

Topic #1: Regulating the Carbon Footprint of the Cruise Ship Industry

I. Issue Overview

The cruise ship industry is expanding rapidly but has a significant environmental impact. Cruise ships burn large amounts of fuel, releasing carbon emissions and other pollutants that contribute to climate change, harm air quality, and threaten marine ecosystems. The United Nations (UN) has a vital role in creating policies to reduce the carbon footprint of the cruise industry and shift it toward greener practices.

II. Background Information

Cruise ships could be more efficient when it comes to environmental impact. A single ship can pollute as much as hundreds of thousands of cars. Despite the global push to combat climate change, many cruise lines continue to operate without adequate regulation, contributing significantly to environmental harm.

Key Issues:

- **Air Pollution:** Cruise ships emit large amounts of CO₂ and SO₂ by burning cheap, dirty fuel.
- **Marine Pollution:** Wastewater, plastics, and oil from ships pollute the oceans, endangering marine life.
- **Black Carbon:** The pollution from ships accelerates the melting of polar ice, exacerbating climate change.

Some solutions include using cleaner fuels like LNG, connecting ships to shore power while in port, and exploring renewable energy sources like wind or hydrogen. However, these solutions are often costly and require significant infrastructure development.

III. UN Approach to the Issue

The UN, particularly through the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** and other environmental bodies, is working on policies to address the cruise ship industry's pollution. These efforts include:

1. Stronger Regulations

- Implementing stricter global rules requiring cruise ships to use cleaner fuel and cut emissions.

- Developing carbon tax systems or emission trading systems to encourage cleaner practices.
- 2. Green Technologies**
 - Promoting the use of alternative fuels, such as LNG and hydrogen, and renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.
 - Encouraging the installation of shore power connections to reduce emissions when ships are in port.
- 3. Transparency and Accountability**
 - Requiring cruise lines to report their emissions and waste production, creating transparency around their environmental impact.
 - Establishing certification systems to reward companies that meet environmental standards.
- 4. Protecting the Environment**
 - Banning the discharge of wastewater, plastics, and other harmful waste into the ocean.
 - Strengthening marine protection regulations to prevent pollution in sensitive areas.
- 5. Financial Support**
 - Offering incentives for cruise lines to invest in cleaner technologies.
 - Imposing penalties on companies that fail to meet environmental standards.

IV. Questions for the Delegates to Consider

1. How can global regulations be updated to make sure cruise ships follow stricter environmental rules?
2. What financial incentives can help cruise companies switch to cleaner technologies?
3. How can the UN help build the infrastructure needed for cleaner fuels and energy sources in cruise ports?
4. What steps can be taken to ensure that the cruise industry helps meet global climate targets?
5. How can we ensure the cruise industry is transparent and accountable in its environmental practices?

V. Conclusion

The cruise ship industry must shift towards more sustainable practices to reduce its environmental impact. Stricter regulations, investment in cleaner technologies, and international cooperation can drive the industry toward greener solutions. The UN has a crucial role to play in ensuring that these changes happen, balancing the benefits of tourism with the need to protect our planet.

By taking action now, we can secure a future where the cruise industry thrives while minimizing its harmful environmental effects.

VI. Useful Resources and Links

[**UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\):** Climate Action \(Goal 13\) and Life Below Water \(Goal 14\)](#)

[**International Council on Clean Transportation \(ICCT\):** Reports on reducing the environmental impact of shipping](#)

[**Clean Shipping Coalition \(CSC\):** Works on policies to reduce pollution from ships](#)

[**Marine Conservation Society:** Protecting marine life from pollution](#)

[**World Bank:** Carbon emissions reduction in the shipping industry](#)

[**UN Sustainable Development Goals:** Climate Action \(Goal 13\) and Life Below Water \(Goal 14\)](#)

[**International Maritime Organization \(IMO\):** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships](#)

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