To Build or Not To Build?

Water is a natural resource needed by all living organisms. As the human population grows, its need for more and more freshwater increases as well. Many areas of the world are in current water crisis – due to lack of resources, drought, dispute over international water rights, or a combination of all three. One such location is southern Africa, arguably one of the most arid places on Earth. Namibia has at several points in recent history discussed the possibility of erecting a pipeline – one that would reroute water from the Okavango River and transport it miles away to the central region of the country. Due to heavy drought in the past 10 years, the government of Namibia is seriously considering revisiting the pipeline plan. Is this a mistake?

In order to best decide the future of the pipeline, the UN has brought together a committee to discuss and ultimately agree on the best plan of action. The committee will be made up of members of several constituencies from Namibia as well as the neighboring country of Botswana, which would be affected by the building of the pipeline.

You will be assigned the role of one of the members of the committee. As such, you will be responsible for the following:

- Researching your unique position in relation to pipeline
- Compiling a single page “fact sheet” that lists several of your key facts and statistics
- Summarizing your findings in brief, yet informative, 5-6 minute presentation to your fellow committee members
- Listening to the findings of the other members of the committee
- Discussing and ultimately deciding whether the pipeline should be built

You will be given 3 class periods to gather your data. The presentations and discussions will be held in class on Thursday, 14/12.

The committee will be made up of the following members:

- The Secretary of Water Affairs from Namibia
- The mayor of Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia
- A member of Conservation International
- A Botswana economist
- A representative from a wastewater treatment facility in Namibia
- A representative from a desalination plant in Namibia
- A scientist to discuss the innovative technology of “artificial recharge”
- A human population statistician
- A meteorologist

Feel free to discuss your findings with other members on the committee prior to 14/12.
The Secretary of Water Affairs from Namibia - You will want to discuss the **importance** of this pipeline to the citizens of Namibia (how will the pipeline affect the citizens?) as well as the limited impact it will have on the Okavango Delta and the wildlife that live there.

The mayor of Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia – What water limitations have your citizens faced in the past few years? How have you sought to alleviate the water stress? How might the pipeline help the current situation?

A member of Conservation International – The Okavango Delta is a wildlife refuge of international importance. What is the potential impact of the pipeline on the wildlife of the Okavango Delta?

A Botswana economist – You will need to discuss the impact of the pipeline on the ecotourism industry, a major generator of revenues for Botswana. You may also want to discuss the impact of the pipeline on other means of livelihood (fishing, washing, reeds for building, etc.) in Botswana.

A representative from a wastewater treatment facility in Namibia – You will need to discuss the Namibian successful practices of recycling wastewater. Is this a viable alternative to the pipeline?

A representative from a desalinization plant in Namibia – You will need to discuss the Namibian practices of desalination. Is this a viable alternative to the pipeline?

A scientist to discuss the innovative technology of “artificial recharge” – You will want to share the new technology of artificial recharge and the storage of water underground to limit evaporation in the arid environment. Is this a viable alternative to the pipeline?

A human population statistician – You will speak about the current population growth situation in Namibia. What is the historical data for human population growth? What are the predictions for the next 20 years? The next 50 years? How might the current water situation be affected by this?

A meteorologist – You will speak about the climatic conditions of the area. What impact have the climatic conditions had on the water supply in recent past? How often have droughts occurred in the past? What are the impacts of the droughts? How often do floods occur? What might we expect in the future? What would be the impacts of the pipeline?
Helpful Maps

**Image 1:** Continent of Africa

Namibia resides on the southwestern coast of Africa.

**Image 2:** Country of Namibia

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http://cnmat.berkeley.edu/~ladzekpo/Kusum/africa%20map%2002.jpg

http://media.maps.com/magellan/Images/NAMIBI-W1.gif
# Environmental Science Project: PIPELINE CONFLICT

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## In Class Presentation

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**Total Oral Presentation Points** 25

## Fact Sheet

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**Total Fact Sheet Points** 25

## Total

**Total**