intervention, and the ousting and death of the de facto dictator Muammar Gaddafi.²⁶ Violence and instability rage in Libya,

²³ “The ‘Arab Spring’ and other American Seasons,” *Al Jazeera*, 29 Aug. 2012, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282972539153865.html>

²⁴ “The Anger Revolutions in the Middle East: an answer to decades of failed reform,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13 June 2011, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

https://www.academia.edu/919845/The_Anger_Revolutions_in_the_Middle_East_an_answer_to_decades_of_failed_reform_Journal_of_Balkan_and_Near_Eastern_Studies_13_2_June_2011_pp.143-156

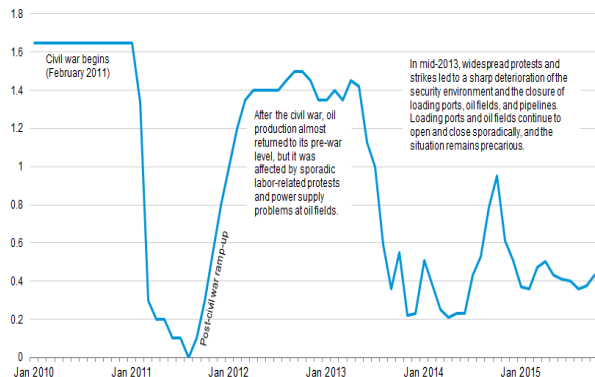
²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “Libya – Crisis Response,” *European Union*, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

http://web.archive.org/web/20141221001922/http://eeas.europa.eu/crisis-response/where-we-work/libya/index_en.htm

especially after the renewed civil war in 2014, with tens of thousands of casualties rising. As a result of both of Libya's civil wars, Libya's oil output has plummeted, as shown in Figure 1, to a tiny fraction of its normal level as oil facilities are blockaded or damaged by rival groups.²⁷

Figure 3. Crude oil production in Libya, January 2010 to October 2015
million barrels per day



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Short-Term Energy Outlook, November 2015

Figure 1: “Crude Oil Production in Libya, January 2010 to October 2015”²⁸

Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the United States began economic sanctions on Iran primarily targeting investments in oil, gas, and petrochemicals, exports of refined petroleum products, and business interactions with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.²⁹ Later in 2006, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1696 imposing sanctions on Iran after Iran's

refusal to suspend uranium enrichment program.³⁰ These sanctions have hurt Iran's economy and people, as oil is a major product in Iran. While the U.S. fears Iran's uranium enrichment program is intended for developing nuclear weapons, Iran argues that their intention is solely to provide electricity and new forms of medicine.³¹ As Iran's currency has fallen over the years, the nation has struggled with rising inflation, increasing costs for commodities and energy, growing unemployment, decreasing supplies of medicine, and a rise in public unrest.³² The people of Iran have been suffering for decades as a result of these sanctions, which are especially damaging due to the country heavy reliance on oil production.

Domestically, factors such as political unrest, corruption, and violations of LGBT rights, women's rights and workers' rights all contribute to the human rights violations surrounding OPEC. Corruption by high government officials and the refusal by oil companies to acknowledge human rights violations has led to the exploitation many civilians and workers in OPEC member countries including Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Libya. The 2002 Global Corruption Report of Transparency International ranked the three non-Middle East OPEC members as having some of the highest corruption

²⁷ “Country Analysis Brief: Libya,” *US Energy Information Administration*, 19 Nov. 2015. Web 02 Sept. 2016.

https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Libya/libya.pdf

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “Sanction Qaddafi? How 5 Nations have Reacted to Sanctions: Iran,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Feb. 2011. Web 01 Sept. 2016.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2011/0224/Sanction-Qaddafi-How-5-nations-have-reacted-to-sanctions./Iran>

³⁰ “Security Council demands Iran suspend uranium enrichment by 31 August, or face possible economic, diplomatic sanctions,” *United Nations*, 31 July 2006. Web 02 Sept. 2016.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8792.doc.htm>

³¹ “U.N. Chief says sanctions on Iran affecting its people,” *Reuters United Nations*, 5 Oct. 2012. Web. 03 Sept 2016.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-sanctions-un-idUSBRE89412Z20121005>

³² Ibid.

levels in the world: among 102 countries, Venezuela ranked 81, Indonesia 96, and Nigeria 101.³³ Nepotism, favoritism, and profiteering enable many leaders of member OPEC countries to thrive under corruption, skewed standards of living, and a lack of transparent governance. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Rafael Correa of Ecuador, anti-Western socialist/populist leaders, paid their domestic democratic opposition with oil revenue dividends. Petroleum profits have also been used by Saudi Arabia and Qatar to finance Salafi Wahabbism and the Muslim Brotherhood, respectively. In terms of terrorist groups, Algeria struggles with Al Qaeda of the Maghreb and the combat Salafists, Indonesia with Laskar Jihad and the Jemaa Islamiya, and Northern Nigeria with the radical Jihadi factions.³⁴ Political discrimination against workers in state institutions, like oil refineries, for holding certain political viewpoints has been a major issue in Venezuela. In 2013, the Human Rights Center of the Catholic University Andrés Bello received complaints from hundreds of workers from state oil companies who were allegedly threatened with losing their positions for supporting Capriles after the April elections.³⁵ In fact, labor legislation adopted in April 2012 in Venezuela severely limits workers freedom in choosing their representatives because the National Electoral Council (CNE), a public

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “OPEC Regimes: The ‘Change They Need’ in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Human Events: Powerful Conservative Voices*, 27 Oct. 2008, Web 03 Sept. 2016. <http://humanevents.com/2008/10/27/opec-regimes-the-change-they-need-in-us-foreign-policy/>

³⁵ “World Report 2014: Venezuela,” *Human Rights Watch*, Web 02 Sept. 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/venezuela>

authority, continues to play an active role in union elections.³⁶

By the 1980s, Nigeria had become largely dependent on petroleum production, forcing many workers to abandon their agricultural practices due to significant drops in cash and food crops. Though once a large exporter of cocoa, rubber, cotton, and groundnuts by the 1990s Nigeria’s cocoa production dropped by 43 percent, rubber by 29 percent, cotton by 65 percent, and groundnuts by 64 percent.³⁷ Although the skilled workers employed by the oil corporations were paid well, a large majority of Nigerians who lived in the Niger Delta states fell further into poverty after the 1960s. Poverty, urbanization, corruption, and lack of jobs characterized the Niger Delta, forcing the people to destroy the ecosystem in order to survive.³⁸ As conflict rose in the 1990s between foreign oil corporations, several of the region’s minority ethnic groups, including the Ogoni and the Ijaw, felt exploited.³⁹ When petroleum was discovered in Ogoniland in 1957, the Ogoni people claimed that the government forced them to abandon their land to oil companies without consultation and minimal compensation. A 1979 constitutional amendment awarded the Nigerian federal government full ownership of Nigerian territory and stated that compensation would be “based on the value of the crops on the land at the time of its acquisition, not on the value of the land

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Okonta and Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast*, 2001.

³⁸ Okonta and Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast*, 2001.

³⁹ Carlo, Koos and Jan, Pierskalla, *The Effects of Oil Production and Ethnic Repression in Nigeria: A Mixed-Methods Approach* (Terrorism and Political Violence)

itself.”⁴⁰ Growing increasingly aggravated with the government, the Ogoni people formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1992 to fight for their ethnic and environmental rights. MOSOP demanded oil companies like Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation \$10 billion for royalties, damages and compensation.⁴¹

The Nigerian government responded with military repression in 1994 that led to the death of four Ogoni chiefs and 2,000 civilians and the displacement of 100,000 internal refugees.⁴² Furthermore, nine activists known as the “Ogoni Nine” were hung - among them was the founder of MOSOP Ken Saro-Wiwa.⁴³ Similarly, the Ijaw people experienced human rights violations under the exploitation of the Nigerian government and oil companies in the Niger Delta from 1998-1999. In 1998, the Ijaw Youth Conference began Operation Climate Change as they called for oil companies to stop operations and withdraw from Ijaw territory.⁴⁴ In December 1998, two warships and 10-15,000 Nigerian troops entered Bayelsa and the Delta states of the

⁴⁰ “The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria’s Oil Producing Communities,” *Human Rights Watch*, 1999, Web 01 Sept. 2016.

<http://pantheon.hrw.org/reports/1999/nigeria/>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bogumil, Terminski, *Oil-Induced Displacement and Resettlement: Social Problem and Human Rights Issue*.

⁴³ Nick, Mathiason, *Shell in court over alleged role in Nigeria executions*, (London: Guardian).

⁴⁴ “Ijaw Tribe,” *Online Nigeria*, 19 Dec. 2005, Web 31 Aug. 2016.

http://www.onlinenigeria.com/finance/?blur_b=669.

Ijaw opening fire on 2,000 young Ijaw protestors, killing three and arresting twenty-five. In addition to opening fire and killing several protestors, at night the soldiers invaded private homes to beat and rape women and young girls.⁴⁵ On January 4th, 1999, one-hundred soldiers from Chevron’s military base occupied Opia and Ikiyan, two Ijaw communities in the Delta state, killing the Ikiyan leader, leaving sixty-two people missing, destroying canoes and fishing equipment, killing livestock, and destroying churches.⁴⁶

Despite the election of Obasanjo in 1999 and the push for democracy, ethnic and political unrest suffocated Nigeria throughout the 1990s. Ethnic militia groups in addition to the Nigerian military and police forces like the Nigerian Mobile Police were forced to militarize Nigeria as violence raged between ethnic groups over the competition for oil wealth.⁴⁷ Starting in 2004, the violence in Niger Delta’s oil industry rose with piracy and kidnappings. A presidential amnesty program, which included support and training of ex-militants, was initiated in 2009. This program alleviated fears of those oppressed by the oil industry in Nigeria because up until 2011, victims of crimes linked with oil companies were afraid to seek justice for crimes committed against them due to lack of prosecution for those responsible for human rights violations.⁴⁸ In March 2016,

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Carlo, Koos and Jan, Pierskalla, *The Effects of Oil Production and Ethnic Repression in Nigeria: A Mixed-Methods Approach* (Terrorism and Political Violence)

⁴⁸ “Violence in Nigeria’s Oil Rich Rivers State in 2004: Summary,” Web 02 Sept. 2016.

the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) – a militant group in the Niger delta – publicized their existence with an attack of oil-producing facilities in the delta. Attacks on these oil facilities caused the shutdown of oil terminals and the fall of Nigeria’s oil production to its lowest level in twenty years.⁴⁹

Current Conditions

Currently, the ongoing war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen is creating domestic tension while modern day slavery in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar furthers their infrastructure desires at the expense of exploiting unskilled labor. Political unrest within member nations that are governed by fundamentalist or support radical Islamist ideologies continues to plague many OPEC countries. Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Ecuador continue governance under authoritarian regimes and radical Islamic ideologies fuel Saudi Arabia, Iran and Qatar.⁵⁰ Russia and China continue to purchase oil sanctioned in Iran. LGBT and women’s rights violations are committed by nearly every member nation. Imprisonment or death towards human rights defenders and activists in member nations continues to be a pressing issue.

<https://www.hrw.org/legacy/background/africa/nigeria0205/1.htm>.

⁴⁹ “Nigeria Arrests ‘Avengers’ Oil Militants,” *BBC News Online*, 16 June 2016, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36301835>

⁵⁰ “OPEC Regimes: The ‘Change They Need’ in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Human Events: Powerful Conservative Voices*, 27 Oct. 2008, Web 03 Sept. 2016.

<http://humanevents.com/2008/10/27/opec-regimes-the-change-they-need-in-us-foreign-policy/>

Extreme lack of transparency and accountability plague many of the citizens in OPEC countries. Zero tolerance for freedom of speech and widespread corruption only intensify the human rights violations surrounding OPEC countries.

The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, starting from April, 2015, triggered vast numbers of humanitarian crisis. War crimes were committed by every side of this conflict. In Yemen, domestic and regional groups, both pro-Saleh and pro-Hadi, indiscriminately targeted civilian during battles; pro-Saleh forces practiced arbitrary arrests, abductions, and illegal detentions of civilians, resulting in significant loss of personal freedom⁵¹. Saudi Arabia, leader of the air strike coalition against Yemen, was suspected to overlook the existence of civilians, or even deliberately target civilians in military actions. Saudi and its allied parties also blocked an effort by UN to investigate human rights violation during this conflict.⁵² Despite the UN Security Council and High Commissioner of Human Rights’ calls for abiding international humanitarian laws, there is certainly a lot of space for humanitarian improvement at this region.

On the other hand, as of today in Nigeria, the NDA’s attacks on oil-producing facilities place Nigeria behind Angola as

⁵¹ "Yemen 2015/2016." *Amnesty International*.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/report-yemen/>

⁵² "What Military Target Was in My Brother's House." *Human Rights Watch*. 2016.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/11/26/what-military-target-was-my-brothers-house/unlawful-coalition-airstrikes-yemen/>

Africa's largest oil producer.⁵³ A fall in oil production has weakened Nigeria's economy and ruined its budget as Nigeria's economy and revenue highly depend upon oil. Described as the "nation's tormentor-in-chief" by the Nigerian government, the NDA wants to create a sovereign state in the Niger Delta and threatens to disrupt the Nigerian economy if this aim is not met.⁵⁴

Even though the demand for energy has been drastically increasing, the world, as of 2060, still has not seen a major transition in energy structure. From 2011 to 2020, the percentage of fossil fuels, mainly oil and coal, in total primary energy supply only dropped from 82 percent to 76 percent.⁵⁵ From 2020 to 2060, this number has gone down to 60 percent. But with skyrocketing energy consumption, the base for this percentage has been increasing faster than the percentage decrease, which suggests an increasing amount of oil consumption. However, oil price shows increasing volatility due to more mature technologies in renewable energy exploitation, increasing awareness of oil industry's effect on environment, etc. Such instability in oil

prices forces Oil Magnates to take measure in controlling the cost of production in order to maintain profitability. Therefore, as of 2060, local workers in OPEC countries are still treated unfairly, both in material condition and in social aspect.

LGBTQ right is an important issue in raising human rights standard in OPEC countries. Unfortunately, most of the OPEC members are extremely repulsive towards homosexuality. Among its members, Iran and Saudi Arabia punish homosexuals with death penalty; Algeria, Kuwait, Libya imprison homosexuals; homosexuality is also illegal in Indonesia and UAE. In these countries, homosexuality is very socially unaccepted.⁵⁶ The reason behind such LGBTQ unwelcome is largely religious: the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Qur'an directly condemns homosexuality as a transgression against Allah's will.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Venezuela, the country with the largest oil reserve, almost legalized same sex unions in 2009, but this effort was denied by its National Assembly.⁵⁸ Ecuador recognized same sex union in 2008.⁵⁹ As of 2060, with western culture continuously flows into them, Middle East states have

⁵³ "Africa's Largest Oil Producer has been Dethroned," *Business Insider*, 16 May 2016, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/niger-delta-avengers-nigeria-oil-production-crash-2016-5?r=US&IR=T>

⁵⁴ "Buhari will be distracted in 2017 but pray for him" *Blank News Online*, Web 02 Sept. 2016.

<https://blanknewsonline.wordpress.com/2016/07/25/prophesy-buhari-will-be-distracted-in-2017-but-pray-for-him-ogedengbe/>

⁵⁵ "World Energy Resources 2013 Survey." *World Energy Council*. 2013.

https://www.worldenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Complete_WER_2013_Survey.pdf.

⁵⁶ "Equaldex: The Collaborative LGBT Rights Knowledge Base." *Equaldex: The Collaborative LGBT Rights Knowledge Base*. <http://www.equaldex.com/>.

⁵⁷ "AL-SHUARA (THE POETS)." Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, University of Southern California. *The Qur'an*.

<http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/026-qmt.php#026.165>.

⁵⁸ "Same-Sex Unions Not On the Table After All?" *Queerty*.

<https://www.queerty.com/same-sex-unions-not-on-the-table-after-all-20090327>.

⁵⁹ "Equaldex: The Collaborative LGBT Rights Knowledge Base." *Equaldex: The Collaborative LGBT Rights Knowledge Base*. <http://www.equaldex.com/>.

slightly loosened its repulse against homosexuality: that is, death penalties and imprisonment are not enforced as strictly. However, the cultural climate against LGBTQ community still prevails. What OPEC can do to balance between humanitarian improvement and social environment on LGBTQ issue should be seriously considered.

Past UN and International Action

OPEC countries have been deeply intertwined in an intricate web of interest formed by oil companies, local and international governments, and cultural and religious background since the discovery of oil as illustrated before. Therefore, with tremendous amount of interest at hand, the international actions taken place in OPEC countries have triggered a lot of debate on whether they were justifiable or merely action of self-interest.

The Iran-Iraq War starting in 1980 started an oil crisis and a human rights disaster. Although the war was heated by historical issues and border dispute, its progression inevitably gained UN attention. Firstly, Iraqi troops' massive use of chemical weapon targeted not only Iranian military but also caused hundreds of thousands of casualties among civilians.⁶⁰ The United Nations passed a series of resolutions, including Resolution 514 and 522, which called for peace, Resolution 582, which condemned usage of chemical weapon, Resolution 598, which called for a ceasefire and UN investigation. And later, the Resolution 1060 demands Iraq to give

⁶⁰ Randal, Jonathan C. "Iran-Iraq War" *Crimes of War*.
<http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/547/>.

UN Special Committee access to inspect disarmament progress.⁶¹

The Gulf War in 1990 was a war triggered by oil. In 1990, Iraq's economy was deteriorating. Heavily relied on oil export, Iraq was extremely discontented when Saudi Arabia and Kuwait kept increasing oil production so that the oil price went down and became less profitable for Iraq. On August 2nd, 1990, Iran invaded Kuwait, and virtually defeated all resistance within 12 hours. The United Nations Security Council followed by passing the famous Resolution 661 on August 6th. This resolution decided to: 1. Forbid any import of products originating in Kuwait or Iraq; 2. Forbid sales of weapons to Kuwait or Iraq; 3. Forbid any financial or economic assistance to either country, except for the use of humanitarian aid; 4. Restore the legitimate Kuwait Authority. However, this resolution, although widely supported internationally, was not powerful enough to thwart Iraqi aggression. It was the United States, along with a 34-nation coalition, that intervened full-scale, and prevented Iraqi force to occupy Saudi Arabia. However, the actual purpose of US intervention was debatable: some opinions justify this military intervention a human rights protection, preventing more genocides and war crimes⁶²; but the US certainly strategically gained from protecting Saudi and its oil industry, especially when the

⁶¹ "Security Council Resolutions - 1990." *UN News Center*.
<http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1990/scres90.htm>.

⁶² Hanson, Victor D. "Why Did We Invade Iraq?" *National Review*. March 26, 2013.
<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/343870/why-did-we-invade-iraq-victor-davis-hanson>.

unstable condition in Middle East made oil price volatile.⁶³

The United Nations has noticed the important role of women in settling regional peace. It passed Resolution 1325, in October, 2000. This resolution stresses importance of equal participation of women in efforts for peace.⁶⁴ However, women are still significantly underrepresented in OPEC countries. Kurdish women face both sexual and social discrimination.⁶⁵ In Nigeria, women face threats of abduction from terrorist group Boko Haram.⁶⁶

Bloc Positions

Middle East

Many Middle Eastern countries have conflicting social values with those of Western culture. Under a strong patriarchal society, the status of women and children in Middle East have not been given significant attention, especially during military

⁶³ Aarts, Paul, and Michael Renner. "Oil and the Gulf War." *Middle East Research and Information Project*.
http://www.merip.org/mer/mer171/oil-gulf-war?ip_login_no_cache=33496d87951ce2e2680cdf3698ac376a.

⁶⁴ "Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (Security Council Resolution 1325)." *UN News Center*.
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/#resolution>.

⁶⁵ Black, Ian. "UN Campaign Highlights Unsung Work of Women in Middle East Peace-building." *The Guardian*. June 09, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/09/united-nations-un-campaign-work-women-middle-east-peace-building-conflict-resolution>.

⁶⁶ Segun, Mausi. "A Long Way Home: Life for the Women Rescued from Boko Haram." *Human Rights Watch*. July 29, 2015.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/29/long-way-home-life-women-rescued-boko-haram>.

conflicts. Similarly, the LGBTQ community has suffered severe, unequal treatment under these social values. Therefore, members of this bloc should consider the correlation between regional social values and human rights condition of those underrepresented groups. Moreover, OPEC members from this region still disproportionately rely on oil export as its source of finance. As the unstable fluctuation of oil prices forces oil magnates to lower production cost, members should also consider measures to balance financial elements and fair treatment to workers.

North America

Countries from this region are characterized as having both high oil reserve and high oil consumption, evidenced as U.S., Canada and Mexico all rank within the top 11 in consumption, and U.S. and Canada both in the top 11 for reserves.⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ U.S. and Canada observe a stable growth in their oil production, but their oil workers do not have a heavenly work space: the fracking and tar sands significantly threaten the health and living condition of workers and residents nearby.⁶⁹ Also home to many international oil magnates, members from this bloc should consider the financial and humanitarian advantages and disadvantages of extracting offshore.

⁶⁷ "The World's Largest Oil Reserves By Country." *WorldAtlas*. September 19, 2016.
<http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-world-s-largest-oil-reserves-by-country.html>.

⁶⁸ "Crude Oil Consumption by Country." *Index Mundi*.
<http://www.indexmundi.com/energy/?product=oil>.

⁶⁹ "The Price of Oil: Human Rights Violations - Oil Change International." *Oil Change International*.
<http://priceofoil.org/thepriceofoil/human-rights/>.

Asia and Russia

The world has seen a skyrocketing of energy demand at this region. China, now the second biggest consumer of oil, possesses increasing demand for self-sufficiency. However, its conflict with Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan and Malaysia over the possession of South China Sea, largely due to its abundant oil reserve, has escalated and risked a regional conflict.⁷⁰ On the other hand, Russia escalated conflict with Ukraine partly due to dispute over oil and natural gas possession.⁷¹ The Ukrainian civil war has produced millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance.⁷² The members of this bloc should review the repercussion of energy expansion, especially on a humanitarian level that concerns civilian security.

Central/South America

American countries are often victims of corruption and authoritarianism. Venezuela and Ecuador, both major oil output countries at this region, had been under authoritarian socialist regimes, and social injustices have become a serious

⁷⁰ Lin, Shu-yuan, and Jamie Wang. "U.S. Report Details Rich Resources in South China Sea." *Focus Taiwan*. February 9, 2013.

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201302090013.aspx>.

⁷¹ "Crimean Authorities Not Ruling out Future Privatization of Chornomornaftogaz." *KyivPost*. March 14, 2014.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/crimean-authorities-not-ruling-out-future-privatization-of-chornomornaftogaz-339347.html>.

⁷² "Ukraine." *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/ukraine>.

issue. In Ecuador, freedom of speech is harshly violated, as government practices strong censorship on individuals and media; Ecuador also sees overcrowded prisons and arbitrary detentions.⁷³ Venezuela suffers large amounts of corruption, as millions of dollars have been illegally embezzled within the government, and billions of dollars of loss have been added to PVDSA, the state-run oil company, due to corruption.⁷⁴ Thus, members from this bloc should focus on promoting justice and equality as oil economy fuels wealth for them.

Africa

Africa also possesses large amount of oil reserve. Historically, nationalization of oil reserve land created humanitarian crises. On the other hand, terrorism significantly threatens the production of oil and the human rights of its people. As mentioned above, the NDA in Niger Delta poses such threat to Nigeria. Moreover, Africa is also a region characterized by inequality of women, non-acceptance of LGBTQ groups, poverty, and corruption. Members from this bloc should consider every kind of human rights violation committed by government, oil companies, and terrorist groups.

⁷³ "International Organizations Denounce Ecuador's Record on Corruption, Press Freedom - The Amazon Post." *The Amazon Post*. March 28, 2016.

<http://theamazonpost.com/international-organizations-denounce-ecuadors-record-on-corruption-press-freedom/>.

⁷⁴ King, Quenton. "\$350 Billion Lost to Corruption in Venezuela: Expert." *InSight Crime*. March 22, 2016.

<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/350-billion-lost-to-corruption-venezuela-official>.

Conclusion

Despite its mission of coordinating oil production and stabilizing oil prices, OPEC should also take responsibilities in promoting human rights. It is obvious that OPEC members generally have less than ideal human rights conditions: civilian security is threatened by domestic unrest, radical terrorism, and corruption; equality is not ensured, as women and LGBTQ groups face discrimination in most of OPEC countries. Despite UN's consistent effort to call for peace and protect human rights, OPEC members have been entangled in geopolitical, historical and religious conflicts that often overlook human rights conditions. OPEC, as an economic organization, should take substantial measures not only because human rights morally ought to be respected, but improvement of human rights also creates better environment for further economic development.

As of 2060, the prospect of oil industry is rather unstable. Rising advocacy for clean energy and maturing technology in alternative energy made oil less demanded in consumer sector. Even though the total demand for oil is still rising due to soaring energy consumption, the percentage of energy generated by fossil fuel is rapidly decreasing. Therefore, OPEC members should also consider the effect of heavy reliance on oil industry, and how this instability will influence its people. Overall, this committee will face a heavy task of solving various types of human rights violation under intricate backgrounds. A unanimous, effective, and culturally and economically sensitive resolution should be this committee's ultimate goal.

Questions a Resolution Should Answer

1. How does it define human rights violation? What are the different types of human rights violations committed by OPEC members?
2. Identify the specific group of people whose rights are being, or have been, violated, and the interest group that violates their rights.
3. With these violations continuing to take place the UN has proven unsuccessful to stopping such crimes. What steps should the UN take to push for major reforms with minimal collateral damage?
4. What should these reforms consist of? Should they involve uproot of cultural values? What possible repercussion will these reforms produce?
5. What can be done to hold OPEC members accountable without the threat of regional unrest?
6. Is it a human right to work? If so, are oil companies responsible for finding new employment for workers as oil reserves run out?
7. How will the member states of OPEC, as an economic organization, face the financial cost, or perhaps loss of competitiveness, that your resolution will bring?
8. How will you enforce your resolution? How do you prevent future human rights violation if military is involved and more conflicts will start?

Topic B: Environmental Repercussions and Decreasing Reserves

Introduction

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) functions as a moderator for global oil production.⁷⁵ The committee of five original members emerged in 1960 and has since grown in membership up until 2060. An important distinction to make is the difference between oil and petroleum. Petroleum on its own encompasses both crude oil and petroleum products; crude oil is a liquid mixture of hydrocarbons found in natural underground reservoirs, and petroleum products are created from refining crude oil and processing it with other liquids.⁷⁶ The committee strives to synchronize petroleum policies amongst the world's largest exporters. In doing so, OPEC aims to ensure equitable and efficient prices for producers and purchasers. However, managing petroleum extends far beyond the economics.

While petroleum fuels global processes and drives human activities, it comes at a high cost. The environmental repercussions of petroleum are immensely damaging to Earth and OPEC must acknowledge their accountability as a

⁷⁵ "Brief History," *Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2016. Web 10 Jun. 2016.
http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm.

⁷⁶ "Frequency Asked Questions," *Independent Statistics & Analysis: U.S. Energy Information Administration*, 3 Dec. 2015. Web 10 Jun. 2016.
<https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=40&t=6>.

prominent actor in the equation. Environmental repercussions vary in type, severity, and frequency. Processes like hydraulic fracturing and seismic surveys, accidents such as oil spills and offshore blowouts, and byproducts including greenhouse gas emissions and toxic waste are all inextricable components of the petroleum industry; thus, they are important factors that OPEC, as an international organization, must acknowledge.

It is a balancing act to weigh the many variables of petroleum production. In addition to considering the ecological effects of production, OPEC must also be cognizant of reserve levels and how much longer the world can afford to deplete them. The four major nonrenewable energy sources are crude oil, natural gas, coal, and uranium.⁷⁷ Unlike renewable energy sources such as wind or solar power, crude oil cannot be replenished in a short period of time. Since petroleum is refined crude oil, the Earth's supply of petroleum and petroleum products is finite.⁷⁸ Since approximately 1950, the world has become dependent on oil and natural gas as its principal energy sources.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ "Nonrenewable Energy Sources." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. U.S. Department of Energy, 16 June 2016. Web 10 July 2016.
http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/?page=nonrenewable_home.

⁷⁸ "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. U.S. Department of Energy, 16 June 2016. Web 10 July 2016.
http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm?page=oil_home.

⁷⁹ Kharaka, Yousif, Dorsey, Nancy, "Environmental Issues of Petroleum Exploration and Production: Introduction," *The American Association of Petroleum Geologists Division of Environmental Geosciences*, Jun. 2005,

Currently over 94 percent of the Earth's reserves are entirely or almost entirely depleted. By the end of 2060 the number of depleted reserves is projected to rise to 95 percent. At the current rate of usage, even if new reserves are discovered, it is likely that the globe will be drained of crude oil within the next few years. While many countries have increased their use of alternative energy sources and transferred significant portions of their consumption to renewable resources, the complete exhaustion of the planet's crude oil is monumental and difficult to prepare for. The international community has ample work to do in preparation for an Earth without oil all while also remembering the responsibility to prevent and ameliorate the harm brought onto the Earth in the all years of petroleum usage leading up to the current.

The two problems must be handled in conjunction: declining reserves prompt action that must consider the environmental repercussions. Similarly, the reduction of current environmental harm, prevention of future problems, and amelioration of past damage must be carefully considered as OPEC's role in the global petroleum process alters with decreasing petroleum. There is little use in expending exorbitant amounts of energy and money towards preventing environmental harm from petroleum production if the entire industry will be desolate in a few years. At the same time it would be reckless to completely disregard the effects of petroleum on the environment simply because the end of production is approaching quickly.

<http://toxics.usgs.gov/pubs/KharakaIntro.PDF>

Environmental Repercussions of Petroleum

OPEC as an organization currently has more members than ever before. While the increased size also brings increased global influence, more members make it more difficult to configure the logistics. Before some of the newer additions to the organization, most of its members were geographically concentrated in the Middle East and Africa. As of 2060 it is truly a global organization with members as far west as Canada and as far north as Norway. Currently OPEC owns about 89 percent of the world's crude oil reserves. Of the reserves owned by non-OPEC countries, Russia owns 80 percent of them. Yet with current consumption rates, all countries will soon own the same amount of reserves as they all shrink to nothing.

The creation of petroleum, from its first raw procurement to its final refined use, causes environmental harm in numerous ways. Seismic technique or seismic surveying is the process of determining oil wells that can potentially be drilled. On land seismic techniques often require the area be completely stripped of vegetation, thus destroying plants and animals that occupy the area. Underwater seismic surveying is may cause harm to the marine life.⁸⁰

Hydraulic fracturing is a newer oil production technique, recently growing in popularity, which works by fracturing or breaking rock arrangements (such as shale) with a high-pressure liquid (water mixed with various chemicals)⁸¹. This method, also

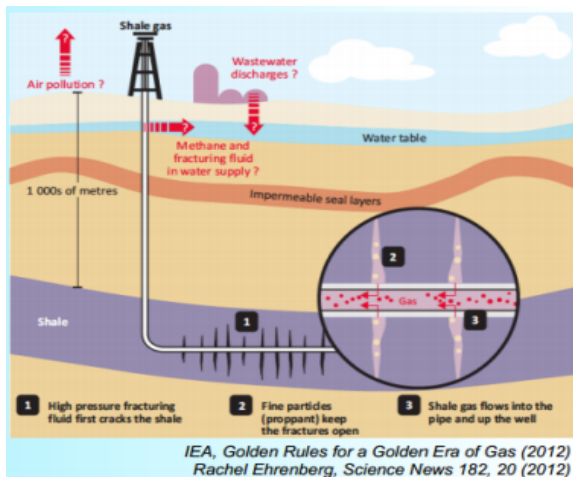
⁸⁰ "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. U.S. Department of Energy, 16 June 2016. Web 10 July 2016.

http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm?page=oil_home.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, "Oil: Crude and Petroleum."

referred to as “fracking” and illustrated in Figure 2 below, requires large amounts of water to rupture the shale. As a result the process creates potentially hazardous runoff to contaminate local environments, and the broken rock formations can result in earthquakes.⁸²

Figure 2: “Golden Rules for a Golden Era of Gas,”⁸³



Fracking fluid contains hundreds of chemicals including those that are known carcinogens, radioactive, and heavy metals.⁸⁴ Furthermore, companies conceal the composition of their fracking liquids under the claim that it is proprietary information that must be kept confidential so the true toxicity of the liquids used is unknown. The American Association of Pediatrics opines that human exposure to fracking fluid (directly or even indirectly) is extremely dangerous and can negatively impact an individual’s neurology, immune system, organs, skin, reproductive system, and endocrine system.⁸⁵ The lack of

legislature in the United States allows companies to practice fracking with minimal adherence to federal standards, thus posing a large risk to public health.⁸⁶

Of the many ways petroleum production harms the environment, oil spills are especially critical to address in this conference. Oil spills are accidents that intertwine the two topics of discussion; such events are both environmentally harmful and wasteful of an already limited resource. Oil spills exacerbate both the problem of environmental repercussions and that of declining; however, this concurrence is not solely disadvantageous. The relation to both topics of concern can serve as a powerful tool: the committee gains the ability to affect both problems simultaneously if oil spills are diminished.

These accidents can occur from many different types of sources: wells, rigs, pipelines, plants, refineries, automobiles ships, trucks, and trains.⁸⁷ In addition to the oil itself, oil spills often necessitate remediation and such operations can also be harmful to animals, plants, and their environments.⁸⁸ Toxic chemicals can be

⁸² Ibid., "Oil: Crude and Petroleum."

⁸³ Ibid., "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products."

⁸⁴ Ibid., "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products."

⁸⁵ Ibid., "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products."

⁸⁶ Ibid., "Oil: Crude and Petroleum Products."

⁸⁷ "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015." *The International Taker Owners Pollution Federation Limited*, 2015, Web 10 Jul. 2016.

http://www.itopf.com/fileadmin/data/Documents/Company_Lit/Oil_Spill_Stats_2016.pdf

⁸⁸ "How Oil Harms Animals and Plants in Marine." *Office of Response and Restoration*. US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service, n.d. Web 11 Jul. 2016.
<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oil-and-chemical-spills/oil-spills/how-oil-harms-animals-and-plants-marine-environments.html>.

found in both oil and the substances used to clean up the spills. These toxicants threaten the safety of plants and animals that come into contact with them. In some instances, oil spills endanger an entire species. The 1986 Bahia Las Minas oil spill in Panama depleted the coral species *Acorpora palmata* to near extinction. This eradication was directly linked to the oil spill because in other reefs that were not contaminated by oil the species grew in size by 38 percent.⁸⁹ The toxicity of oil spills in coral reef habitats is clearly evidenced by the inverse relationship between increased oil in the environment with diminishing size and diversity of the reefs.⁹⁰

After an oil spill, governments and organizations must determine the most appropriate response to the situation. The most common method is booming and skimming.⁹¹ The process uses booms to capture and contain spilled oil and skimmers to collect the concentrated oil slicks. Cleaning oil spills physically eliminates the dangers of using hazardous chemical; however, booming and skimming has limitations. Booms are largely ineffective in high currents, heavy waves, shallow waters, and coral reefs. Additionally, booms must be anchored and consistently upheld, so oil spills in desolate areas are difficult to maintain.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015." *The International Taker Owners Pollution Federation Limited*, 2015, Web 10 Jul. 2016.

⁹² "Residues from In Situ Burning of Oil on Water," *NOAA Office of Response and Restoration*, 2016. Web 10 Jul. 2016. <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/oil-and-chemical-spills/oil-spills/resources/residues-in-situ-burning-oil-water.html>.

An alternative to physically removing the oil from the water is disposing of it without removal. In-situ burning is a mechanism that eliminates oil from an oil spill by burning it. The two main advantages to this technique include the speed at which it can clean an area and the efficiency of removal. Over 90 percent of the oil spill is effectively removed when burned in-situ, which is by far the most efficient method of oil removal.⁹³ The process requires relatively minimal equipment, supervision, and results in minimal waste. There are minimal studies that provide concrete data on the potentially hazardous effects of the process on surrounding such as the toxicity of the residue produced. However, in-situ burning does produce extensive quantities of smoke that can threaten human, animal, and plant life.⁹⁴

Another method to clean oil spills is by spraying dispersants. Dispersants are chemicals that break the surface tension of oil and disperse or break apart large formations of oil slicks.⁹⁵ Breaking up large oil slicks can decrease the danger the oil spills pose to birds, turtles, and marine mammals and prevent oil from reaching delicate shoreline habitats.⁹⁶ However, while

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ "How Do Oil Spills Out At Sea Typically Get Cleaned Up?" *NOAA Office of Response and Restoration*, 17 Jun. 2015. Web 11 Jul. 2016.

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/how-do-oil-spills-out-sea-typically-get-cleaned.html>.

⁹⁶ "How Do Oil Spills Out At Sea Typically Get Cleaned Up?" *NOAA Office of Response and Restoration*, 17 Jun. 2015. Web 11 Jul. 2016.

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/about/media/how-do-oil-spills-out-sea-typically-get-cleaned.html>.

dispersants can be effective, their effects on the marine life are potentially dangerous.⁹⁷ Cleaning an oil spill requires careful calculation to determine the most beneficial trade-off. The best response varies depending on the unique circumstances of each accident; determining the most appropriate course of action requires careful analysis of the risk and benefits of the available options for that specific spill.

Oil spills are unintended incidents of oil waste; however, the frequency and quantity of spilt oil has continually decreased.⁹⁸ Disregarding certain anomaly years, generally oil spills are decreasing in both frequency and severity. In 1970 approximately 383,000 tonnes of oil were spilt; in 2015 total volume of lost oil was about 7,000 tonnes.⁹⁹ As evidenced in figure four, global accidental oil loss decreased by about 98 percent over the last forty-five years.¹⁰⁰ Such losses are both wasteful when handling a limited resource as well as environmentally detrimental because while a resource to humans, petroleum is largely toxic to other life forms.

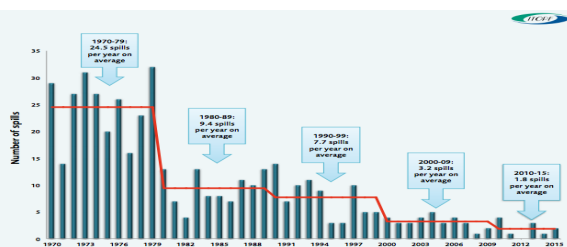


Figure 4: “Number of large spills (>700 tonnes)”¹⁰¹

Another more recent global trend is the break in the positive relationship between seaborne oil trade and oil spills. Figure 3 below illustrates the correlation, in which as the number of miles sailed for oil trade increased, so did the number of oil spills.¹⁰² However, this relationship ends around 1987. Instead the number of spills continued to decrease even as oil trade across the seas steadily increased – a testament to the global capability to protect the environment and reduce waste of an already diminishing resource.

The causes of oil spill depend on a variety of factors. The loading and discharging of oil causes about 40 percent of all small spills and only 29 percent of medium sized spills.¹⁰³ Yet causes can also show similarities across categories: about 46 percent of both small and medium oil spills are the result of malfunctioning equipment.¹⁰⁴ Knowing when and where oil spills occur most is crucial to reducing their occurrence. While the globe has clearly made massive improvements in reducing the volume of oil lost in accidental spills and the resulting environmental harm, there can always be improvement until the numbers reach zero.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., “Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015.”

⁹⁹ Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

¹⁰¹ “Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015.” *The International Taker Owners*

Pollution Federation Limited, 2015, Web 10 Jul. 2016.

¹⁰² Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

¹⁰³ Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

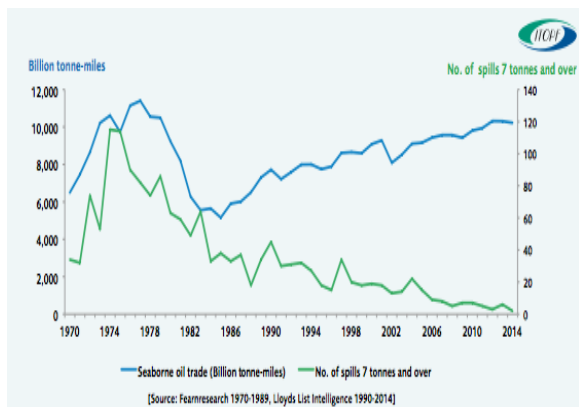


Figure 3: “Seaborne Oil Trade & Number of Tanker Spills 7 tonnes and over”¹⁰⁵

While oil spills catch public attention through media’s focus on such acute events, there are many manifestations of petroleum production’s environmental repercussions. Petroleum production and consumption dramatically expedites air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, and climate change on multiple levels.¹⁰⁶ In the U.S. companies that produce petroleum have often disregarded proper waste procedures resulting in the pollution of surrounding water and soil.¹⁰⁷ The toxicity of the petroleum released into the ecosystem can harm crop, wildlife, and humans. A study in Oklahoma found 34 percent of releases (both accidental leaks and spills as well as intentional improper disposal tactics) damaged water, livestock, crops, or wildlife.¹⁰⁸ In Wyoming researchers found a vast majority, 62 percent, of surveyed oil

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., "Oil Tanker Spill Statistics: February 2015."

¹⁰⁶ Yousif Kharaka, Nancy Dorsey, “Environmental Issues of Petroleum Exploration and Production: Introduction,” *The American Association of Petroleum Geologists Division of Environmental Geosciences*, Jun. 2005. Web 3 Aug. 2016. <http://toxics.usgs.gov/pubs/KharakaIntro.PDF>.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

fields did not take the necessary precautions to protect the surrounding ecosystem from entering the oil pits.¹⁰⁹

Past UN and International Action

As the demand for oil rose, methods of transporting it grew alongside it. In the late 1800s the first oil tankers emerged to ship hundreds of thousand tonnes of oil across the globe.¹¹⁰ As the ships grew to massive sizes, some people began to understand the dangers petroleum pollution would bring to the aquatic ecosystems. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil (OILPOL) convened in 1954, spearheaded by the United Kingdom, to establish maritime safety with regards to the recent increase in petroleum transportation.¹¹¹ The convention identified many significant conclusions on the causes behind oil pollution. For example the OILPOL convention determined that routine shipping processes, such as cleaning the tanks, were largely the cause of petroleum pollution.¹¹² In response, the convention created guidelines on many ship operations and prohibited those that threatened the environment. Multiple OPEC members signed OILPOL, yet only a single country, Kuwait, has ever submitted a report to IMO detailing enforcement activities.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ “Background,” *International Maritime Organization*, 2016, Web 5 Aug. 2016. <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Environment/PollutionPrevention/OilPollution/Pages/Background.aspx>.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Mitchel, Ronald, *Intentional Oil Pollution at Sea: Environmental Policy and Treaty Compliance* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 156.

The harmful nature of uncontrollable petroleum was further exemplified after a series of tanker accidents in 1976-1977, and nations from across the globe came together for the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (shortened to “MARPOL” for marine pollution).¹¹⁴ The convention was adopted in 1973 and then entered into force in 1983.¹¹⁵ Each of the six unique annexes regulations a form of pollution (oil, sewage, garbage, air pollution, noxious liquid substances, harmful packages carried over waters) and focuses on largely on prevention.¹¹⁶ Annex I requires new oil tankers to have additional precautions to prevent accidental oil discharge such as double hulls.¹¹⁷ Annex II guides proper waste procedures for noxious liquid substances by restricting the disposal to specific locations and under substance-specific conditions.¹¹⁸ Annex III addresses necessary shipping precautions such as labeling and quantity limits when transporting goods that are marine pollutants.¹¹⁹ Annex IV, V, and VI establish

methods of controlling sea pollution by restricting sewage discharge, requiring appropriate garbage disposal, and placing caps on airborne ship emissions such as sulfur and nitrogen oxides.¹²⁰ Countries can elect to ratify only certain annexes of MARPOL.

Currently 157 nations have ratified Annexes I/II, which must be ratified together.¹²¹ Annex V (delineating the proper garbage disposal mechanisms for ships) has the least ratifications with 89 nations.¹²² MARPOL is the largest global conventional to address ship pollution in its many forms, and most members of OPEC have ratified at least portions of the convention protocol.¹²³ Nations that have ratified some or all annexes of MARPOL include Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Qatar, Indonesia, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Nigeria, Ecuador, Gabon, Angola, the United States of America, and Russia.¹²⁴ Notably, one of OPEC’s founding members has not ratified any part of MARPOL: Iraq.¹²⁵ Yet despite the signatures of support, none of countries of OPEC have ever actively reinforced the parts of the

¹¹⁴ “International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL),” *International Maritime Organization*, 2016. Web 9 Aug. 2016. [http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-\(marpol\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-(marpol).aspx).

¹¹⁵ “International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL),” *International Maritime Organization*, 2016. Web 9 Aug. 2016. [http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-\(marpol\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/conventions/listofconventions/pages/international-convention-for-the-prevention-of-pollution-from-ships-(marpol).aspx).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ “Summary of Status of Conventions,” *International Maritime Organization*, 2016. Web. 10 Aug. 2015. <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/StatusOfConventions/Pages/Default.aspx>.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “Summary of Status of Conventions,” *International Maritime Organization*, 2016. Web. 10 Aug. 2015. <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/StatusOfConventions/Pages/Default.aspx>.

protocol.¹²⁶ A commitment to safe, environmentally conscious petroleum production extends beyond ratifying a document; the committee needs to discuss its role in handling countries that ignore its promises.

Even though nations differ in the treaties and conventions they choose to support and ratify, as an organization OPEC has continually advocated for conscientious petroleum production. Each member nation has signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which states signatories will prioritize the environment and its protection.¹²⁷ At the 2014 UN Climate Change Summit hosted in New York, delegations discussed air pollution – another significant repercussion of oil production.¹²⁸ Pollutants can be short-lived and long-lived; short-lived pollutants remain in the atmosphere for less than a few decades while long-lived pollutants can linger for hundreds or even thousands of years.¹²⁹ Pollutants including black carbon or soot, methane, tropospheric ozone, and hydrofluorocarbons are all classified as

short-lived climate pollutants.¹³⁰ However, the definition is wide-ranging as black carbon's lifetime in the atmosphere is usually a few days, meanwhile methane can persist for 12-15 years.¹³¹ A long-lived climate pollutant is carbon dioxide: 60 percent of the total released carbon dioxide remains for 100 years and even after 1,000 years 25 percent continues to pollute the atmosphere.¹³² Many of these climate pollutants result from petroleum production; reducing and preventing their release is important because many are not only detrimental to the ecosystem, but also to human health. In 2010 black soot caused nearly 7 million deaths.¹³³ Furthermore, many short-lived climate pollutants have heat-trapping properties and contribute largely to global climate change.¹³⁴ The average global temperature from 2010 to 2060 has risen by 0.82 degrees Celsius. The New York summit culminated with goals to reduce methane emissions methodically (while still ensuring companies remain profitable), increase alternatives for hydrofluorocarbons, and reduce climate pollutants from municipal solid waste.¹³⁵

However, as many UN countries and committees band together to pledge the globe first legally binding commitment to climate change, most OPEC members nations decided to refrain. A total of 195

¹²⁶ Ronald Mitchel, *Intentional Oil Pollution at Sea: Environmental Policy and Treaty Compliance* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 156.

¹²⁷ "OPEC and the Environment," *Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2016, http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/press_room/315.htm.

¹²⁸ "UN Climate Summit: What to Expect on Pollution Control," *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 16 Sept 2014. Web 14 Aug. 2015. <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/focus-on-petroleum-and-industry-at-23-september-un-climate-summit/>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² "UN Climate Summit: What to Expect on Pollution Control," *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 16 Sept 2014. Web 14 Aug. 2015.

<http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/focus-on-petroleum-and-industry-at-23-september-un-climate-summit/>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

countries signed the Paris Agreement in December 2015 with the ultimate goal to keep the increase in global temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius.¹³⁶ Although the countries that signed the Paris Agreement include 90 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, only two OPEC members made this pledge.¹³⁷ Only Algeria and Ecuador have signed onto the carbon-cutting objectives, while many large carbon emitters, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Nigeria, have remained silent in their environmental plans.¹³⁸ Many countries with economies that depend on petroleum production fear reducing emissions will negatively impact oil sales.¹³⁹ OPEC Secretary General, Abdalla Salem El-Badri, addressed the criticism on the lack of OPEC signatories on the Paris Agreement.¹⁴⁰ El-Badri readily acknowledged the importance of environmental protection and how it must be a concern to the globe.¹⁴¹

At the same time he highlighted that policies on sustainability must take into consideration equity; equity in that energy (such as petroleum) has fueled economic growth; development is necessary for safety, electricity, heating, cooling, transportation and other crucial facets to enhance quality of life to citizens of developing nations.¹⁴² Socio-economic growth often comes with

¹³⁶ “Paris Agreement,” *European Commission Climate Action*, 8 Oct. 2016. Web 9 Aug. 2016.

¹³⁷ Alex Pashley, “OPEC Chief Defends Members Over Missing Climate Pledge,” *Climate Home*, 10 Jun. 2015, Web 9 Aug. 2016.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ “OPEC Embraces Adoption of Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change,” 2016. Web 9 Aug. 2016.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

greenhouse gas emissions, El-Badri concedes; however, he emphasizes, “Climate actions need to consider the development needs of developing countries.”¹⁴³ He stresses that since the Paris Agreement includes language that countries focus on the environment in an equitable manner, so developing countries should have an equal opportunity as those that are already developed.¹⁴⁴ Over a billion people globally do not have access to electricity, and El-Badri argues such poverty that can be alleviated with energy (and petroleum) must take precedence over environmental concerns.¹⁴⁵ The balance between prioritizing the environment and prioritizing the economy is a difficult judgment for countries in which focusing on both seems mutually exclusive. Furthermore, the role of OPEC as an organization regarding these national decisions is one that needs to be clarified.

The Economies of Diminishing Reserves

An important factor to consider in the debate on developing countries and how to balance environmental concerns with economic needs is the supply of petroleum. Countries that have already developed were able to enjoy an abundant supply of petroleum; however, currently that is far from true. In 2014 petroleum accounted for about 33 percent of the globe’s primary energy source, currently that portion has increased to over 45 percent.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Miller, Steven Sorrell, “The Future of Oil Supply,” *The Royal Society: Philosophical Transactions Series A, Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering*

Furthermore, petroleum composes over 96 percent of transport energy uses – an entire percentage increase from earlier in the century despite global goals to reduce this dependency.¹⁴⁷ The production of oil is intensely concentrated in few countries and a small number of large fields; moreover, additional large fields are unlikely to be found as consumption rises substantially faster than production.¹⁴⁸ Reserve estimates are variable given they are calculated from assumptions that are subject to change including geology, economics, and available technology.¹⁴⁹

However, even if the current estimate of 6 percent remaining reserves is inaccurate, the eventual depletion of all reserves is inevitable and quickly approaching. Figure 4 illustrates that most large fields are old and have surpassed optimal production rates. Simultaneously, new fields of such petroleum-producing magnitudes are unlikely to be found at a rate to sufficiently fulfill the demand. While demand is increasing globally, it is not growing in every country or even every continent. Figure 5 illustrates growth in oil demand stratified by continents. Oil demand is largely concentrated in developing Asian countries – about 71 percent of the increased demand comes from that area with the top two users being China and India.¹⁵⁰ Contrastingly, America and Europe are

Sciences, 13 Jan. 2014. Web 8 Aug. 2016. <http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/372/2006/20130179>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ “2014 World Oil Outlook,” *Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*, 2014. Web 10 Aug. 2016.

https://www.opec.org/opec_web/static_files_project/media/downloads/publications/WO_O_2014.pdf.

decreasing in oil demand.¹⁵¹ The pattern of these demands correlate strongly to the development in the respective continents and countries.

Figure 4: “Breakdown of Global All-Liquids Production”¹⁵²

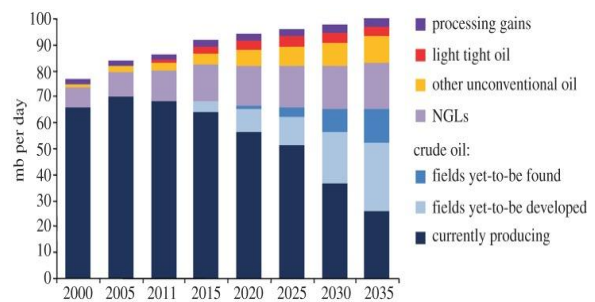
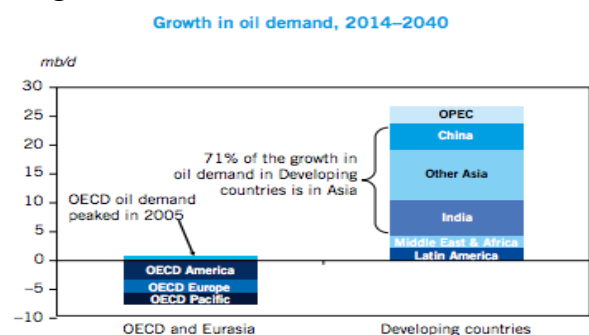


Figure 5: “Growth in Oil Demand”¹⁵³



Such a discrepancy between developed and developing nations causes difficulty in creating global agreements on policy. This committee includes countries with varying levels of development and petroleum needs, so it is imperative that any resolution this committee passes take into consideration the large range of needs.

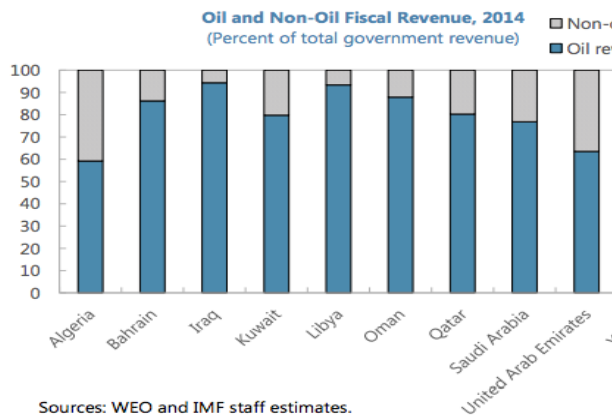
Even top petroleum producers and exporters realize the danger in oil dependency given its finite nature, so countries have recognized the need to prepare and adapt for an inescapable future without oil. In April of 2016 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led a meeting with Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

discuss economic diversification.¹⁵⁴ As petroleum is a non-renewable resource, new energy industries need to be substantially developed, so countries can redistribute the sources of energy-dependency.¹⁵⁵



Sources: WEO and IMF staff estimates.

Figure 6: “Oil and Non-Oil Fiscal Revenue (percent of total government revenue)”¹⁵⁶

Given petroleum’s finite nature, an economy that uses it as their primary energy source is simply unsustainable. When the oil-exporting industry accounts for most of a nation’s economy, the private, non-oil sector is often small. Such an uneven distribution of economic dependence results in what Manama calls “macroeconomic volatility”: a nation’s entire economy can be dramatically impacted when oil prices drop even slightly.¹⁵⁷ When oil revenues drop in a

country where it funds nearly an entire nation’s wellbeing, the government can compensate by reducing important public goods and services. Cuts like these create a vicious cycle because the reductions public spending are mostly in the non-oil sector, and as a result continue to prevent and restrict growth outside of the petroleum industry.¹⁵⁸ Economic diversification is not a simple task. Even in times of strong economic activity, a country can struggle with social, political or environmental concerns. Historically some countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Yemen have struggled with wars, thus making large economic rearrangements difficult.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, each country’s needs are different. In 2013 Saudi Arabia’s petroleum minister, Ali al-Naimi, spearheaded the creation of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, which he intends will lead the nation in a world without petroleum.¹⁶⁰ Naimi believes the institution will expedite Saudi Arabia’s diversification efforts by focusing on scientific and commercial developments using on the country non-oil resources: “sun, sand, and saltwater.”¹⁶¹

OPEC must consider its role in directing economic diversification in its member nations. It is an organization built on the need to unify petroleum across the

¹⁵⁴ Bahrain Manama, “Economic Diversification in Oil-Exporting Arab Countries,” *International Monetary Fund*, Apr. 2016, Web 10 Aug. 2016, <https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2016/042916.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵⁷ Bahrain Manama, “Economic Diversification in Oil-Exporting Arab Countries,” *International Monetary Fund*, Apr. 2016, Web 10 Aug. 2016, <https://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2016/042916.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Waldman, “Saudi Arabia’s Plan to Extend the Age of Oil,” *Bloomberg Markets*, 12 Apr. 2015, Web 10 Aug. 2016 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-12/saudi-arabia-s-plan-to-extend-the-age-of-oil>.

¹⁶¹ Peter Waldman, “Saudi Arabia’s Plan to Extend the Age of Oil,” *Bloomberg Markets*, 12 Apr. 2015, Web 10 Aug. 2016 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-12/saudi-arabia-s-plan-to-extend-the-age-of-oil>.

globe; however, it is an organization built to manage a finite resource. When the world's oil is entirely exhausted, will the organization restructure its role in the global economy or will it disband? The time to make that decision is quickly approaching. However, it is also important to for the organization

Bloc Positions

The global environment should be a vested interest for all nations present. And as the last reserves begin to diminish, OPEC needs to prepare for the world to be an entirely new place – one without petroleum. It is in each country and region's best interest to determine the mechanisms and responsibilities towards the present environment and prepare for a future without petroleum. Each major region's perspective on environmental repercussions and diminishing reserves is shaped by its unique historical, economic, and political happenings.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, the de facto leader of OPEC and largest exporter of petroleum, has led OPEC through many of the its past decisions and policies.¹⁶² In October of 1973 Saudi Arabia pioneered the decision to halt oil supply to the U.S. and supporters to demonstrate disagreement over the U.S. pro-Israeli policies in the Middle East.¹⁶³ A

¹⁶² Bright E. Okogu, "The Middle East and North Africa in a Changing Oil Market," *International Monetary Fund*, 2003, Web 11 Aug. 2016 <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/med/2003/eng/okogu/okogu.htm>.

¹⁶³ Chris Miller, "OPEC's Control Over Global Oil Prices Slips Away," *Yale Global*

couple years later in the 1980s OPEC decided to implement a production cap to maintain high oil prices. Saudi Arabia complied but many other countries did not, thus Saudi's proportion of OPEC's total petroleum production plummeted.¹⁶⁴ In response, Saudi Arabia dramatically increased their production and cut oil prices in half – a price drop that lasted approximately two years.¹⁶⁵ Due to the tumultuous history, Saudi Arabia is often skeptical on OPEC deals as many other organization members have proven unfaithful - particularly Iran and Saudi's largest geopolitical rival.¹⁶⁶ Even as one of the globe's top producers, Saudi Arabia has shown tangible success in diversifying the nation's economy to reduce their dependency on petroleum.¹⁶⁷ This experience can be valuable in this committee as many other nations are still struggling or even only starting to wean off petroleum dependency.

Online, 26 Apr. 2016, Web 11 Aug. 2016 <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/opec%E2%80%99s-control-over-global-prices-slips-away>.

¹⁶⁴ Chris Miller, "OPEC's Control Over Global Oil Prices Slips Away," *Yale Global Online*, 26 Apr. 2016, Web 11 Aug. 2016 <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/opec%E2%80%99s-control-over-global-prices-slips-away>.

¹⁶⁵ Chris Miller, "OPEC's Control Over Global Oil Prices Slips Away," *Yale Global Online*, 26 Apr. 2016, Web 11 Aug. 2016 <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/opec%E2%80%99s-control-over-global-prices-slips-away>.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., "OPEC's Control Over Global Oil Prices Slips Away."

Middle East

The countries in the Middle East constitute a large portion of OPEC. Especially important is that the region holds 95 percent of OPEC's spare capacity, so the organization's Middle Eastern members will supply the final barrels of oil.¹⁶⁸ However, the region has long struggled with a turbulent history both nationally and internationally. Fueled by competing religious ideologies, territory disputes, extremist groups, political turbulence, and years of war, the region is still recovering from historical conflicts and still managing current issues.¹⁶⁹ In this committee it is important for the individual countries to consider their nations uniqueness with regards to its history, development, strengths, and weakness.

Asia

Asia has seen the largest increase in oil consumption out of all regions.¹⁷⁰ India and China are undoubtedly Asia's two largest consumers of oil; in 2030 the countries consumed 3,700 and 1,161 million tonnes respectively.¹⁷¹ The number of vehicles in China is growing dramatically and largely responsible for the corresponding rise in oil consumption.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., "The Middle East and North Africa in a Changing Oil Market."

¹⁶⁹ Anup Shah, "The Middle East Conflict," *Global Issues* 30 Jul. 2016 Web 10 Aug. 2016.

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/119/the-middle-east-conflict-a-brief-background>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., "World Oil Outlook 2014."

¹⁷¹ "Climate Change in Asia," *Environmental Journalism In Asia-Pacific*, 2013. Web 11 Aug. 2016.

<http://ejap.org/environmental-issues-in-asia/energy-consumption.html>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

India is projected to be the most populous country, but still consume less energy than China and the U.S.¹⁷³ As a result China, India and other large Asian importers including Japan and South Korea, have created a heavy dependence on the Middle East. At the same time to alleviate this reliance on a politically unstable region, many Asian countries have redirected imports to be supplied from Russia and central Asia.¹⁷⁴ However, importing from many different regions can make it difficult when those nations disagree and importers have to make difficult decisions. Furthermore, given the size of the Asian continent there is substantial variation not only in regards to how much each nation imports but also its economy and development.

The Americas

The Americas are home to many nations that lead the world in production. The International Energy Agency predicted that by 2020 the U.S. would produce more oil than Saudi Arabia; however, this lead is only expected to last a few years after which Saudi Arabia is expected to regain momentum.¹⁷⁵ The U.S. has also been steadily decreasing importing and relying more on domestic petroleum resources. Prior

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Pablo Bustelo, "Oil. China and Oil in the Asian Pacific Region: Rising Demand for Oil," *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 2007. Web 11 Aug. 2016.

<http://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp/vol21/iss2/16/>.

¹⁷⁵ Lananh Nguyen, "Is it Time for the U.S. to Join OPEC?" *Bloomberg*, 15 Nov. 2012. Web 11 Aug. 2016.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-11-15/is-it-time-for-the-u-dot-s-dot-to-join-opec>.

to joining the organization, the U.S. experienced conflict with OPEC and many of its member nations due to disagreement on pricing and production caps. Additionally, the U.S.-Mexico High Level Economic Dialogue between the United States, Mexico, and Canada established economic cooperation as a priority in order to achieve energy cooperation.¹⁷⁶ The relationship between these North American countries is crucial for Mexico's development and the U.S. energy demand.¹⁷⁷ Further south, Latin America holds 20 percent of the globe's known oil reserves; Venezuela triumphs over Saudi Arabia in this category.¹⁷⁸ Venezuela is a strong force in the petroleum market, but the country is financially unable to produce to its full capacity without foreign investment.¹⁷⁹ Brazil struggles with a similar problem: the country is attempting to extract the billions of barrels of oil trapped undersea. The only way to successfully capture those reserves will require substantial environmental disruption, harm, and extensive funding.¹⁸⁰ The Americas own many of the globe's untapped reserves; however, individual nations have starkly different concerns, and even nations with similar problems have

¹⁷⁶ Clare Seelke, Michael Ratner, M. Angeles Villarreal, Phillip Brown, "Mexico's Oil and Gas Sector," *Congressional Research Service*, 28 Sept. 2015. Web 11 Aug. 2016. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43313.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Stephanie Garlow "Who Holds the World's Oil?" *Public Radio International Global Post*, 18 Jul. 2011. Web 11 Aug. 2016. <http://www.pri.org/stories/2011-07-18/who-holds-worlds-oil>.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

distinctive resources, thus eliminating the possibility of a single solution.

Africa

Nigeria, Angola, and other African countries show some of the globe's rapidly growing economies.¹⁸¹ A dependency on oil, both for imports and exports, causes developing economies to fluctuate with global oil prices. When oil prices plummet, corrupt governments react by devaluing local currencies – ultimately, harming citizens the most.¹⁸² Nigeria is the continent's largest oil producer; however, the industry is plagued with militants, corrupt officials, spills, and theft.¹⁸³ It is important to consider how this committee can effectively address corrupt governments evident in many African nations with regards to issues such as economic diversification.

Questions a Resolution Should Answer

1. Given petroleum production's undeniable harm to the environment, do OPEC member nations have an obligation to mediate these environmental repercussions? If so, what is OPEC's role in determining such obligations and under what conditions?

¹⁸¹ "Top 20 Oil Producing Countries in Africa," *African Vault*, 2013. Web 11 Aug. 2016. <http://www.africanvault.com/oil-producing-countries-in-africa/>.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Top 20 Oil Producing Countries in Africa," *African Vault*, 2013. Web 11 Aug. 2016. <http://www.africanvault.com/oil-producing-countries-in-africa/>.

2. If environmental responsibility is agreed upon, what are the conditions? Will the committee only call for changes to current and future processes or is remediation for past harms also necessary?
3. If the committee establishes specific environmental standards, should the standards adjust to take into consideration a country's unique standing (such as development status) or should they be global guidelines?
4. How should the committee alter its petroleum-policies (production, pricing, exporting, etc.) given the approaching end of such processes? What mechanisms should be implemented to prepare for a world without petroleum?
5. Should OPEC continue to exist once there are no longer any petroleum-exporting countries? Would the global economy at that point benefit from its restructuring or would the organization be outdated?
6. Given how many of its members depend on petroleum for economic stability, does OPEC have a responsibility to encourage national economic diversity? If so, how can a single policy or recommendation fit the needs of so many unique nations?
7. Even though reserves are dwindling and even after their complete depletion, revenues from oil will not halt so suddenly. Where should current and future petroleum profits be directed? To help the environment, to diversify economy, a combination of both, or some place else entirely?

Conclusion

As the world oil market developed and grew, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries joined together and directed the market's growth. As its member nations owned and controlled a substantial number of the globe's petroleum reserves, the organization was able to guide the growth of the globe fueled by oil. From 1973 – 1974 large oil companies largely controlled the market.¹⁸⁴ During these years the rights were transferred from companies to countries, and the oligopolistic oil market shifted most control to OPEC.¹⁸⁵ As petroleum demand increased globally, the committee's responsibilities grew accordingly.

However, while petroleum developed and advanced economies, its production also harmed environments. Although oil is a non-renewable resource and thus the globe will eventually run out of the finite resource, the environment does not have the same inevitable end date. It is difficult for countries to balance competing priorities; defining the role of OPEC in the situation is even more challenging.

Simultaneously, nations must remain conscious on how to best handle a limited resource – especially currently as its end quickly approaches. Global demand for oil rises to unprecedented heights and current reserves cannot fulfill the demand for long. With the unlikelihood of immense new reserve discoveries, this committee should prepare for the more likely depletion of

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., “The Middle East and North Africa in a Changing Oil Market.”

¹⁸⁵ Bright E. Okogu, “The Middle East and North Africa in a Changing Oil Market,” *International Monetary Fund*, 2003, Web 11 Aug. 2016
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/med/2003/eng/okogu/okogu.htm>.

petroleum. This committee is tasked with a difficult agenda; the past, the present, and the future all require its attention, careful consideration, and action.