  

Country: Republic of Finland

Committee: United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP),

Agenda: Environmental Problems Regarding Cities

**About Finland**

The nation of Finland is located in northern Europe. Finland, which is geographically isolated and among the most northern countries in the world, experiences a severe climate. Finland serves as a symbolic northern border separating eastern and western Europe, characterised by thin forests and Russia to the east, and Sweden and the Gulf of Bothnia to the west. With dense woodlands covering nearly two-thirds of the territory, it is the most densely forested nation in Europe.

**Current Situation**

Urban development tends to harm biodiversity and widen the gap between people and nature. Urban areas impact land-use change, climate change, nitrogen deposition, and invasive species, resulting in biodiversity loss.

Urbanisation ranks as the third major threat to species on the IUCN Red List. Cities' ecological impact goes beyond just the plants and animals within them, contributing to urban growth. Investing in ecosystem conservation is crucial to tackle the biodiversity crisis and encourage a healthier, sustainable future. It's crucial to keep nature in mind when planning urban areas for a better future. Putting money into nature makes sense because it offers affordable answers to air pollution, flood prevention, and climate change adaptation.

Urban growth patterns often widen the divide between people and nature, putting biodiversity at risk. Urban areas play a significant role in the decline of biodiversity because of invasive species, climate change, nitrogen deposition, and alterations in land use. According to the IUCN Red List, industrialization is considered the third most significant threat to species. Urban development thrives on the ecological footprint of cities, extending beyond urban biodiversity. Tackling the biodiversity problem and pushing for a greener, healthier future involves putting resources into protecting ecosystems.

Thinking about the future, it's important to keep nature in mind when planning cities. Investing in nature is a smart move because it provides cost-effective ways to mitigate air pollution, preventing floods, and adapting to climate change.

**Finland’s National Climate Policy**

Finland’s Climate Act, which came into force on 1 July 2022, sets emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2050, with a goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2035. The Act aims to reduce emissions by -60% by 2030, -80% by 2040, and -90% by 2050, with a target of -95% by 2050. It also includes a target for stronger carbon sinks in the land use sector. Negotiations with the Sámi Parliament are required for climate policy planning. The Act will be supplemented with an obligation for municipalities to create climate plans and provisions for requests for review. The Act’s impact is based on the climate policy planning system, with annual climate reports published to monitor targets and measures sufficiency.

**Possible Solutions**

Preserving agricultural land in urban areas can help reduce supply chains and lower CO2 emissions during food transportation from rural to urban areas. Advocating for the production and sale of fresh food within the city can help lessen the environmental effects of food distribution, create more inclusive local supply chains, and enhance access to healthy foods, such as through farmers’ markets.

Urban areas are responsible for consuming a significant portion of the global food supply, yet a large amount of it goes to waste. Causes of food waste differ across regions worldwide, with poor food planning, inadequate packaging, improper storage, and cultural practices all playing a role in the issue. Food waste can be significantly decreased by implementing citywide programmes for recovering nutritious food that is safe and donating it to food banks and charities, composting, or using leftover food to create energy.

Moreover, leftover food that isn't recycled or repurposed is piling up in the landfills. There, as it breaks down, it produces methane, a greenhouse gas that has a more detrimental impact on the environment compared to CO2. This situation is not only about wasting food, but also about squandering energy, finances, and valuable natural resources like land and water that are essential for food production. Implementing citywide initiatives to recover safe and nutritious food, redistribute it through charities and food banks, compost, or convert discarded food into energy can significantly reduce food waste.

Furthermore, putting into action sustainable city, eco-city, or green city is a city that is carefully planned to have positive effects on society, the economy, and the environment, while also providing a safe and stable home for current residents and preserving resources for future generations. With the main goals to minimise energy, water, and food inputs, while also reducing waste, heat output, air pollution, CO2, methane, and water pollution.

**References**

[**https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/cities/cities-and-climate-change#:~:text=Rising%20global%20temperatures%20causes%20sea,housing%2C%20human%20livelihoods%20and%20health**](https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/cities/cities-and-climate-change#:~:text=Rising%20global%20temperatures%20causes%20sea,housing%2C%20human%20livelihoods%20and%20health)**.**

[**https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/cities-and-the-environment/**](https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/cities-and-the-environment/)

[**https://pachamama.org/effects-of-deforestation#:~:text=The%20loss%20of%20trees%20and,for%20a%20number%20of%20reasons**](https://pachamama.org/effects-of-deforestation#:~:text=The%20loss%20of%20trees%20and,for%20a%20number%20of%20reasons)**.**

[**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable\_city#:~:text=A%20sustainable%20city%2C%20eco%2Dcity,generations%20to%20experience%20the%20same**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_city#:~:text=A%20sustainable%20city%2C%20eco%2Dcity,generations%20to%20experience%20the%20same)**.**

[**https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1260457/**](https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1260457/)