Summary of “The Path of Progress”

By Giselle Weiss

The second resolution states: *Developing countries should prioritize economic growth over environmental protection.* I am greatly looking forward to this topic; I think it will produce many good debates because of one word, priority. That is the one thing that will make this case easy to win or easy to lose. But we’ll get into that soon. Let’s talk first of Developing countries.

The parameters of the debate are narrowed greatly because of this term, and this case takes the position that less developed countries are the same as developing countries, which they are. In order to do well with this case you need to be able to prove that they are, and the definition does say a poor country. But I’m certain that will be an arguing point, so be prepared.

All you have to do is prove priority. Never forget that. Don’t shy away from the fact that at times economic growth can hurt the environment, because it can. Instead accept that, and show how in the short run it may hurt a little but in the long run it is better for everyone.

The value is progress, which is usually a good thing. Make sure to remember that progress is moving to a better state. The position this case takes is that without progress in developing countries, little can be achieved, because again, a big focus of this case is on impoverished developing countries. Arguments should take the position that progress must come before anything else and economic growth is a direct link to progress.

This is a logical case rather than one with lots of evidence, so if you prefer evidence, change it, and make it yours. Good luck!

“The Path of Progress”

Affirmative Case: Progress

By Giselle Weiss

# Introduction

“Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.”-Ban Ki-moon.[[1]](#footnote-1)

It is because I believe that progress is the way to sustainable development, I am in agreement with the resolution that: *Developing countries ought to prioritize economic growth over environmental protection.*

# Definitions

**Developing Countries:** “A poor agricultural country that is seeking to become more advanced economically and socially.”**[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Priority:** “The right to take precedence or to proceed before others.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Economic Growth:** “An increase in the nation’s capacity to produce goods and services. Usually refers to real GDP growth.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Environmental Protection:** “Environmental protection includes prevention (avoidance) strategies to protect the environment from future damage or degradation; and control measures to restore and maintain environmental quality.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

# Value: Progress

My value today is that of **Progress,** defined as: “Advance or development toward a better, more complete or more modern condition.”[[6]](#footnote-6) The reason we must value progress is because it is necessary in order to better the human condition and is required to develop a stable society. Without progress, developing countries can achieve little.

# Contention 1: Developing countries lack necessary resources

It is obvious that developing countries lack the resources needed to protect the environment and better the human condition.

In order to better understand this let us look to the application of Haiti. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere with 80% of their population below the poverty level and 52% of the population in extreme poverty. As reported by the World Bank the total dollar value of goods and services produced is $8.7 billion in 2014, which is tiny compared to Hungary, which has a smaller population and a GDP of $137.1 billion.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Impoverished countries play a role in environmental degradation in a few ways such as improperly disposing of waste and garbage. Because economically comfortable countries like Hungary have a level of economic stability, they can prevent these and many kinds of environmentally harmful actions. These statistics go to show that developing countries, many of which are impoverished, don’t have the resources to value environmental protection. Therefore, when we look at the resolution it’s actually asking us a much different question from what it originally seems. It asks for countries like Haiti, Afghanistan, and many others to attempt to use their very limited resources to protect the environment instead of working towards progressing their country and bettering the human condition. And that is not a possibility for many countries.

# Contention 2: Prioritizing the environment will stunt progress

Prioritizing environmental protection will stunt progress in developing countries. Protecting the environment is a good thing to do, but it must not be placed above a country’s economic growth.

Many developing countries are in some state of poverty. For them, it would be nearly impossible to prioritize the environment over something that will better their conditions. Adequately protecting the environment may not even be an option for many of these countries. It is illogical for them to use their resources and energy to protect the environment before they have achieved a more stable society.

Economic growth is progress and by prioritizing it, there is a better chance that the environment can be protected, whether it is by utilizing the raw resources or by properly dealing with waste. Prioritizing the environment is like planting a field before you have the necessary tools to prepare the ground and harvest it. Prioritizing the environment will not bring about progress in developing countries. It will not allow the country to move to a better more complete state because it won’t allow for a country to prioritize their best interests, their economic growth.

# Contention 3: Economic growth will allow for progress

When economic growth is prioritized there is a much higher chance for a stable society to be created. By prioritizing the economy, progression is allowed and aided. People will be working toward a better state, and by this will have the ability to better their lives. A developing country working toward a stable community is progress. Through economic progression, countries will then have the power to protect the environment without harming the country as a whole. The environment will be protected best when the country is stable, and this happens through progress.

To see this idea in action let’s look to the application of America’s Industrial Revolution. The American industrial revolution took place in the 1800s. America realized that they needed to be self-sustaining. This led to the refining process of metals being improved, production acceleration in factories, and the method for production becoming more efficient. [[8]](#footnote-8) Corporations expanded massively creating many jobs and boosting the economy.

The use of factories and mass production did take its toll on the environment and in some ways hurt it, but once America reached a place where they were economically independent, they took steps to protect the environment, and they still take steps today.

# Conclusion

Progress is brought about through economic growth and it helps to create stable societies. Stable societies have the resources they need to protect the environment properly. If we value progress and prioritize economic growth, the conditions in developing countries can be improved and the environment can then best be protected.

Negative Brief: Progress

By Giselle Weiss

The resolution states that Developing countries should prioritize economic growth over environmental protection. This case hinges on the idea that impoverished countries are the same as developing countries. I definitely think that there is a valid argument against this, especially if you have a good counter definition.

The value is progress. It goes very well with the affirmative because it is directly linked with economic growth. A line of argumentation you can use is saying that not all progress is good. Everything progresses in some way, good and bad. So bring up arguments and applications showing “bad progress.”

Here are some specific arguments to make with each contention:

1. Contention One links to the arguments you would make against the definition, so bring up a counter definition for developing countries, and argue that developing countries are only countries already on the course of development. If you argue this well, then contention one becomes almost pointless because it’s talking about under developed countries and not developing ones, therefore it doesn’t apply to the resolution.
2. Contention Two goes over how logically progress won’t happen if we prioritize the environment. If you can, try to prove that even if we prioritize the environment, progress won’t be harmed because the people will not stop trying to improve their state.
3. Contention Three is the strongest because it is fairly logical. But you can argue again that progress isn’t always in a form beneficial to the people. For example, you can say that communism is a form of governmental progression, but it is not good for the citizens.

1. "Ban Ki-moon." BrainyQuote.com. Xplore Inc, 2015. 13 July 2015. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/bankimoon643741.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Oxford Dictionary. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\_english/developing-country [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Oxford Dictionary. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\_english/priority [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Campbell R. Harvey, "Economic growth," Financial Glossary 2011. Accessed 17 Jun. 2015. <http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/economic+growth> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. National Agricultural Library. <http://agclass.nal.usda.gov/mtwdk.exe?s=1&n=1&y=0&l=60&k=glossary&t=2&w=environmental+protection> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Oxford Dictionary. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/progress> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. (Haiti) <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti> (Hungary) http://data.worldbank.org/country/hungary [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Kelly. “Overview of the American Revolution” <http://americanhistory.about.com/od/industrialrev/a/indrevoverview.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)