

UN Panel

Decision Makers



You will keep control of the debate and will be the overall decision-makers at the end.

At the beginning of the meeting, one member of your panel will need to read this statement out below.

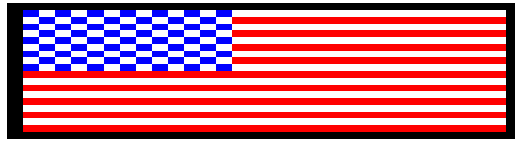
“I would like to welcome the member countries here today. This is an international conference to decide what to do about the growing problem of waste disposal. We all understand that landfill is no longer an option for waste disposal due to the lack of space on our massively polluted planet.

Also we are concerned that some countries are shipping waste to other countries to deal with. The United Nations would like to hear suggestions from all countries and will then create a new ‘Global Waste Policy’ that will become international law.”

When all the countries have prepared their cases, please say the sentence below.

We would like to hear from America first.

United States of America



America is a large country and is one of the world's largest consumers of food and household goods. For example, most Americans have more than one car, several TVs, washing machines, dishwashers, second homes, very large fridges, many computers and mobile phones etc.

They are also one of the largest producers of waste. **America's recycling rate of 30%** is quite good.

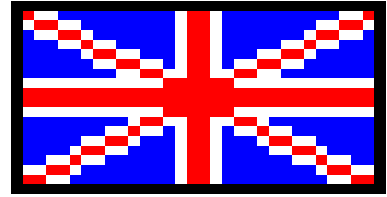
There are three main points you wish to raise at this conference.

America would like to continue to ship some of its waste to China, as this helps them to control the amount of rubbish going to disposal. Americans argue that by sending their rubbish to China they are helping the poorest Chinese people earn money and live a better life.

America and the UK have been discussing the possibility of building large incinerators outside New York and London to burn some of their waste.

You do not think that America should be forced into buying less goods. You have a right to buy as much as you like.

United Kingdom



The United Kingdom has one of the worst recycling rates in Europe. They only recycle 23% and need to increase this to 30% by 2010 or the UK will be fined by the EU. The UK has a big problem because it used to landfill 60% of its waste and this is now just building up in piles across the country.

The UK has some recycling facilities in place, including kerbside recycling boxes. However, only a small number of homes in the UK have a recycling box and we only have a limited amount of recycling factories.

The main points you wish to raise are:

London would like to build a large incinerator to burn waste from the UK and other countries. This will have many benefits; creating jobs and helping the economy by charging other countries to burn their waste.

The UK also argues that if they are burning their own waste, then they will no longer need to send some of the UK's waste to China or India.

We currently only have a few factories that can recycle metal, glass, paper, textiles and type 1 and 2 plastics. Should we invest in more factories and what about the other plastics and nappies etc?

Germany



The Germans are very serious about recycling. They have a recycling rate of 58%. Germany is very concerned that other countries are not recycling as much as they are.

In Germany, people are punished by having to pay fines if they are caught putting things in their bin which could be recycled.

It is also very expensive to dispose of waste in Germany, so many people prefer to recycle using their kerbside recycling bins.

The main points that you need to bring up are:

Germany is concerned that America is prepared to let other countries deal with America's waste and believe this to be totally unfair.

Germany recommends that if the UK has an incinerator it should charge other countries to burn their waste and then use that money to develop more recycling schemes and factories. Germany would not want all countries to invest in incineration.

Germany also suggests that the UK might want to introduce recycling fines to people who do not recycle.

Sweden



Sweden recycles 41% of its rubbish, but Swedes also reuse much of their rubbish and try to reduce and compost their waste too.

The Swedes look after their environment and are very concerned about anything that may harm their countryside.

Years ago, when the UK burned a lot of coal for energy, some of the pollution from the factories travelled through the atmosphere and mixed with rain. This rain then fell in Sweden as 'Acid Rain' and caused many of their forests to die.

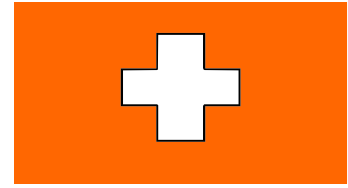
The main points that Sweden will need to bring up in the conference are:

Sweden is worried that if more incinerators are built then there will be more pollution from the chimney stacks that could cause acid rain and harm Sweden's environment.

Sweden believes that we should all carry on trying to recycle more and encourage more reusing, like reusing plastic bags, real nappies etc and trying to stop people buying things wrapped in plastic.

Sweden also takes back old drinks bottles to be refilled and used again, and thinks more countries should adopt this scheme.

Switzerland



Switzerland is the best recycler in Europe and recycles over 65% of its waste.

People in Switzerland are punished if they throw away things like paper and glass that can be recycled. They can be fined up to 100 Swiss francs, which is £35!

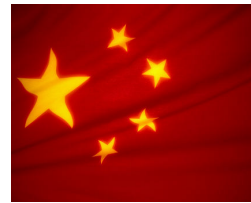
The main points that Switzerland wants to put across in the Conference are:

People in America and the UK should be fined for not recycling, as Swiss people are.

Switzerland does not believe that America and the UK should send their waste to China, because the Chinese people are suffering health problems caused by sorting through this rubbish. They think Americans and the UK should take responsibility for their own waste and stop being so greedy!

More countries should try to encourage reusing of waste to make things and use things again like plastic bags. More investment is needed in compostable and recyclable plastics.

China



China is a developing country and does recycle some materials like plastic bottles. They do reuse their waste more than other countries because they cannot afford to buy new things. There are no recycling percentages for China as there is no system for recording the work people do.

Some Chinese people earn a living by sorting through rubbish and taking bits that may be valuable. These people are called 'Rubbish Pickers'. However, this occupation can be a health risk because rubbish dumps can contain dangerous chemicals, sharp needles and rats.

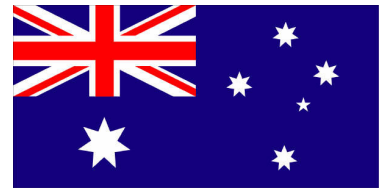
The main points China would like to mention during the Conference are:

China is worried about its people becoming ill from sorting through waste from America and the UK. They would like these countries to help them by giving them proper factories to work in within a safe environment.

Chinese people are worried about the proposal to build a large incinerators in England and America because they may lose their jobs and they will not be able to feed their families.

If more countries did reuse their waste and buy more recycled products, then China could make items from rubbish to sell in the UK and America.

Australia



Australia is an enormous country and it is only in the larger cities that waste has been a problem. To solve this, Australia introduced kerbside recycling boxes 10 years ago and now has a fantastic recycling rate of 65% and 42 % of the population own a compost bin.

Australia is not really affected by the issue of building a large incinerator in America or the UK because they are so far away, but they do have some concerns about the Chinese people.

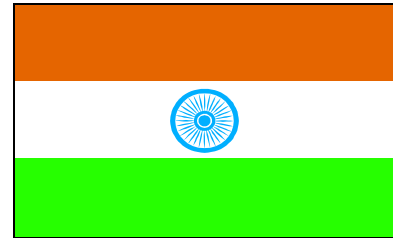
The main points that Australia would like to bring up at the Conference are:

They are worried about the people in China and would like the UK and America to think of other ways to reduce their waste.

Australia has suggested that America and the UK should include more recycling in their kerbside boxes, as Australia started this 10 years ago and now have an excellent recycling rate, and collects over 12 different materials.

Australia has invented a Zero Waste Policy which encourages more reusing of waste. Some of the ways Australia did this was to provide all homes with cotton reusable bags to go shopping with and taking bottles back to be refilled when empty instead of buying new bottles. Shops in Australia also refuse to sell products that are over-packaged or if you can't recycle the packaging.

India



India has no incinerators, they pile all of their rubbish into dumps. These are not buried as in landfills, but just continue to grow higher and higher in size. Approximately 50% of India's rubbish is recycled by 'Rubbish Pickers' and unorganised schemes.

India is worried that thousands of children work on the rubbish dumps, getting injured and ill. They would rather these children were in school.

The main points you wish to raise are:

If people didn't send their rubbish to India to be disposed of then the rubbish pickers would have less work and would starve. They know that their jobs are dangerous but it means they can raise money without stealing or begging.

India would like to be paid better for sorting other people's rubbish so they could pay to have some schooling for all children.

Sometimes India thinks that countries like America should simply reduce their waste. Each American throws away roughly 1.8kg of waste a day. In India each person throws away only 0.4kg of waste a day.