



General Assembly

Marine Pollution

Climate Change and Human Displacement

UCIMUN 2022



Welcome Delegates,

My name is Mary Lee, and I am the Secretariat-General for the UCI Model United Nations 2021-2022 school year. I am honored to serve as part of your Secretariat this year and are excited for everything we have planned for the conference. Now that we are finally hosting an in-person conference again after two years, we hope that everyone will reunite together, have a fun, engaging and informative time in debate.

I am a fourth year Criminology, Law and Society major. I have been involved in UCIMUN since freshman year of college and loved my experiences here by far. My favorite part of actively being involved in MUN is cooperating with other students to contribute to raising awareness of global issues and their relevance to the holistic wellbeing of the entire world. In UCIMUN, I have been an Assistant Director of the Legal Committee, Director of the SPECPOL Committee and Secretariat-General for the year of 2020-2021. Outside of UCIMUN, I am actively involved in advocacy for basic needs, research, and legal organization. In my leisure time, on the other hand, I like listening to music and watching YouTube videos.

By now, we have spent roughly two years in this unprecedented time due to Covid-19. This year, however, in light of the global pandemic that has been slowly attenuated by vaccination, our theme, “reaffirming UN leadership in rebuilding a fractured world”, has become more relevant than ever. As we are transitioning to the new-normal in such turbulent times, it is imperative to recognize the responsibility of the UN and address any lingering issues that are influencing different communities across the globe. With your research and your resolutions, I would like you all to delve into ways to benefit as many people as possible, because global issues go beyond nations and governments—they affect all of us.

Our staff’s goal, as always, is to provide delegates with high quality debate and an opportunity to immerse themselves in an intellectual discussion of relevant issues. Please feel free to reach out to me or our Directors anytime between now and our conference. We are here to help you in any way we can.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to seeing you in the Spring!

Sincerely,

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 30th Annual UCIMUN Conference! I am thrilled to be serving as the Director for the General Assembly. Because our past two conferences were cancelled or shifted to a remote format due to COVID-19, I'm especially excited to host this committee in-person. This will be my 7th year in MUN, and like you, I attended conferences throughout high school. I also served as a mentor, instructional aid, and USG for my school's MUN program. Of all the wonderful memories I made, speaking at NHSMUN's closing ceremony at the UN General Assembly in New York was definitely a highlight.

I am a third-year Education Sciences major specializing in child development and minoring in Sociology. Since Kindergarten, my dream has been to become an elementary school teacher and perhaps, one day, a principal. On campus, you can find me in the Vietnamese cultural club, student government, or at my job as a scholarship advisor. Back at home, I love teaching kids how to swim, traveling, biking, and watching Netflix.

Our committee topics (Marine Pollution & Climate Change and Human Displacement) are especially important because they are not issues strictly confined to one country or region. They affect the entire international community and impact our everyday lives, thus reflecting this year's conference theme, "advancing upon the global issues of our community." Keeping in mind this grand scale, it is in your best interest to thoroughly research the topics to ensure that you arrive well-informed and prepared to debate. I suggest exploring alternative methods to achieve sustainable consumerism, agriculture, renewable energy, waste reduction, etc., as well as perusing the References as a starting point.

As Director, I will do my best to foster a positive environment where delegates of all abilities can learn and grow. If there's one thing that MUN has taught me, it's that collaboration overpowers competition! I was once a delegate in your shoes, so I know how nerve-racking conference prep can be, whether it be your first or twentieth conference. With that said, please do not hesitate to email me with any questions about the topics, conference, or UCI in general. MUN has gifted me valuable skills and lifelong friends, so I'm very glad you're taking this journey despite its challenges. I look forward to meeting you in April -- until then, best of luck!

Sincerely,

Aline Pham  
Director, General Assembly 2022



## Topic A: Marine Pollution

### Introduction

Marine pollution, which is made up of chemicals and trash, makes its way into our oceans before harming wildlife and entire ecosystems. Although it is common to automatically think of litter and trash when discussing this topic, marine pollution also stems from various other sources including oil spills, nonpoint source pollution like agricultural runoff, and intentional discharge, which involves dumping waste into the sea as if it were a landfill. These sources of pollution originate from the land, but have detrimental consequences underwater that ultimately circle back to those on land, thereby continuing the cycle of pollution. For example, humans release plastic pollution into the ocean, which degrades into microplastics that fish consume, and finally the plastic-filled fish ends up in humans' stomachs. As puzzle pieces in this interconnected web of organisms, it is crucial to recognize that marine pollution is not confined to the oceans, but also has implications on land too.

Much of this pollution creates large garbage patches in the ocean, where marine debris like litter, fishing gear, and trash collects (US Department of Commerce, 2013). Garbage patches fill up areas of the ocean from floor to surface, oftentimes unnoticed by researchers and sailors because they are filled with a plethora of tiny microplastics. The Ocean Cleanup, a nonprofit organization, was launched in the Netherlands to remove plastic from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (The Ocean Cleanup, 2021). Still, much more will be needed from corporations, government agencies, and legislators to address the pollution crisis.



Unfortunately, marine pollution does not only threaten the planet's health and biodiversity; economic structures are at stake too. Although plastic has proven to be a convenient means of cheap mass production, our reliance on single-use plastics is jeopardizing seafood that stabilizes economies, especially in coastal areas that rely on fisheries to maintain a profitable aquaculture industry (NOAA, 2020). Consequently, these communities will suffer the worst economic impacts of ocean pollution, even if they are not largely responsible for it. What once seemed like the greatest invention is now regarded as for its “persistence, durability, and volume” (Phelan, 2020).

## Description

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) defines marine debris as “any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment” (US Department of Commerce, 2008). In 1907, Leo Hendrik Baekeland accidentally invented plastic while attempting to create an electrical insulator for the United States (ACS). Since then, plastic production has skyrocketed due to its cheap and simple process. As a result, plastic is infamously a major marine pollutant today; an estimated 100,000 sea animals die annually due to plastic marine litter (UNESCO, 2017). Although plastic pollution is present in all global regions, Southeast Asia is experiencing some of its most adverse effects. For example, as an island archipelago surrounded by Pacific Ocean waters on all sides, the Philippines faces a public health and environmental disaster as piles of solid waste and plastic litter increasingly drown shorelines (EPA, 2017).



### *Microplastics*

In 2015, scientists concluded that there are 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic trash in the ocean, whether on the surface or deep underwater (National Geographic Society, 2019). Yet this staggering number only reflects the plastic contaminating our oceans, not pollutants of other materials. Although plastic trash like straws and cups are notorious for entering the ocean through sewers and storm drains, the impact of microplastics on the environment and human health are not as obvious. Microplastics measure less than five millimeters in diameter and pose a serious threat to wildlife, and can even end up in the bodies of humans who consume seafood. Microplastics come in two forms: degraded bits of larger plastic debris, or microbeads, manufactured polyethylene plastic (produced by fossil fuels) added to health and beauty products (US Department of Commerce, 2016). Typically used in personal care products such as facial cleansers and body soaps, microbeads are a common type of microplastics that have proven to be very harmful to the marine environment because they cannot be filtered or broken down by waste management systems. These tiny pollutants are relatively new, thus scientists have yet to determine their exact health effects on fish and humans. However, scientists found that when microplastics linger in marine life, they can cause inflammation, secrete hazardous chemicals, and threaten organ walls (Thompson, 2018). Future research will reveal how their effects extend to humans, who inevitably consume microplastics through seafood. These negative impacts on humans and the environment have prompted environmentalists to initiate microbead bans. In December of 2015, President Obama signed the Microbead-Free Waters Act, which banned the



usage of plastic microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products (NOAA, 2020). This ban was followed by many others.

### *Marine Life*

According to the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Land-based sources (such as agricultural runoff, discharge of nutrients and pesticides, and untreated sewage including plastics) account for approximately 80% of marine pollution, globally” (UNESCO, 2017). Debris like soda cans, plastic packaging, and specialized tools like fishing gear and nets also make their way into aquatic ecosystems. Especially a product like derelict fishing gear (DFG) -- lost, abandoned, or disposed of at sea -- has entangled, suffocated, and even killed marine wildlife (Gilardi et al., 2009). When fishermen fail to properly discard fishing traps and nets, DFG remains in the ocean for five years on average; during that time, it continues to trap oceanic wildlife and seabirds (many of which are endangered or economically valuable species) in a process known as “ghost fishing” (Gilardi et al., 2009). DFG also damages coral reefs and blocks human navigation by tangling propellers and clogging intakes (Ballesteros, 2018). Fishing equipment like DFG largely contributes to contamination, making our oceans both unattractive and unsafe for aquatic species. In terms of other marine pollution, many animals mistake ocean debris for food, which often leads to starvation, suffocation, injury, and death. For example, sea turtles accidentally ingest plastic grocery bags that appear to be their primary food jellyfish. Then, the plastic occupies space in their stomachs, causing a false sensation of fullness and therefore leading to unintentional self-starvation.



*Previous United Nations Involvement*

The United Nations and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) tackle marine pollution in coordination with various environmental and marine organizations. Most of the progress achieved in the past few years involved research and scientific studies in the field, considering that mobile plastic marine debris is hard to track and record. A major UN step in addressing marine litter was the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter in 1972, also known as the London Convention (International Maritime Organization, 2019). Effective in 1975, the London Convention aimed to control and prevent marine pollution as a result of industrial waste dumping. The 87 state parties have worked toward this goal by reviewing and enhancing regulations on a national level to discourage illegal dumping. To update measures, the members replaced their original convention with the London Protocol of 1996, which did not actually go into effect until 2006. The London Protocol came to be more comprehensive than its predecessor because it required countries to take measures like prohibiting dumping, exportation, and incineration of waste in oceans. In addition to being more effective, the protocol specifically outlines compliance conditions and technical aid for members to meet standards within five years.

In its efforts to alleviate harm inflicted upon wildlife and environments by marine pollution, the UNEP also helped form the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML). The GPML works to reduce land-based litter by supporting the Global Partnership on Waste Management; strengthening governmental cooperation; retrieving useful substances from waste; solidifying relationships between scientists, NGOs, governments, and groups; along with other methods (United Nations, 2016). Because marine debris is constantly being transferred from one





nation's waters to another's, the GPML and international groups play a key role in organizing collaborative efforts.

More recently, at the start of 2017, the UN launched the #CleanSeas Campaign at the Economist World Ocean Summit in Bali to encourage citizens to assume a more active role in protecting oceans (UNEP). The campaign focuses on plastic reduction by renewing governmental policies, redesigning production and packaging, and encouraging personal awareness. As part of the largest coalition against marine pollution, “[committed] signatory countries now cover more than 60 percent of the world’s coastlines” (UNEP). In just four years, #CleanSeas has motivated developing nations to reject single-use plastics through individuals and company participation in cleanups, pledges, media, and education. The UN praised, “Indonesia has committed to slashing its marine litter by 70 per cent by 2025; Uruguay will tax single-use plastic bags this year; and Kenya has agreed to eliminate them entirely.”

## **Bloc Positions**

### Asian-Pacific

Bloc Several Asian countries suffer severe marine pollution, which is often a consequence of ineffective or faulty environmental legislation. Asia-Pacific countries also rely heavily on the fishing industry and seafood in general to stabilize their economy in the world market. Plastic pollution like microbeads impacts the food supply by contaminating fish, which are then sold to consumers. Recently, this bloc adopted a more serious approach to marine pollution; China, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines agreed on a “less-plastic” policy (Marks, et al., 2020).



### African Bloc

Although marine pollution is not their top priority, African countries still advocate for international cooperation and have launched their own campaigns. Plastics SA, the umbrella body representing the South African plastics industry, collaborated with the Department of Environmental Affairs, the South African National Biodiversity Institute, and the United Nations Environment Programme to organize a conference that brought together marine debris researchers, natural resource managers, policy makers, industry representatives, and the non-governmental community.

### Eastern European Bloc

A strong advocate for reducing ocean pollution, the European Union supports protecting ecosystems for clean and productive seas, promoting sustainable use of Europe's marine sources, and applying common approaches at both the EU and regional level. The bloc favors assessments, target-setting, monitoring, and measures to reduce pollution and human impact on oceans internationally. The EU Framework for Marine Litter outlines the steps necessary for implementing public awareness, funding, and other projects.

### Latin American & Caribbean Bloc

Although affected by marine debris like any other bloc, Latin American and Caribbean countries lack sufficient funding and governmental and economic stability to implement sustainable marine pollution prevention. Countries in this bloc must first recognize the impact of marine pollution on their economies, and will likely need economic stimulation, redistribution, or financial aid to combat it.

### North American Bloc



North American countries operate multiple agencies and organizations to implement anti-pollution projects around the world. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Marine Trash and Debris Program, among others, reflect the bloc's commitment to preserving marine wildlife. However, it is important to keep in mind that Western nations are able to spearhead such projects because they have the financial means to do so.

## Committee Goals

Marine pollution is a pressing issue that ultimately harms all communities. Its prevention requires collective efforts from various sectors, such as education, legislation, and enforcement. In this committee, our goal is to diplomatically discuss the multifaceted issues stemming from and toward marine pollution in order to propose unique and effective solutions. However, delegates should note that communities contribute to and suffer from marine pollution differently. With this in mind, the ideal approach is to propose a variety of solutions tailored to individual regions and groups. Addressing marine pollution is a lofty and long-term challenge that requires cooperation, partnership, community-based models, and co-ordination with participating actors such as NGOs, national governments, corporations, and community members. We highly encourage you to arrive prepared with quality research, actively collaborate (not necessarily compete!), and share original ideas in committee.

## Research Questions

1. What various economic, social, and physical factors contribute to marine pollution?



2. Who would be most willing to combat ocean pollution and with what incentives, if any?  
Who is the target audience for your proposed solutions?
3. Which methods have proven to be effective, cost-efficient, and sustainable in removing or preventing marine pollution?
4. What type of debris affects marine wildlife most and where does it originate from?
5. Why is it difficult to enforce laws regarding marine pollution? How can countries or governments remove such barriers?
6. Given that private corporations are largely responsible for releasing harmful plastic and chemical pollutants into the oceans, what can individuals do to reduce their own carbon footprint (e.g. single-use plastics, electronic waste, etc.)



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## Topic B: Climate Change & Human Displacement

### Introduction

“Climate change is the defining issue of our time:” Secretary General António Guterres’s words still ring true three years later. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, climate change “is a long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth’s local, regional and global climates” (NASA, 2021). When studying this natural and anthropogenic phenomenon, scientists measure features like average temperature, humidity, and rainfall patterns over long periods of time. With this data, we can monitor trends and spikes that indicate how extreme environmental conditions are at a given moment. For example, in 2016, the world’s carbon dioxide level surpassed the 400 parts per million (ppm) threshold; this permanent milestone signaled a dangerous shift and occurred in September, when CO2 levels are historically at their lowest (Kahn, 2016). Since then, several months, including July 2021, were the hottest on record since the late 1800s. The NOAA manages a Global Monitoring Laboratory that tracks atmospheric CO2.

The effects of an increasingly inhabitable planet are visible, especially in the case of forced displacement. In a report published in 2019, the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organization estimated that Earth’s average temperature will rise by 4-5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century (McCarthy, 2020). This increase may seem minute or trivial, but in fact it will effectuate even more sea level rise, food insecurity, inconsistent and scarce rainfall, and natural disasters (additionally, wildfires release carbon dioxide emissions, exacerbating the cycle of global warming) (WMO, 2020). Such catastrophic outcomes are the very factors that compel



individuals to leave their homes in search of safer shelter. Whether their original homes were burned or flooded, or their crops succumbed to drought, the root cause can be traced back to climate change. Along with armed conflict, economic instability, and poverty, climate change, therefore, is a leading cause of displacement (Eikenberg, 2019). Oftentimes, displaced people are the victim of all these troubles combined; like many global issues, environmental justice is one of intersectionality. Furthermore, developed countries are the primary contributors to fossil fuels to sustain their growing populations, but are ironically the least likely to suffer the consequences of such environmentally harmful actions. While climate change affects every corner of the globe, it is destroying certain populations much more rapidly than others. So, although it may seem like a distant threat to developed nations, it takes a collective effort to address the existential peril for which we are all responsible. Until then, climate change will continue to uproot the homes and lives of people predominantly in less-developed countries. The following section analyzes different ways that climate change ultimately displaces people as well as proven solutions to prevent such an outcome.

## Description

Recently, we have witnessed many record-breakers that highlight the declining state of Earth. The past decade (2019-2020) was the hottest, while atmospheric methane, carbon dioxide, and nitrous oxide are at their highest levels (McCarthy, 2020). The longer these gases continue on their incline, the more global warming becomes unfixable. A common error is the use of “climate change” and “global warming” interchangeably. While the latter is an example of the former, these two terms are not the same. Global warming occurs when greenhouse gases deplete





the ozone layer thereby allowing the sun's rays to seep through the atmosphere and warm Earth. Humans emit these gases into the atmosphere by livestock farming, biomass combustion, deforestation, and other activity (Rafferty). Meanwhile, climate change refers to the heating or cooling of Earth.

Another misconception (and common counterargument against climate activists) is that the environment must be sacrificed for the sake of the economy. In reality, Earth and business are not mutually exclusive. Petteri Taalas, the WMO Secretary-General, stated, "Last year [2019] emissions dropped in developed countries, despite the growing economy, so we have been to show that you can detach economic growth from emission growth" (United Nations, 2020). However, it will take much more than a handful of countries to lower emissions globally. To offset centuries of production and pollution since the Industrial Revolution, humans need to invest in large-scale renewable energy, which many progressive countries have already been achieving. The United States, Germany, Sweden, and Costa Rica are a few of the many leading countries in renewable energy (CRP, 2016). Such pioneering efforts include developing alternatives to fossil fuels like solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal energy.

### *Disruptions in Global Markets & Populations*

There exists not only a gap among nations in renewable energy efforts, but also in the experienced economic and physical impacts of climate change. As suggested before, underdeveloped nations are most vulnerable to extreme climate, such as intense natural disasters, and lack the resources necessary to recover from them. 14.9 million people were displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters in 2011, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring



Centre (Kolmannskog, 2012). Disasters like these are considered rapid onset, compared to slow onset ones like droughts and soil erosion. The former jeopardizes entire regions, especially Africa, where a freshwater shortage is expected to impact 75 to 250 million people (Jayawardhan, 2017).

Furthermore, researchers have found that there will be an imbalance in temperature peaks, resulting in warmer temperatures and productivity for northern countries but destruction in tropical areas (EPA, 2017). Besides creating disproportionate progress levels, the more frequent severe weather will lead to loss of property and infrastructure, food insecurity, spread of diseases, and mass migration -- all of which contribute to human displacement. Take the United Arab Emirates, for example: 87% of the UAE's food supply is dependent on agriculture (Deepti, 2018), leaving the country at mercy of Mother Nature in an encounter with severe weather. Damage to the agricultural sector decreases supply, which in turn affects the international food market by raising prices, making low income people susceptible to financial shocks (Deepti, 2018). As this example illustrates, our economies are deeply interconnected and equally dependent on natural resources; a collapse in one will trigger a ripple effect throughout all.

#### *Ocean Acidification, Warming, & Deoxygenation*

Like marine pollution, ocean acidification and warming pose a serious threat to marine wildlife. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of Earth's excess energy (Resplandy et al., 2019), as well as a quarter of our carbon dioxide (Watson et al., 2020). The latter results in ocean acidification and deoxygenation, both of which harm ecosystems that provide populations with a food supply and source of income (WMO, 2020). Acidification hampers reproduction and shell



formation; heat waves destroy coral reefs; and deoxygenation creates dead zones that are depleted of oxygen and life (McCarthy, 2020). Furthermore, fish are forced to migrate to cooler waters when their habitats become too warm -- humans are not the only species that fall victim to climate change induced displacement. Such disruptions to marine life are a cause for concern because entire economies are dependent on them. For example, “projected reductions in water flows and increases in sea level [in the Lower Mekong delta in Asia] may put the 40 million people who rely on the largest freshwater fishery in the world at risk (EPA, 2017).

A viable solution to remove excess carbon in our atmosphere is carbon capture and storage (CCS), which involves trapping, liquefying, and burying carbon in underground pockets (Jha, 2005). Although CCS units have failed to store the estimated amounts of carbon (TCC, 2021), and despite concern that the pockets will eventually re-release carbon, they are a far more eco-friendly alternative than fossil fuels.

### *Obstacles of Displacement*

Environmentally displaced persons (EDPs) are extremely vulnerable, thus much focus is on addressing the needs of such a defenseless population. Perhaps the most significant challenge that EDPs face is the legal protection gap, which exists for them because they “are not covered by the 1951 Convention [Relating to the Status of Refugees] and are therefore not protected by the UNHCR’s charter” (Jayawardhan, 2017). In other words, migration and refugee laws do not apply to them. Most EDPs are internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were forced to flee their homes but remained within borders (OHCHR). In the last few years, the number of IDPs has been exponentially increasing and is currently at 40 million (Huang & Graham, 2019). So, while



EDPs are in limbo on foreign territory, the rest of the world debates their status as refugees, which they are not officially considered to be.

In addition to lacking security, displaced people are left at a socioeconomic disadvantage: it is difficult to find a stable income and support system -- possibly due to language barriers -- in a new environment. The struggle to integrate economically and socially, involves navigating unfamiliar labor markets, though EDPs in urban areas have a greater chance of success (Huang & Graham, 2019). In conclusion, while climate change is the initial force that pushes people out of their home, several other factors intensify the isolation in a time of displacement.

Unsurprisingly, stateless and displaced people are more at risk to COVID-19 because of limited access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare (UNHCR, 2021). Like the virus, climate change is too plaguing the entire international community. Fortunately, due to lower transportation and fossil fuel consumption during the pandemic, we witnessed cleaner air quality and less water pollution. The past two years have proven that drastic change is possible on the part of the people, and that it can result in significant and beneficial changes to our environment.

### *Previous United Nations Involvement*

Given the legal protection gap, there is only so much the UN can do to help environmentally displaced people. Instead, the focus is shifted to preventing climate change-related disasters in the first place. The United Nations has a long track record for promoting environmentally healthy initiatives and policies, which are reflected in their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1997, 192 parties committed to the Kyoto Protocol international treaty to prevent global warming by setting carbon budgets. Each country was given an individualized target for greenhouse gas emissions, with stricter binding limits for developed countries (UNFCCC, 2021). The United Nations has also adopted more specific measures to address other environmental issues that stem from global warming. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) of 1996 provides sustainable land management technologies, drought preparedness, and other resources for severely dry areas, especially in Africa (UNCCD, 2021).

The Paris Agreement, established in 2015 as a legally binding treaty, was an attempt to restore carbon emissions to acceptable levels, thereby saving the global population from an ugly fate. Nearly every nation ratified the agreement to collectively reduce greenhouse gases, provide financial support, and advance technology (UNFCCC, 2021). The past five years have resulted in innovative low-carbon options, greater transparency, and flexible goals. Still, some skeptics lack faith in the treaty. Former President Trump withdrew the U.S. after claiming that the Agreement would hurt the economy, but he based this statement on a debunked study that “exaggerated the future costs of emissions reductions, underestimated advances in energy efficiency and clean energy technologies, and outright ignored the huge health and economic costs of climate change itself” (Denchak, 2021). It is untrue that climate action leeches from economic gains, but very true that climate inaction would do precisely that.

There is much debate around the question of whether climate change is reversible or not. Regardless of the answer, experts agree that it is possible to maximize our time on Earth by slowing global warming with reduced carbon emissions. In the most ideal situation, full-fledged



efforts to combat climate change will stabilize Earth's temperature before lowering it (Herring & Lindsey, 2020). Despite the lengthy duration it takes to assess climate change, Earth's inhabitants -- plants and animals alike -- are confronted with a real-time crisis that requires immediate drastic action. We are, indeed, on borrowed time.

## **Bloc Positions**

### Asian-Pacific Bloc

In particular, Southeast Asian countries lack the adequate infrastructure for climate resilience, making them especially vulnerable to climate disasters like floods, monsoons, and tsunamis. Their proximity to the Indian and Pacific Oceans facilitates these water-related catastrophes that displace many coastal residents. Meanwhile, mass producers like China are major contributors to global fossil fuel emissions.

### African Bloc

Less-developed countries in Africa also struggle to protect their people from climate change due to insufficient financial resources. However, the types of environmental hardships faced are starkly different: Sub Saharan and Eastern Africa are prone to extreme heat waves and droughts. Together climate change, violence and conflict (e.g. political instability), has forced more people to flee their countries in Africa than any other region (United Nations, 2021).

### Eastern European Bloc

The European Union is more equipped to implement climate resilient mechanisms like renewable energy. In fact, countries like the Netherlands and Sweden serve as models to other countries that have similar financial and technological means. Still, the countries are not immune



to global warming-induced events like fires. This region, especially Germany, is also a hotspot for refugees and EDPs.

### North American Bloc

Despite also holding developed status, the USA and Canada trail behind in renewable energy production due to their dependence on fossil fuels. North American countries generally have the most resources to make these necessary transitions, but more economic compromises and incentives are needed for policy changes to occur.

### Latin American & Caribbean Bloc

Considering many Latin American countries like Bolivia and Chile are small and vulnerable to climate change, this region is typically in favor of progressive climate policies. As always, there are exceptions: Brazil and Venezuela are large oil producers and deforesters, both actions that speed the process of global warming (Kassai, 2019).

## **Committee Goals**

Climate change is an incredibly multifaceted issue to say the least. No single topic synopsis or report can completely and thoroughly encapsulate this ever-evolving crisis that has countless causes, consequences, and solutions. With that said, I encourage you to dive into your research (and eventually, committee) with an open mind. If you would like a starting point, research both long-term solutions to climate change and short-term responses for displaced persons, but keep in mind solutions for the latter may not be sustainable in the far future. For example, you may explore the barriers that displaced people face when migrating so that you can find approaches to remove them. And finally, remember that every country is complicit in this issue -- but some are



more active in the fight against it. Sticking to country policy and transparency will ensure an accurate and lively debate. Combating climate change is a lofty goal, but the first step is educating and awareness. From there, we can transform our culture of unmet goals into one of initiative and progress.

## Research Questions

1. Name three examples of how climate conditions can force people to migrate.
2. What long-term, sustainable policies should be enacted to prevent climate change induced displacement?
3. What populations or regions are most vulnerable to severe climate catastrophes?
4. Recognizing that human displacement is often the result of combined violent conflict, instability, and climate disasters, how does intersectionality play a role in this debate?
5. What barriers do displaced persons and migrants face in their search for a new home?
6. Does your country accept displaced people from other countries? What is the policy in place for such populations?
7. On the other hand, are your country's citizens fleeing due to climate change? What actions are being taken by your government or NGOs to prevent this?





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