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UNEP 1

The Effects of Climate Change and Status of
'Climate Refugees'

EFFLMUN'25

Special thanks to my guiding friends at the *Tepebaşı Municipality Climate Department* and *Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality Climate Change and Zero Waste Department*.

Special thanks to my professors in *Eskişehir Technical University, Climate Tepebaşı* and *Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change* for their help in my previous UNEP committees.

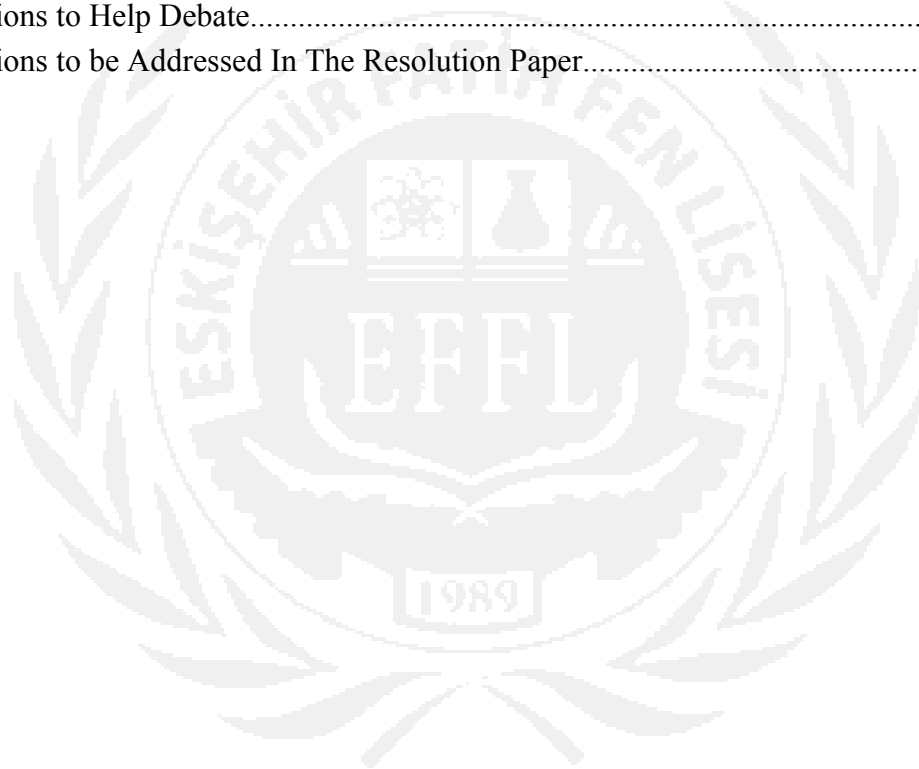
We have made six meetings with experts from many institutions during the preparation of this very committee. Their help and suggestions really helped shaping the committee.

EFFLMUN

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1. Letters from the Secretariat and the Academic Team

Dear delegates,

A warm welcome to EFFLMUN'25. We are truly delighted that you have chosen to spend your time with us, and we aim to make this decision one you'll look back on with absolute satisfaction.

This conference has been crafted with careful thought and unwavering dedication. I feel incredibly fortunate to have a role in shaping this event and to work alongside such talented individuals. The process demanded commitment, yet every step was rewarding because we always believed in the value of what we were building.

EFFLMUN'25 represents so much determination, passion, patience, and countless moments of collaboration that cannot be summed up easily. Above all, it was created to leave you with lasting, meaningful memories.

With great enthusiasm, we come together once more to celebrate dialogue, leadership, and the spirit of democracy. We cannot wait to offer you an exceptional and inspiring experience.

Güneş Uzun
Secretary-General
guneuzn@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

We made the EFFLMUN'25 with you in our hearts. We are happy that you joined us. Much thought and energy went into creating this gathering — but most importantly, it started with one idea: talking deeply always links people in unique manners. You picked to stay these days by our side; thus for every bit of time spent getting ready, it is valuable.

EFFLMUN'25 is far greater than the timetable of committees and sessions. It is a space where ideas converge, perspectives widen, and acquaintances happen to strike up. We wish that you are able to muster up enough confidence to speak out your thoughts, interest to look around, and ease just having fun being here.

As this conference kicks off, we want you to feel welcomed and supported as well as encouraged to take hold of any opportunity that comes your way. We are eager to see your drive, your leadership, and the individual marks each of you will make.

Ahmet Furkan Elden
Director General
afurkaneld@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the conference. As the Academic Team, we have worked with great care to research, write and organise every topic you will see throughout this event. Our goal was to create material that is clear, reliable, informative, and inspires you to debate with confidence.

We believe MUN is at its best when delegates feel prepared, supported and their visions expanded. That's why we focused on building committees that not only tackle global issues but also spark curiosity and encourage deeper thinking. We hope our work helps you dive into your roles, challenge ideas, and enjoy the experience fully. If you have any questions before or during the conference, our team will be glad to assist you. We wish you meaningful discussions, bold diplomacy, and an unforgettable MUN experience.

The Academic Team

2. Letter from the Under Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is my pleasure and joy to serve as your Under-Secretary General of United Nations Environmental Programme at this annual session of EFFLMUN. I extend my warm welcome to every one of you. I'm a 11th grade student at Çağdaş College, and I serve as the founder and the current chairman of Turkey's biggest free Model United Nations platform, MUN Course.

For this conference, we've decided to be more centralized on global cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals. During these 3 days, we will be discussing how global cooperation can be achieved in order to solve climate displacement, finding new solution ideas for the sustainability of our future. The agenda item is extremely important and serious. If we don't act now, the doomsday is near. Please do not read the study guide alone, but also watch videos, listen to podcasts, read books and articles about the topic. The agenda is more urgent and important than it seems, so I want you to be fully focused in. I'm more than sure that we'll be able to come up with some beautiful ideas.

I hope you will learn a lot from this committee and the overall conference, practicing your English debating skills and raising awareness on important global issues. As your USG, or in other words, your guide for this conference, please don't hesitate to contact me regarding the study guide or committee.

Warmest regards,

USG of UNEP

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3. Introduction

3.1 Introduction to the Committee

Established in 1972, The United Nations Environment Programme's mission is to coordinate international efforts in addressing environmental challenges, promoting sustainable development, and assisting nations in implementing environmentally sound policies. The organization works through various initiatives to improve environmental governance, support climate action, and foster sustainable urban growth.ⁱ The Stockholm Declaration of 1972, or the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, was the first United Nations declaration on the global environment. It consists of 26 principles and led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme, which will be mentioned in [section 5.1](#) later on this paper.

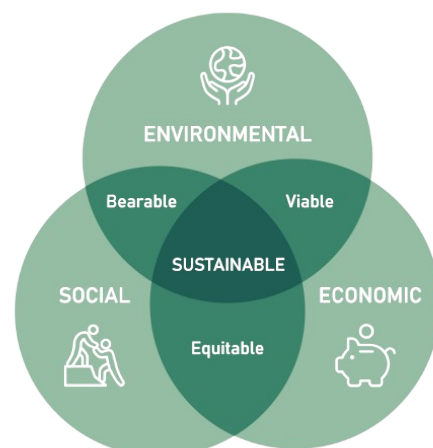
3.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item

The term “Climate refugees” is mentioned as “Environmentally displaced people”, which means displaced people who suffer from the climate and environment changes does not get the same legal treatment as asylum seekers who suffer from politics, wars and religion. Climate refugees lack explicit legal rights, highlighting a gap in international law, demanding urgent ethical and legal solutions.

As the world is being driven into a phase which climate change will affect almost everybody from every community, ignoring the facts on this topic would just worsen the situation that awaits us.

3.3 Sustainable Development

Sustainability's applicability to three elements of life: nature, people and business, as represented in the Venn diagram, the three elements of sustainability. The interlocking circles show that all three of these categories are highly interdependent. For example, at a global level, business flourishes when water is abundant and raw materials are plentiful. People (and the



environment) are healthy when they have clean air and water. People succeed when their businesses and institutions succeed. The idea of this interaction continuing on indefinitely is central to sustainability.

Furthermore, the dynamic landscape of urban development, coupled with growing social inequalities, underscores the strategic and global significance of urban policies for cities and metropolitan regions. This is particularly evident when considering that a significant portion of the urban population still resides in shanty towns, highlighting the substantial work that remains to be accomplished in this domain. At stake is also ensuring that cities remain thriving and habitable, prioritizing the well-being of their residents and the environment.ⁱⁱ

3.4 Sustainable Development Goals



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

As mentioned, Sustainable Development Goals cover many urgent modern-day problems, including creating urban areas and liveable spaces that fulfill their residents' needs with the minimum harm to the environment possible. You will mainly focus on the goals 13-15, but our agenda expands to other goals such as 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12. It's safe to say that the topic of climate displacement is interdependent on various factors, which will be explained further in this study guide.

3.5 Millennium Development Goals (Pre-SDGs)

Before Sustainable Development Goals (2015), there was 'the Millennium Development Goals', which were eight goals set to be achieved during the 2000-2015 period. Member States unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Summit led to the elaboration of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty by 2015.

3.6 Keywords and Useful Terms

Some keywords, trends, terms and concepts are given below to further help you understand the agenda and provide you a brief explanation to those you need to research about:

i. Climate Change

Climate change is an umbrella for various events that are happening in our world. From changing rain patterns to extreme temperatures; climate change is the situation we are currently experiencing, which is a long term shift in patterns that we are used to. Formerly the "climate change" and "global warming" terms were considered the same. But climate change differs from global warming because it covers much more, including global warming itself. The shift from ice age to the world that we know now was also a result of a climate change. The world constantly changes, including millennium long climate periods. Preparing for the change today is the best us humans can do.

What Is Climate Change?

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures.

The main greenhouse gases that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and cutting down forests can also release carbon dioxide.

Agriculture, oil and gas operations are major sources of methane emissions. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main sectors causing greenhouse gases.

Sourced from UN.org

ii. Climate Refugees

This term

Every day vulnerable people are forcibly displaced due to impacts generated by climate change. This isn't something that will happen, this is something happening now. Numerous studies, like The World Bank, forecast a grim picture of internal displacement in the millions, as the adverse effects of climate change induce more extreme weather, rising sea levels, threaten food security and impact livelihoods. As we are seeing play out now, it is the poorest and most vulnerable communities - those who contributed the least to global warming - that are paying the price and are hit hardest by this crisis.

Across and within borders, people are displaced. Recent trends indicate more internal displacement due to climate-related disasters than conflict, where in fact, of

the 30.6 million people displaced across 135 countries in 2017, 60 percent were as a direct result of disasters.

And for many others who are wholly dependent on the land and natural resources for their livelihood, slow climate changes are intricately linked to economics and politics, which means this is by no means merely an environmental issue. This is a human rights issue.

Climate change can also multiply existing vulnerabilities by exacerbating existing risks and creating new ones like food and water insecurity and competition over resources, which contribute to conflict and compound displacement.

Climate change impacts vary by region and communities, and in some contexts, climate-driven migration can be a managed response, while in other contexts, it can undermine regional stability. As with refugee flows, where people who flee conflict and persecution face multiple drivers of displacement, climate displaced people can face similar circumstances where climate conditions contribute to and exacerbate systemic failures and even conflict.ⁱⁱⁱ

Although we refer to climate refugees, the concept does not entirely exist in international refugee law.

Those who leave their countries in the context of climate change or disasters do not qualify for protection under international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention offers protection to those fleeing war and conflict who face persecution along grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. This could leave the Bangladeshi family displaced across borders by a disaster, the subsistence farmer in Chad with no option but to leave his ...

... country because he lacks water for farming, or a mother forced to flee her country because of a climate change-induced resource war, outside the legal framework for protection.

Yet regional refugee instruments like the 1984 Cartagena Declaration and the 1969 OAU

Convention offer a wider definition of providing protection to refugees fleeing conditions that “seriously disturb public order.” These regional instruments long pre-date when climate change was on our public radar but the intent was clear: to protect people’s fundamental human rights when events beyond their control, threaten their lives. ...

...
We approach this as an issue of equality, equity and justice - a fundamental threat to human rights - because climate change disproportionately impacts the most impoverished, marginalized, discriminated and disenfranchised people in our world who played very little role in contributing to the problem in the first place, and will pay a heavier, disproportionate price that challenges the enjoyment of human rights of huge populations.

Sourced from climate-refugees.org

Photo by Sean Robbins



Photo by Sean Robbins

4. Historical Background

The issue of climate change is surely not new. With the new changes in our world, especially after the .com bubble and social media boom, smaller media outlets and individual activists are more visible than they have ever been. As the way we get our news change and

getting information directly from the source becomes more popular, people can now be notified about the things they want to hear and care about.

“UNEP: 50 years of Environmental Milestones” (Interactive Timeline)
<https://www.unep.org/environmental-moments-unep50-timeline>

4.1 Early Footsteps

i. Earth Day (1970)



The first Earth Day that took place on April 22, 1970

The first Earth Day, which took place on April 22, 1970, is often seen as the unofficial birth date of modern environmentalism. It is estimated that 20 million people took to the streets on that day to demand greater protection of the natural world. That demand, which had barely figured in the catalogue of romantic artists and was foreign to modern rationalism, became part of the imagination of liberal societies. This is a significant fact: although environmentalism is largely a protest against the environmental unsustainability of liberal society, it does not emerge in spite of liberalism but thanks to the normative structure that characterizes open societies where any point of view can be defended peacefully.

ii. The Stockholm Declaration

“UN Conference on the Human Environment” (1972)

As mentioned in the introduction, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm was the first world conference to make the environment a major issue. Conference participants adopted a series of principles for sound management of the environment including the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment and several resolutions.

The Stockholm Declaration, which contained 26 principles, placed environmental issues at the forefront of international concerns and marked the start of a dialogue between industrialized and developing countries on the link between economic growth, the pollution of the air, water, and oceans and the well-being of people around the world.

The Action Plan contained three main categories:

- a) Global Environmental Assessment Programme (watch plan);
- b) Environmental management activities;
- c) International measures to support assessment and management activities carried out at the national and international levels. In addition, these categories were broken down into 109 recommendations.^{iv}



iii. Establishment of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “IPCC” (1988)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides governments at all levels with the most up-to-date, robust scientific information to help them develop climate policies. Created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), IPCC reports are a key input into international climate change negotiations. As an intergovernmental entity, IPCC is made up of members of the United Nations or WMO, totalling 195 countries.^v

The IPCC informs governments about the state of knowledge of climate change. It does this by examining all the relevant scientific literature on the subject. This includes the natural, economic and social impacts and risks. It also covers possible response options. The IPCC does not conduct its own original research. It aims to be objective and comprehensive.

Thousands of scientists and other experts volunteer to review the publications. They compile key findings into "Assessment Reports" for policymakers and the general public; Experts have described this work as the biggest peer review process in the scientific community.^{vi}

iv. The Rio Earth Summit “UNCED” (1992)

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the 'Earth Summit', was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3-14 June 1992. This global conference, held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the first Human Environment Conference in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972, brought together political leaders, diplomats, scientists, representatives of the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 179 countries for a massive effort to focus on the impact of human socio-economic activities on the environment. A 'Global Forum' of NGOs was also held in Rio de Janeiro at the same time, bringing together an unprecedented number of NGO representatives, who presented their own vision of the world's future in relation to the environment and socio-economic development.

The Rio de Janeiro conference highlighted how different social, economic and environmental factors are interdependent and evolve together, and how success in one sector requires action in other sectors to be sustained over time. The primary objective of the Rio 'Earth Summit' was to produce a broad agenda and a new blueprint for international action on environmental and development issues that would help guide international cooperation and development policy in the twenty-first century.

The 'Earth Summit' concluded that the concept of sustainable development was an attainable goal for all the people of the world, regardless of whether they were at the local, national, regional or international level. It also recognized that integrating and balancing economic, social and environmental concerns in meeting our needs is vital for sustaining human life on the planet and that such an integrated approach is possible. The conference also recognized that integrating and balancing economic, social and environmental dimensions required new perceptions of the way we produce and consume, the way we live and work, and the way we make decisions. This concept was revolutionary for its time, and it sparked a lively debate within governments and between governments and their citizens on how to ensure sustainability for development.

One of the major results of the UNCED Conference was [Agenda 21](#), a daring program of action calling for new strategies to invest in the future to achieve overall sustainable development in the 21st century. Its recommendations ranged from new methods of education, to new ways of preserving natural resources and new ways of participating in a sustainable economy.

The 'Earth Summit' had many great achievements: the [Rio Declaration](#) and its 27

universal principles, the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#); and the [Declaration on the principles of forest management](#). The 'Earth Summit' also led to the creation of the [Commission on Sustainable Development](#), the holding of first world conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States in 1994, and negotiations for the establishment of the [agreement on straddling stocks and highly migratory fish stocks](#).^{vii}

Quoted from [UN.org](#)

v. New York 1997 and Global Environment Outlook

Five years after Rio, UNEP created the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) to track and see if the world is making any progress. Please note that GEO is just one way of showing the progress and see what global politicians have done. There are many ways and parameters to track climate change progression. *You can just as well skip the GEO, it is really not an important topic compared to other titles in this study guide.*

GEO-1 is the first product of the GEO Project. It is a snap-shot of an ongoing worldwide environmental assessment process. It incorporates regional views and perceptions and aims at building consensus on priority issues and actions. Input was solicited from 20 collaborating centres, from United Nations organizations and through regional policy consultations.

GEO-1 describes the environmental status and trends in seven regions; it summarizes developments over time in regional policy responses; the report concludes with an exploration, based on model analysis, of what we might expect in the future for a selected number of environmental issues if no major policy reforms are initiated.

GEO-1 showed that significant progress has been made in the last decade in confronting environmental challenges both in developing and industrial regions, but that, nevertheless, the global environment has continued to degrade. Poverty, burgeoning population growth, the inefficient use of resources, high levels of consumption, waste generation, and industrial pollution are some of the key factors leading to this continuous degradation. Progress towards a sustainable future is simply too slow. The report argues that effective policy setting for sustainable development requires a blend of policy instruments that addresses the social fabric of life, ensures effective institutional arrangements, improves the economy and protects the environment.^{viii}

vi. Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005 as the first step towards clarification of the steps to be taken in the fight against climate change. Flexibility mechanisms developed to achieve the reduction target determined in the protocol and sanctions to be applied in case of non-compliance are among the most important features

that make the Kyoto Protocol different from other international environmental agreements. The Kyoto Protocol is the first international agreement to specify a quantified emission reduction target for Annex I parties.

The detailed implementation rules of the protocol were adopted at the 7th Conference of the Parties held in Marrakech in 2001. These rules, called the "Marrakech Accords", were approved in 2005 at the 1st Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

Afterward, the 13th Conference of the Parties held in Bali in 2007 was one of the most important meetings in the process of establishing the international climate regime after 2012. After this meeting, a process in which two-way international climate change negotiations were carried out under the titles of "Convention" and "Protocol" was entered.^{ix}

In short, the Kyoto Protocol operationalizes the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by committing industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. The Convention itself only asks those countries to adopt policies and measures on mitigation and to report periodically.

The Kyoto Protocol is based on the principles and provisions of the Convention and follows its annex-based structure. It only binds developed countries, and places a heavier burden on them under the principle of "common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities", because it recognizes that they are largely responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere.

4.2 The Rise of Climate Awareness in International Politics

The topic of climate awareness got more publicity as the world broke heat records over and over. Climate action is one of the main agendas for the last two decades.

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Heads of delegations at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons CC 2.0

As climate change is increasingly recognized as a “threat multiplier” by scientists, political representatives, and civil society across the world, the United Nations Security Council held an open debate on Friday to discuss its concrete impact on peace and security, and focus on tangible ways to diminish the effects of global warming.^x

As the threat of climate change got bigger and bigger, nations started to work more on the topic. With increasing priority, the issue of climate change is being discussed in every panel and convention.

4.3 How Climate Impacts and Displacement Became a Global Concern

i. Malé Declaration on the Human Dimension of Global Climate Change

The Malé Declaration on the Human Dimension of Global Climate Change is a treaty made by representatives of several Small Island Developing States who came together to sign the declaration in November 2007. The Declaration's goal was to lay out a clear strategy to link climate change and human rights together. The Declaration also sought to change the agenda of the campaign to combat climate change from focusing on only the environmental impacts of climate change to also taking into account the human rights impacts of climate change.

... [Click](#) to see the Malé Declaration - *Can help with the resolution paper.* ...

ii. IPCC First Assessment Report

The First Assessment Report (FAR) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was completed in 1990. It served as the basis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This report had effects not only on the establishment of the UNFCCC, but also on the first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP), held in Berlin in 1995.^{xi} Some citations from Section 5 (“Potential impacts of climate change on human settlement, the energy, transport and industrial sectors, human health and air quality”) regarding our agenda is given below:

“Throughout the world the most vulnerable populations are farmers engaged in subsistence agriculture, residents of coastal lowlands and islands, populations in semi-arid grasslands and the urban poor in slums in shanty towns, especially in megacities—those with several millions of inhabitants.”

“Climate change and even a modest global sea-level rise can be expected to prove disruptive to human settlement in many vulnerable coastal areas of some island nations and communities where drought, floods and changed agricultural growing conditions have affected water resources, energy, public health and sanitation, and industrial or agricultural production.”

“Global warming can be expected to affect the availability of water resources and biomass, both major energy sources in a large number of developing countries. Such changes in areas which lose water may jeopardize energy supply and materials essential for human habitation and energy. Climate change will also affects the regional distribution of other renewable energy resources such as wind and solar power.”^{xii}

Quoted from *CLIMATE CHANGE: The IPCC 1990 and 1992 Assessments*, p. 102

[Click](#) to see the whole document

5. Socio-Economic Consequences of Climate Change

The impact on developing countries, many of which lack resources for adaptation, may be particularly disruptive. Understanding the impacts of climate change on human settlement, energy, transport, industry and human health in such countries should be a high

priority, together with reinforcing indigenous capability to design and implement strategies to reduce adverse impacts of climate change.

5.1 Loss of Livelihoods, Poverty, and Economic Instability

Climate change will have pervasive socio-economic consequences that will not only affect major economic sectors such as agriculture, energy or healthcare, but will also result in changes to the supply and demand for goods and services of all sectors of the economy, albeit with varying levels of intensity. Higher temperatures, sea level rise, and other climatic changes (changes in regional precipitation patterns, the water cycle, frequency and intensity of extreme weather events), will also impact aspects of life that are not primarily based on or related to economic activity, as for example human security, health and well-being, culture, people's capabilities, and environmental quality.^{xiii}

The documents given in section 5.2 explain this topic pretty well.

5.2 Health Risks, Food & Water Insecurity, and Urban Overload

i. Health

Health impacts of climate change include both direct and indirect effects; including extreme heat and cold related mortalities, water and food and diseases, deaths and well-being dependent on environmental factors, and changes in air pollution and allergens. There are also risks to health infrastructure and to occupational health. The economic costs of health impacts are not easy to assess as they include both market and non-market costs. For instance morbidity costs include market impacts, such as the effects of illnesses on labour productivity, and non-market impacts, such as the costs of pain and suffering.

ii. Water Resources

“Climate change is projected to have both positive and negative impacts on freshwater resources, with the effect varying to a large extent by geographic latitude. While the global circulation climate system models vary significantly in their projections of regional climate changes, including precipitation patterns, it is expected that many humid mid-latitude and high latitude regions will most likely experience increased water availability with climate change. Groundwater is the biggest reservoir of available freshwater and is relatively better insulated from climate change. Nonetheless, groundwater recharge is projected to decline in many countries and sea level rise may increase salinity of groundwater reservoirs. Declining water availability and a larger number of extended dry periods are projected to affect drier many countries in the mid-latitudes and dry subtropical latitudes, although uncertainties on regional water availability are very large. Short-term or seasonal water reductions from more

variable streamflow (mostly resulting from a greater variability in rainfall) and reduced storage of water in ice and snow might nonetheless also be felt in regions with projected larger water availability. In addition, negative impacts of climate change on water quality from toxins produced by algae, for example, can contribute to reduced availability of freshwater (OECD, 2012, 2013; IPCC, 2014a). These impacts are expected to affect, inter alia, end users through changes to the availability of drinking water as well as industry through impacts on water supply for irrigation and energy supply.”^{xiv}

iii. Urban Overload

Urban areas tend to grow in population over time, making already dense cities more and more dense. At some point, maintaining the infrastructure and services becomes almost impossible or ineffective. As mentioned in the New Towns Act section in the study guide, new remote settlements are a must for sustainable urban expansion.

Too much or too little load on public services and infrastructure is not good. Fitting too many people in small urban areas results in broken public transport, long traffic jams, lower happiness, higher stress and health issues, and a spike in pollution. At the same time, not having enough people to provide services would cause local governments to build smaller capacities or not build at all, making residents unhappy once again.

5.3 Pollution and Carbon Emissions in Urban Areas

i. Air Pollution

Urban areas create massive amounts of CO₂ due to high fossil fuel usage mostly for transportation, heating and electric generation. It's an undeniable fact that greenhouse gases are one of the main issues in denser urban zones. Wrong usage of resources and overconsumption causes unnecessary air pollution. Many cities have found ways of reducing their carbon emissions without making a big impact on their citizens lifestyles or their city budget.

Urban activities are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Estimates suggest that urban areas are responsible for 70 percent of global CO₂ emissions, with transport and buildings being among the largest contributors.^{xv}

ii. Water Pollution

Urban waters take on large amounts of pollution from a variety of sources, including industrial discharges, mobile sources such as private cars and big trucks, residential/commercial wastewater, trash and polluted stormwater runoff from urban landscapes.^{xv}

iii. Soil Pollution

Soil pollution is usually caused by private-use everyday (self-care, cleaning, pesticides, etc.) products and wrong waste management.

iv. Other Types of Pollutions

Other pollutions such as light and noise are highly dependent on residents' lifestyles and how cities are built in the first place.

5.4 Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier (conflict, migration, inequality)

Climate change is considered as a global security risk, a threat to the society that we've built. The threat multiplier concept refers to the tendency of climate change to multiply existing threats to security.

“Projected climate change will seriously exacerbate already marginal living standards in many Asian, African, and Middle Eastern nations, causing widespread political instability and the likelihood of failed states. Unlike most conventional security threats that involve a single entity acting in specific ways and points in time, climate change has the potential to result in multiple chronic conditions, occurring globally within the same time frame.

Economic and environmental conditions in already fragile areas will further erode as food production declines, diseases increase, clean water becomes increasingly scarce, and large populations move in search of resources. Weakened and failing governments, with an already thin margin for survival, foster the conditions for internal conflicts, extremism, and movement toward increased authoritarianism and radical ideologies.”

-Quoted from authors of the 2007 CNA report^{xvi}

The use of the term “threat multiplier” led to three ways in which climate security risks were better understood. First, by framing risks as emanating not from climate change per se but from how it interacts with and aggravates other environmental, economic, social and political stressors that can threaten national stability,^{xvii} the term helped explain the systemic nature of climate risks and move away from siloed-thinking. In doing so, it allowed for the rise of a broader and more comprehensive security approach to climate risks, with responses integrating defense, development, and diplomacy. Second, by highlighting the role of and implications on the military, it emphasized the necessity to incorporate climate change in every aspect of military planning. It consequently brought together the climate and defense communities, and got multiple actors engaged in efforts toward increased climate resilience of communities and bases.^{xviii} Third, by recognizing that climate change is not only an environmental issue, but also a national security concern, it helped broaden the bipartisan coalition of policymakers and practitioners in the U.S. interested in addressing climate change around military bases and infrastructure and highlighted the transnational security aspects of climate risks requiring collective action.

Developing nations are most vulnerable to modest climate change, and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions would diminish their vulnerabilities significantly. Developed countries would benefit most from mitigation for moderate climate change.

Risk multipliers such as climate change hits the vulnerable harder. Making inequality a deeper problem than it already is. Underdeveloped and developing countries get the biggest damage and that's where the big scale climate migrations are made.

Taking Syria as an example, the civil war displaced millions. The scale of people impacted is quite big, from wealthy to poor, child to adults, there are people affected from every community. When people watch the news on Syrian refugees, they usually just focus on the conflicts. But while that's true, we shall not forget that climate change works as a threat multiplier. The Syrian civil war shows how climate change can act as a threat multiplier and a fuel to conflicts, which is why climate change needs to be considered in peacebuilding processes. The implementation of aggressive, soil-exploiting agricultural policies triggered the climate crisis, which decreased agricultural productivity, forcing a large-scale rural-to-urban migration. This translated into an overpopulation of cities and caused resource scarcity, unequal distribution of resources and unemployment, leading to the rise of protests.



6. Climate-Induced Migration

Climate migration or climate-induced migration describes the permanent or temporary change of location of an individual or group of people due to environmental changes caused by global warming. These changes occur suddenly or gradually, forcing people to permanently or temporarily leave their place of residence. Displacement can occur due to destruction caused by natural disasters, but movements may also be planned in anticipation of gradual environmental changes.

Climate migration is not just the dramatic displacement of poor and underdeveloped communities but also a planned movement from one place to another due to the change of climate, water resources, natural resources and vice versa.

6.1 What Drives People to Leave Their Homes?

Us humans settle because we find a liveable place. A decent way to earn money, a safe place to stay. The quality of life and work opportunities are two of the most important factors for someone to live in an area, and two of the most vulnerable to climate change.

Climate change can affect jobs, especially those dependant on the environment such as crop and livestock farming. In bigger urban areas, overusage of water and underground resources can and does create water shortages and empty dams, limiting access to water.

6.2 Examples from Affected Regions

In this section, there will be one example from each region that depends on a different economic activity.

i. Agricultural Regions

Central American Dry Corridor

The Dry Corridor is a large strip of land across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua that is vulnerable to extreme climate events like long periods of drought, putting livelihoods at risk.

Exposed to heatwaves and unpredictable rainfall, the ecosystems and peoples of the Central American Dry Corridor are some of the most vulnerable in the world to climate change. As recently as 2019, a fifth year of drought left 1.2 million people in the region needing food aid.

Regreening the Dry Corridor: A Climate Action Commitment from Central America

Stretching from southern Mexico to Panama, the Central American Dry Corridor (CADC) spans over 150,000 km² an expansive belt of land that is home to more than 20 million people. Covering 44% of Mesoamerica's territory, this region is both rich in culture and deeply vulnerable to the forces of climate change. Here, 73% of people live in poverty, relying heavily on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods resources increasingly strained by droughts, floods, hurricanes, and conflict.

The Dry Corridor's story is one of both fragility and resilience. It is a place where generations have worked the land, yet where erratic weather patterns and depleted ecosystems now threaten food security and drive migration. It is also where communities, when given the right tools and support, are proving that recovery and renewal are possible.

World Vision's Regreening the Dry Corridor Initiative seeks to transform this fragile landscape into a corridor of opportunity and hope. With a bold ambition to improve the lives of 10 million people, the initiative advances climate resilience through four interconnected pillars:

Environmental regeneration: Restoring degraded land and ecosystems.

Integrated water resource management: Ensuring sustainable access to water.

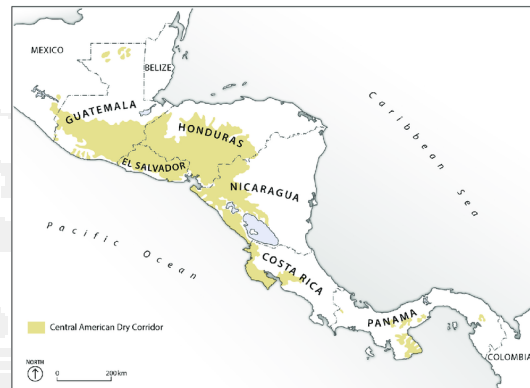
Food security and nutrition: Strengthening local food systems.

Risk reduction and community resilience: Empowering communities to adapt and thrive. By uniting children, families, communities, governments, and donors, World Vision is driving coordinated action to restore ecosystems, revitalise livelihoods, and build lasting resilience.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and global climate frameworks, this initiative represents Central America's shared contribution to global climate action—a testament to the region's determination to protect the planet and secure a healthier, more sustainable future for every child.^{xix}

Quoted from <https://www.wvi.org/dry-corridor>

The region and its agriculture are vulnerable to risks associated with climate change (long periods of drought, followed by intense rains), which has caused a significant economic impact and threatened food security. The Dry Corridor is a great example of how wrong agricultural practices and poor planning can turn out, by droughts affecting almost 500,000 and food shortages around 2.7 million people.



ii. Touristic Regions

“Sinking Islands”

The extinction narrative of the ‘sinking island states’ is well known and discussed extensively in the climate change institutions, academic literature, and media accounts of climate change. This article questions the theoretical basis upon which this narrative has developed, asking how it became so embedded in climate change politics, and what implications this narrative has both for islands and for action on climate change. Focussing on the Pacific, this article uses the insights of racial capitalism and critical feminism to historicise the sinking islands extinction narrative. This historical analysis shows that underlying these extinction narratives of doomed islands and islanders is a colonial logic of disposability that has developed over time, shifting to naturalise changing forms of violence and exploitation in the Pacific. This argument has implications for climate change politics where extinction narratives are widespread, including in justice arguments. The racialised and gendered colonial logics that underlie vulnerability discourse means it does not function to strengthen arguments for mitigation, but instead to naturalise the suffering and loss of those deemed vulnerable. Questioning how discourses of vulnerability impact on capitalist

accumulations and dispossessions is therefore important, as the solutions to vulnerability are different if it is understood not as inherent, but as an actively reproduced condition that is being resisted by vulnerabilised communities.

iii. Fishery and Livestock Based Economic Regions

The Ganges–Brahmaputra–Meghna delta is one of the most populous deltas in the world, threatened by diverse environmental stressors, including salinity intrusion, causing adverse consequences on livelihood adaptation. Shrimp farming has been recognized as one of the most practiced livelihoods among various livelihood opportunities. Growing global demand and higher economic returns encouraged many farmers to convert their agricultural land to shrimp farms by intruding saline water into the farmlands to produce shrimps. In this study, we investigated whether the growing trend of shrimp farming influences the migration aspirations of the vulnerable coastal communities in Bangladesh. The study employed qualitative interviews with individuals in four villages in southwest coastal Bangladesh. Satellite images were analyzed to detect land-use changes and changes in soil salinity in the last 28 years, confirming a rapid increase in shrimp farms. Results from the qualitative interviews indicate that poor people with limited resources cannot produce paddy on their land because of increased soil salinity caused by shrimp farming. Such a situation leads them to aspire to migrate. Thus, our analysis contributes to the discourse on “aspiration and capability” in environmental migration by adding the impacts of land-use changes on livelihoods.^{xx}

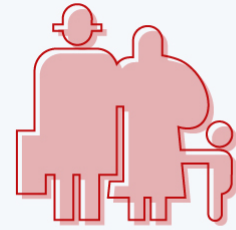
Sourced from [springer.com](https://www.springer.com)

7. The Debate Around “Climate Refugees”

Various names are given to the people who have to leave their countries and their region due to the natural disasters such as environmental refugees, climate refugees, and environmentally displaced people.

Climate Change, the Great Displacer

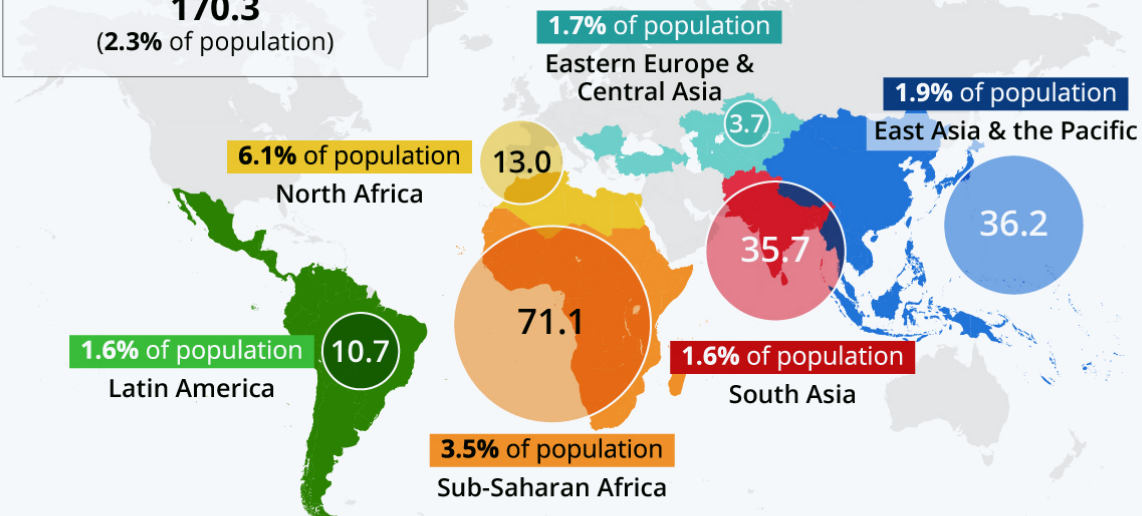
Average number of internal climate migrants by 2050 per region (in millions)*



Total in surveyed regions

170.3

(2.3% of population)



* Modeled on pessimistic reference = High emission & unequal development scenarios concerning water availability, crop productivity and sea-level rise

Source: World Bank



statista

7.1 Definitional Challenges and Lack of Legal Protection

As climate-induced displacement increases, legal protection lags behind. This post explores how current legal frameworks fail to safeguard millions of displaced people – despite growing international recognition.

Legally, climate refugees don't exist. The definition of a refugee was created over 70 years ago in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, organized by the United Nations. And sadly, it hasn't changed since. According to the Convention, a refugee is someone who is "unable or unwilling" to return to their country with a "well-founded fear of persecution" due to "race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." This was a convention that was created in order to create protection for people who have migrated to different countries as a result of World War II—a direct reaction to the extreme events and threats at the time. As a result of an extreme, a definition

was created. The definition included reflections that were necessary after the extreme: reasons of “race,” religion,” and “nationality” came first. Being a member of a certain discriminated group was recognized as something that might lead to persecution. Being “unable” or “unwilling” to trust the protection of your own country was the second possibility of being a refugee. This is important for refugees—while being unable to return could severely limit the number of refugees who are fleeing persecution, the word unwilling allows those who don’t feel safe with how their countries are taking care of them could simply leave. There doesn’t have to be a gun directly pointed at your head—social instability and uncertainty can be a reason for leaving. The general situation in the country becomes a reason for refuge.^{xxi}

-Emine Taha

Despite increasing public acknowledgement of climate-induced displacement, there is still no internationally recognised legal definition of a ‘climate refugee’. Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, a ‘refugee’ is someone outside their country of origin with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group. Environmental degradation, no matter how severe, does not in itself constitute grounds for refugee status, unless it results in human-perpetrated persecution falling under the protection of the Convention.

This restrictive definition is incorporated into European law through Directive 2011/95/EU, which also provides subsidiary protection for individuals facing a real risk of serious harm, such as the death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, or indiscriminate violence in armed conflict. However, displacement caused by environmental phenomena – such as droughts or floods – does not, in itself, meet these criteria. Unless such conditions can be linked to human-perpetrated harm, climate-displaced persons remain excluded from both international and European legal protection regimes.^{xxii}

The grey area is that one person’s motives may change in nature and in importance during their journey. So categorising individuals as “economic migrants” or “asylum seekers” can’t always reflect that complex reality of people’s experience of migration and the situation they had to suffer at home (e.g. droughts). Giving away all your life savings for a chance to cross a few borders is a huge leap to take.

Large numbers of people arriving by boat in Greece, Italy and elsewhere. Are they refugees or are they migrants? The truth is that they’re a mix of both. “Refugees and

migrants” is probably the best way to refer to movements of people by sea or in other circumstances where both groups may be present. As other reports point out, some migrants face extreme conditions at home, such as natural disasters, that have coerced them to leave. The grey area then expands when it comes to determining the difference between coerced (for certain migrants) and forced (for refugees).^{xxiii}

7.2 Why Current International Law Falls Short

The 1951 Refugee Convention in its current form cannot protect climate refugees for three main reasons. The first reason is that this Convention can only grant refugee status to those persecuted for specific reasons, such as race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. These grounds make it impossible to include climate as such. The second reason is that according to the interpretation of the definition of refugee in the Convention, the persecution of the refugee must be carried out by a human agent, such as a state or non-state actor, which cannot be established when it comes to climate as a persecutor. The third reason is that the Refugee Convention requires that the refugee be outside his or her country of residence, which is unable or unwilling to provide protection to that person. In the case of climate change, however, the vast majority of climate change displacement occurs internally, within the person’s country of residence.^{xxiv}

8. Global and Institutional Responses

8.1 Involvement of UNEP, UNHCR, UNFCCC, and Others

- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):** While UNEP focuses on researching and providing services and support for climate action, climate change resilience and many other environment related topics, climate displacement is a special title under climate change and refugees.

The topic of climate displacements fall under many categories from refugee laws to climate and environmental action. Here are some departments working on this topic and what they do:

UNEP addresses climate displacement by focusing on the environmental drivers and consequences of human movement. Its work involves promoting ecosystem based adaptation and resilience projects to

reduce the environmental degradation that forces people to move in the first place.

- **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** Founded in 1921 right after the United Nations was founded, UNHCR works for protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides the foundation for multilateral action to combat climate change and its impacts on humanity and ecosystems. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement were negotiated under the UNFCCC and built on the Convention.

UNFCCC has taskforces. The Task Force on Displacement (TFD) was established in 2015 at COP 21, to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change with its mandate later extended at the recommendation by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.^{xxv}

“The current work of the TFD focuses more broadly to support strategic workstream (d) of the current five-year rolling workplan of the ExCom, which aims to enhance cooperation and facilitation in relation to human mobility, including migration, displacement and planned relocation.”

- **International Organization for Migration (UN Migration):** Established in 1951, IOM, the UN Migration agency, is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants.

IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist

in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

The IOM Constitution recognizes the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development, as well as to the right of freedom of movement. IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management: Migration and development; Facilitating migration; Regulating migration; Forced migration.

IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.^{xxvi}

9.2 Existing Efforts, Frameworks and Proposed Mechanisms

1951 Refugee Convention does not cover climate displacement. There are existing efforts that focus on filling this legal and institutional gap through non-binding frameworks, development projects, and disaster-specific protocols.

- **Kampala Convention**

The Kampala Convention (African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa) is a treaty of the African Union that addresses internal displacement caused by armed conflict, *natural disasters and large-scale development projects* in Africa.^{xxvii}

- **Nansen Initiative and Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD):** A state-led consultative process that created the Protection Agenda (2015). The PDD (its successor) is a global platform that promotes the implementation of the Agenda to help people displaced across borders by disasters and climate change.

The Organization's work on environmental migration and disaster displacement directly builds on policy work and institutional expertise in areas such as international migration law and policy, migration research, displacement tracking and camp management in disaster situations, disaster risk reduction, emergency response and preparedness, transition and recovery, immigration and border management, labour migration and development, and migration health.^{xxviii}

Visit the Platform on Disaster Displacement [website](#) for more.

- **Peninsula Principles:** The 2013 Peninsula Principles are the first international legal instrument on the rights of climate displaced persons and the obligations of states and the international community towards them. They provide comprehensive guidance on how best to deal with climate displacement for all involved.

You can check <https://www.displacementsolutions.org/peninsula-principles>.

PDF • THE PENINSULA PRINCIPLES IN ACTION ►

Other Notable Frameworks and Conventions

- Regional Refugee Instruments
- OAU Refugee Convention
- 1984 Cartagena Declaration
- Cartagena Declaration
- Malé Declaration on the Human Dimension of Global Climate Change
- Samoa Pathway

9. Barriers to Effective Action

There are many factors that prevent lawmakers and NGOs from working effectively in this field. The situations that make taking action harder are numerous and complex, often rooted in political disagreement, corrupt governments, financial shortfall, and legal gaps. They prevent both the reduction of emissions and the protection of vulnerable people, in our case, refugees.^{xxix}

10. Legal, Political, and Financial Obstacles

The successful handling of the climate displacement crisis is heavily blocked by three main problems: legal confusion, political stubbornness, and a critical lack of money.

Legally, the 1951 Refugee Convention's narrow definition excludes climate migrants, creating a "protection void" that leaves millions without official status or guaranteed assistance, a gap only partially addressed by non-binding frameworks.

Politically, the issue is hampered by national sovereignty concerns over border control, a profound trust deficit between highly vulnerable nations, and active lobbying by fossil fuel interests.

Financially, the failure of developed nations to meet existing climate finance pledges and the reliance on voluntary contributions for the new Loss and Damage Fund mean that vulnerable countries lack the essential resources to implement effective adaptation and planned relocation strategies, often forcing migration as the only viable option.

11. Pathways for International Cooperation

Even though existing refugee laws does not cover climate displaced people and communities as it should be, there are many conventions and frameworks that help getting this agenda recognized globally, and eventually make international law acknowledge the issue of climate displacement and refugees.

11.1 Building Resilience and Legal Recognition

You are expected to try cooperating with other nations and coming up with an acceptable plan to make climate displacement recognized worldwide.

UNEP focuses on cooperation and building resilience more compared to other bodies and NGOs that have climate displacement on their agenda.^{xxx}

11.2 Policy Tools for Prevention, Adaptation, and Protection

Policy tools addressing climate displacement are best categorized into a three-pronged strategy: Prevention, Adaptation, and Protection. This structure (Avert, Minimize, and Address) ensures that policies cover the full life cycle of the challenge.

[Click](#) to see the UNFCCC's Technical guide on averting, minimizing and addressing non-economic losses in the context of human mobility - a document that can help you understand how Avert, Minimize, and Address works.

12. Objectives of the Committee

It is expected for you to read the study guide in detail and do your research on the topic, especially on the questions to be addressed. The agenda item is extremely important and serious. The chairboard wants you to think outside the box and come up with some effective ideas. At the end of the committee, you must pass a resolution that would focus on making the lives of climate refugees easier, fixing the current international law to include climate refugees, making climate displacement's importance recognized around the world, and creating a tomorrow where climate change is no more a reason for displacement.

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13. Questions to Help Debate

This section suggests some questions that can be discussed in the committee and they don't have to be mentioned in the resolution paper specifically.

- How can the socio-economic consequences of climate change be minimized around the world?
- What nations are doing to help tackle the issue of climate displacement?
- What are international organizations doing or planning to do in order to reduce the effects of climate displacement and habitat damage due to climate change?

14. Questions to be Addressed In The Resolution Paper

1. How can the effects of climate change be minimized in underdeveloped and developing countries?
2. How can countries work together in order to help climate refugees?
3. What are the gaps in the existing international law and how can it include climate displaced people and communities?
4. How can legal frameworks can be developed in order to protect and define climate refugees?
5. How can a new framework be established to define and protect climate-displaced persons?
6. What measures can be taken in order to minimize inequality in climate change vulnerability?

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Background research bibliography will be published later.

Further reading will be published later.



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