UPrep Model United Nations 2026

OPEC

United Nations Assembly on the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

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Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you to the OPEC committee at the 3rd Annual Uprep Model United Nations Conference! It's so exciting to see so many of you take an interest in this committee and we cannot wait to see all of the interesting ideas and solutions you come up with (With maybe a few debates sprinkled in there)! In this committee, us Diases hope you will develop a deeper (And possibly new) understanding of how oil shapes many aspects of our world both economically and politically, as well as coming up with new and innovative ideas and compromises regarding the efficiency and sustainability of this keystone industry. There are so many ways this committee could turn out over the course of this conference, and we are sure that every way is just as exciting and engaging as the last. A future where sustainability and economic development go hand in hand is a possibility, but it is up to you as delegates to figure out what that looks like and how you will make it a reality.

Best Regards,
Your Daises; Davis, Chelan, Jaya, Sadie

Committee Overview

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1960 at the Baghdad Conference by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. OPEC largely focuses on the coordination of petroleum policies to maintain a stable oil market with regular supply to consumers. It aims to "unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers." OPEC's current 13 member countries span all over the world and together, those countries make up over 40% of the world's oil exports. OPEC largely focuses on the coordination of petroleum policies to maintain a stable oil market with regular supply to consumers, and the member countries have the power to shift the oil market all over the world. In an increasingly pivotal time for the global energy market, as companies are increasingly shifting towards various forms of renewable energy, OPEC has begun to focus on incorporating sustainable oil practices into its current oil markets. In recent years, the oil market has faced global pressure to shift to renewable forms of energy, which has caused spikes in the price of oil across the market. To stay on top of modern needs, OPEC has begun to approach incorporating sustainable oil practices into its current oil markets. In this committee, delegates will work together to balance the need for affordable, accessible oil with climate consciousness at this pivotal time. Countries will tackle ways to establish and implement climate-conscious regulations, while balancing them with their economic growth and global financial stability. Do you want to learn more about the impacts of oil on the environment and work with your peers to establish environmentally sustainable regulations while also having the power to bring the global economy crashing down with one decision? This committee is for you.

Topic A:

Balancing the Goals of Oil-Dependent Nations With the Increasing Demand for Renewable Energy.

Topic Introduction

For centuries, oil has served as the world's primary energy source, shaping the global economy, geopolitics, and energy systems. This trillion-dollar industry is crucial for transportation, electricity, and production around the world, making oil crucial not only to economic activity but also to daily life. However, in recent years, the energy sector has undergone profound transformations as an increasing number of countries recognize and prioritize the transition to renewable energy in response to climate change.

As the world's major oil producers and exporters, OPEC member countries play a significant role in this transition. The ongoing shift to renewable energy presents challenges for oil-dependent countries whose economies are heavily reliant on hydrocarbon exports for revenue and economic growth. Despite challenges, many countries have begun to integrate renewable energy projects, including solar, wind, hydro, biomass, geothermal, and thermal power, to promote environmental sustainability. While these energy sources can offer increased diversification and efficiency, they also raise concerns about economic stability and security, particularly in nations that are still heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Finding a balance between maintaining economic growth and meeting environmental goals is therefore at the forefront of global energy policy.

At the moment, various nations have gone in different directions to suit their nation's best interests. In July of 2025, several major oil-producing members of OPEC, including Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, agreed to increase their combined oil production by 548,000 barrels per day. While increasing output levels to meet market demand and working to lower oil prices, this increased production comes at the cost of higher emission rates. At the same time, other countries such as the United Kingdom have created strict guidelines to control oil production and exportation, which require oil projects to assess environmental impacts and carbon emissions, both in terms of production and consumption. These contrasting approaches demonstrate the complexity of prioritizing both economic interest and environmental protection, as well as the urgent need for the unification of OPEC so countries can work towards shared goals. As nations around the world continue to navigate this transition, the challenge to meet an equilibrium across the global market remains. Addressing this issue will be critical for ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for global energy.

Past Action

OPEC's tension and difficulty with sustainability is not a new thing. Protecting the economic and political interests of its member countries while attempting to acknowledge the environmental impact of the oil industry has been a constant struggle going back decades. In the past, OPEC's stance on sustainability and the environment has been very defensive, with member countries constantly stressing the benefits of the current and well established system over causing instability and uncertainty by attempting to switch to more sustainable methods. As of 2024, the combined share of oil, gas, and coal in the global energy market has maintained about an 80% majority. This in fact is only slightly lower than when OPEC was first established back in the 1960s. This reality has been the basis of the argument for sustained investment in the current oil industry.

Despite this however, OPEC and its member nations HAVE taken steps towards incorporating sustainability into their industry while simultaneously defending oil's position in the global economy. Over the years, OPEC has stressed that the central possibility for sustainability in the oil industry is not the elimination of fossil fuels, but rather the incorporation of cleaner methods of these fossil fuel technologies such as carbon capture and storage. The OPEC Fund for International Development has committed nearly $3.3 billion to climate related projects to date with renewables accounting for nearly ⅓ of its private sector operations. OPEC has also set a goal to establish a 40% climate finance share by 2030.

Despite these efforts however, OPEC and its climate related actions have come under harsh criticism. Some nations argue that while 3.3 billion dollars is a lot of money, it is not nearly proportional to the vast majorities of money oil exportation brings into many of these counties. For comparison, Saudi Arabia makes nearly 220 billion dollars alone from their oil exports. In addition, the gap between stated sustainability intentions by OPEC and real life, boots on the ground action have left much to be desired. OPEC continues to urge countries to resist reforms targeted specifically at their oil industries rather than just the emissions produced from them.

Overall, some solid ideas and commitments have been expressed by OPEC in years past. However, if these ideas are to become reality, it will take much more cooperation.

Current Situation

As of recently, OPEC and OPEC+ are going through some of the most complicated times in the history of the organization. In addition, these troubles are not only limited to the OPEC+ member countries, but also affect many countries around the world whose economies rely heavily on oil imports and exports. During the year 2025, OPEC increased its oil production quotas by an average of 2.9 million barrels per day despite deliberately decreasing it in prior years in order to maintain high prices. However, this strategy met certain obstacles. The lower global demand for oil combined with the higher supply of that very substance from both OPEC and the U.S. made many fear the possibility of oversupply of the product in 2026, therefore pushing prices down. That is why Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, UAE, and other prominent OPEC+ countries decided not to increase production in 2026 due to market circumstances, hoping that prices would go back up.

Geopolitical aspects of the oil industry have only further complicated an already unpredictable situation. In early 2026, the use of force in the Middle East caused prices of Brent crude oil to increase significantly, from roughly $71 per barrel to $94 per barrel in less than two weeks. In addition, due to the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, through which passes approximately 20% of all oil produced worldwide, prices have skyrocketed even further. These examples are just one way in which such a delicate balance between stability and crisis must be managed better by OPEC and its allied countries going forward if oil prices are to remain stable. At its November 2025 meeting, OPEC+ confirmed current production goals for the remainder of 2026 and introduced a method of evaluating the maximum sustainable output capability of each country, establishing production goals for 2027.

In addition to managing production levels and prices, the issue of oil reliance versus climate consciousness has led to a reevaluation of the future among the OPEC countries. Even though global demand for crude oil continues to increase to more than 104 million barrels per day in 2026 due to economic development in Asia, the global trend is moving away from this baseline of crude oil. This means that growth in the oil market is increasingly constricted by the shift toward renewable energy sources across the globe which is increasing climate considerations and energy portfolio diversification among the largest oil-reliant countries. Therefore, for the organization itself, the task at hand is not simply that of maintaining supply and demand, but that of changing the way counties think about this traditional source of energy to a more climate conscious mindset to ensure that petroleum remains a viable and controllable energy source in an increasingly renewable world.

Case Studies

Case Study #1: Morocco

Morocco, being one of the largest energy importers in Middle East and North Africa (MENA), has made impressive efforts to reduce its reliance on imported fossil fuels. In 2022, Morocco spent around US$13.5 billion on all energy imports (crude oil and oil products, coal, natural gas and electricity), averaging to 362 dollars per capita. This includes the most expensive solar power project in the world, costing 9 billion US dollars and on track to generate 3 GW of solar power by the year 2028. Projects are stationed in five locations, with the 500MW Solar Power Complex at Ouarzazate the largest in the world. This has led to tangible results, and from 2012 to 2022, Moroccan renewable energy rose from 2.92% to 6.62%. Morocco has pledged to achieve a 52% renewable energy share by 2030 and 70% by 2030, an ambitious goal matching Morocco's growing role in the renewable energy scene.

Case Study #2: Venezuela

Venezuela is widely known for its vast oil reserves, estimated to be the largest in the world in terms of proven reserves. With its status as an OPEC member, Venezuela holds an especially important role in regulating oil prices. In recent years, Venezuela has seen changes to energy consumption shares. Hydropower overtook oil as the second largest source of energy in 2020, reaching 32% of the nation's total energy consumption. However, concerns have also arisen over the negligence and overuse of dams, potentially leading to damage to reservoirs. Developments have also been made to solar power projects, although many such projects are funded through foreign investment. As a major oil exporter, Venezuela has a unique position in this topic.

Case Study #3: Denmark

Denmark's energy sector transformation stems partially from the oil crises of the 1970s, when sudden oil sanctions caused a spike in unemployment and an economic crisis. Since then, Denmark has striven to decrease its reliance on oil for energy. Unlike many other nations making the transition, Denmark is not an oil-producing country; rather, its oil is imported from nearby countries such as Russia, India, and Turkiye. A main way Denmark has decreased its oil reliance is through the development of wind-powered energy, now achieving 26% of total consumed energy. The establishment of three offshore wind farms had a large impact on this statistic, with the latest adding a capacity of 407 megawatt. In 2019, according to preliminary figures, a historical event occurred in Denmark: The 15th of September, from midnight to midnight, was the first day ever where wind turbine production exceeded the Danes' electricity demand.

Bloc Positions

Bloc 1: Countries in OPEC
Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iraq, Libya, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela

These are all the counties that make up the organization of OPEC. You have a direct interest in maintaining your grasp on the national oil economy and continuing to profit off of your vast portfolio of oil exports. Your main allies are the other counties within OPEC

Bloc 2: Major Exporters
Brazil, Brunei, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Kazakhstan, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Vietnam

These are the countries whose economies rely majorly on oil exportation. If the oil industry was to collapse or shift to primarily sustainable forms of energy, your economies and counties would take a big hit. It is important to note that countries such as Brunei, Malaysia, and Mexico would take less of a hit because of a diversification of their economies. However, these countries are still major oil exporters.

Bloc 3: Major Importers
China, India, Indonesia

These countries rely heavily on oil imports to run their economies and development. You benefit from cheaper, more widely available oil and suffer when oil prices shoot up due to conflict or other outlying variables. It is important to note that these counties have also begun to shift to renewables, but still rely heavily on oil.

Bloc 4: Sustainability Pushers
Angola, Canada, Egypt, Norway, United Kingdom, United States

These counties have a commitment to the development and shift of renewables and sustainable methods of energy production. Whether it be through policies or advocation, you are a major player on the sustainability scene and want to see more counties follow suit as you believe this is the future. It is important to note however that many of these counties, including the United States and United Kingdom, are also major oil exporters and importers.

Guiding Questions

As you prepare for committee, consider the following questions to help develop your position and guide your research:

1. On the balance between oil production and climate responsibility:
2. How should OPEC member states weigh their economic dependence on oil revenues against the global pressure to reduce carbon emissions? At what pace, if any, should production targets be adjusted in response to climate goals?
3. What responsibility, if any, do OPEC member countries bear for the downstream environmental consequences of the oil they produce? How does this responsibility differ between producing and consuming nations?
4. On sustainable practices within the oil industry:
5. What does "sustainable oil production" mean in practice? Are measures such as carbon capture, methane reduction, and reduced flaring sufficient steps, or do they merely delay an inevitable transition away from fossil fuels?
6. How can OPEC countries invest in cleaner extraction and refining technologies without compromising their competitiveness in the global energy market?
7. On economic stability and energy access:
8. Many OPEC member states rely heavily on oil revenues to fund public services and national development. How should these countries plan for a future in which global oil demand may decline? What role does OPEC play in supporting that transition?
9. Energy poverty remains a serious issue in many developing nations. How should the committee balance calls for reduced oil consumption with the need for affordable, accessible energy for populations that lack reliable alternatives?
10. On OPEC's role in global energy governance:
11. As renewable energy investment accelerates worldwide, how should OPEC redefine its mission and relevance? Should the organization expand its mandate beyond petroleum?
12. How should OPEC engage with international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement or COP negotiations? Should the organization take a formal position on global climate targets?
13. On regulation and implementation:
14. What kinds of climate-conscious regulations are feasible for OPEC to adopt collectively, given the diversity of its member states' economies, geographies, and levels of development?
15. How should compliance with any new environmental standards be monitored and enforced among member countries? What consequences, if any, should exist for non-compliance?

Further Research

General:

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3. https://www.eia.gov/finance/markets/crudeoil/supply-opec.php
4. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/11/oil-opec-energy-price/
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6. https://www.opec.org/environmental-matters-department.html
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8. https://www.iea.org/
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10. https://www.ipcc.ch/

On your assigned country:

- Delegates should research their country's specific oil production levels, reserve estimates, and share of government revenue derived from petroleum exports, as these figures vary widely across OPEC members and will shape your country's negotiating position.
- Look into your country's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, as well as any domestic climate legislation or energy diversification initiatives, to understand how it has publicly committed to addressing climate change.
- Research your country's historical relationship with OPEC, including any past disagreements over production quotas, to understand where its interests may align or conflict with other member states in committee.

Suggested search terms:

- "OPEC production quotas and climate policy"
- "oil revenue diversification [your country name]"
- "fossil fuel subsidies developing nations"
- "carbon capture oil and gas industry"
- "energy transition OPEC member economies"
- "Petrostates and the Paris Agreement"

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