



United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Climate Change Exacerbating Conflict
Head Chair:

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Policy Dilemma

Modern-day climate change issues continue to impact countless lives across the globe. From the shift in climate patterns and the rise in global temperatures to the melting glaciers and degradation of coral reefs that affect ocean biodiversity, climate change issues are multifaceted and lead to unintended consequences that exacerbate conflict.¹ Human activity persists as the main driver of climate change, especially the rise in industrialization, culture of overconsumption, and environmentally damaging business practices. As more time elapses and little is done to combat climate change, the issue will be expected to be more difficult and costly.² However, the issue of climate change is not one-dimensional, but rather very complex. According to the National Centers for Environmental Information, July 2024 was the warmest July on record. This extreme weather statistic continued the trend of the 14th consecutive month of record-high global temperatures.³ As a result, regions in Central America, Africa, Europe, and southern Asia have been facing some of the most drastic shifts in temperature, which have left these areas experiencing severe resource management problems and the lack of necessities. (Appendix 1.1) These issues have continued to escalate tension and instability on both the local and global level as countries struggle to adapt to the changing climate. At the 1992 “Earth Summit,” the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established to directly address climate change issues.⁴ With climate change at the forefront of critical global issues, scholars have been researching methods and approaches to mitigate its negative effects and slow the degradation of Earth’s nature. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in particular has contributed to scientific knowledge through its contributions of data on climate change, biodiversity, and oceans.⁵ In particular, climate change has impacted the frequency and severity of natural disasters that shape agricultural seasons for countries like South Sudan, Sudan, Chad, and Somalia.⁶ A recent report in southern Africa stated that more than 1.1 million children under the age of 5 are facing acute malnutrition as a

result of a drought that caused an extreme food shortage.⁷ The inadequate agricultural harvest may lead to economic instability and greater tension between communities for resources. This instability often is further exacerbated by the influx of climate refugees, increasing overcrowding and the competition for resources.⁸ Therefore, the issue of climate change and its multifaceted impact on the effort to maintain peace and security has evolved. It has now become a need to reframe how climate change issues affect regions differently and what can be done to remedy the subsequent effects and create climate change-resistant infrastructure.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's core values of reimagining the future of education and the goal to establish common standards for open science aims to navigate the new world to allow people across the world to live in peace with one another. The strong emphasis on working together collaboratively adds to UNESCO's mantra of fostering humanity and the core values of education, science, culture and information. With the ever-present issue of climate change worsening problems such as unsustainable infrastructure, food insecurity, and resource depletion, UNESCO is tasked with determining appropriate approaches to mitigate the widespread impact of climate change and to strengthen countries' climate-resilience as a means to promote peace and longevity.

Chronology

1988: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established as part of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).⁹ The IPCC was initially tasked

with preparing and presenting a comprehensive report regarding the state of knowledge of the science of climate change, the economic implications, and possible strategies to respond to climate change, as outlined in an UN General Assembly Resolution.¹⁰ Since its inception to present-day 2024, the IPCC has produced six cycles of assessments regarding climate change and six reports that detail climate change produced worldwide. These assessment reviews have been crucial in guiding international climate policy making over the past decades. The IPCC is considered the leading scientific entity on all aspects related to climate change and produces comprehensive Assessment Reports every five to seven years.

In 1990, the First IPCC Assessment Report (FAR) was published. The report predicted the fast pace of global warming and served as a wakeup call for the UN that the rapid rate of climate change would be imminent. In 1995, the Second Assessment was released, which reaffirmed the findings in the First Assessment Report. This report also expressed a likely certainty that human activity was a large contributor to global warming. The findings in the Second Assessment inspired the adoption of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty that commits 41 member states to reduce greenhouse emissions.¹¹ The Third Assessment Report of 2001 drew more attention to the range of scientific, technical, economic, and social issues associated with climate change. This report summarized the previous two reports and emphasized the regional aspects of climate change, instead of just broadening the issue to be recognized as solely a global issue.¹² Both the Fourth Assessment in 2007 and the Fifth Assessment of 2014 demonstrated that there was “unequivocal” consensus that human activity was propelling the increase of greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. These two assessments coupled to present a harsh truth that the current rate of greenhouse emissions superseded the previously predicted rate of global warming, thus, signifying an unprecedented acceleration of climate change impacts.¹³ The materials from these reports assisted the implementation of temperature-change standards for the Kyoto Protocol Report.

In 2023, the Sixth Assessment Report was published during the Panel's 58th Session. This report outlines three sections, distinguished by timeframes: "Current Status and Trends," Long-Term Climate and Development Futures," and "Near-term Responses in a Changing Climate." The Sixth Assessment is the latest report that details crucial data to guide policy in the 2030s-2040s. The IPCC's efforts to produce holistic reports of the latest ongoing climate change crisis is crucial in understanding the associated contributors and risks of global warming. By frequently publishing new reports, the IPCC builds on the preexisting database of knowledge to better guide policymakers in a direction of sustainability and longevity for the people and the planet.

The IPCC also indicates that climate change leads to greater food and water insecurity, which can exacerbate violent conflict. The Russo-Ukrainian war, while multifaceted, is caused in part by Russia's desire to re-annex Ukraine as the country once provided 4.27 million tons of grain, more than 12 million people per year.¹⁴ In 2010 and 2012, Russia suffered droughts which led to a significant decrease in grain production while grain prices soared.¹⁵ Thus, climate change is actively motivating armed conflict as resources become scarce. Armed conflict also leads to increased carbon emissions which contribute to the problem, thus exacerbating the problem of climate change and food insecurity.¹⁶

2010: Horn of Africa Crisis

Commonly known as one of Africa's most unstable and conflicted regions, The Horn of Africa has been the center of attention for leaders, scholars, and thinkers to understand the intra-state and inter-state conflicts and their contributing factors.¹⁷ From the late 1950s to present day in the 2020s, the Horn of Africa has been involved in numerous wars and conflicts that were often triggered by the impacts of climate change. The Horn of Africa is experiencing its longest drought in 40 years, which is exacerbating their resource deficit and political instability.¹⁸ A report from the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development (IGAD) in November of 2021 found that seasonal rainfall for a large region of the Horn of Africa was at an all-time low since the 1980s. The lack of rainfall's impact on resource availability has ballooned concerns for the impact of global warming and its detrimental effect on the African population.¹⁹ An estimated 36.4 million people are suffering from hunger due to food insecurity in a plethora of African countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

Marked by war, famine, and internally displaced individuals, the Horn of Africa faces severe internal conflicts that are exacerbated by outstanding factors of climate change-induced disasters. A substantial portion of the countries in the Horn of Africa are arid or semi-arid regions, resulting in an overwhelming reliance on livestock for food (Appendix 1.2). However, due to the conditions of the ongoing drought, the loss of crops and livestock have dwindled food reserves and shifted the reliance of food acquisition to trade. The inflated prices of food due to high-demand and low-supply have caused major backlash from local communities who cannot afford such premium prices, especially those in the areas affected by droughts.²⁰

The growing concerns in the Horn of Africa have gained major headline attention within the international community, thus, the UN has since called to action to target nearly 27.4 million people in the affected areas by setting out billions of dollar's worth of response funding.²¹ The devastating consequences of intra-state conflict within the Horn of Africa highlight the necessity to combat climate change in the regional area to mitigate and prevent such extreme weather events such as intense droughts. Moreso, the developments in the Horn of Africa also emphasizes collaboration within regional entities to create effective programs that can cater to their specific environmental, social, and political needs.

2015: The Paris Agreement

The legally binding international treaty regarding climate change, better known as the Paris Agreement, was adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in

2015. With world leaders of over 196 parties involved in the adoption, the collective agreement expressed the sentiment that climate change is a clear and imminent issue that requires international cooperation to reduce the negative effects and slow the progression of climate change. The mission of the Paris Agreement is to hold the gradual increase in the global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius. The ambitious goal of the Agreement requires a multi-faceted approach to transform the economic, social, and environmental scenes to work on cutting greenhouse emissions by 2030.²²

As of 2020, countries have been engaging in Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to gauge how much each country can reduce in national emissions to reach the goal set in the Paris Agreement. Every five years, countries update their NDCs and submit them to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat for review.²³ The UNFCCC's role in achieving the goals set out in the Paris Agreement lie in the mission values. The UNFCCC recognizes that the majority of current greenhouse gas emissions are produced by developed industrialized countries, categorized as Annex I. Therefore, the UNFCCC places the obligation on developed countries (Annex I) to spearhead the efforts to reduce emissions.²⁴ In doing so, the UNFCCC continues to reevaluate projects to determine financial assistance in countries with climate change activities. Non-Annex I Parties of developing countries hold less liability in leading the way for emissions reductions due to their lack of contribution to the issue. However, Non Annex I parties are still important in implementing local programs to educate and ensure communities can work together and practice sustainable habits.

The capacity-building aspect of the Paris Agreement is the understanding that not all developing countries have the capacity to deal with climate change-induced challenges. Therefore, the Paris Agreement underscores the need for climate-related capacity-building for developing countries so that they may increase their resilience and work to mitigate the impacts of climate change in their own local communities.

The high-standards of the Paris Agreement have influenced many countries to set individual carbon neutrality targets or zero-carbon solutions for their own country to help reach the collective goal. The Paris Agreement also serves as a call to action for the United Nations to work together to create a more sustainable future.²⁵

2015: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which serves as a collaborative blueprint for guiding themes to foster a sustainable tomorrow for peace and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development details 17 core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to call to action both developing and developed countries. Within the 17 SDGs, the prominent themes are ending poverty, improving health and education outcomes, reducing inequality, and addressing climate change crises.²⁶ The creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development leans on previous academics and research in the preceding decades. Every year since the Agenda's inception in 2015, the United Nations Secretary General presents an annual report on the progression towards reaching the sustainable development goals.

In the latest report for 2024, the progress details the implications of the pandemic as well as the overall progression/regression of the SDGs. For climate change in particular, the report describes how the pandemic has worsened ongoing conflicts, geopolitics, and the effect of climate change. The overall report accounts that only 17% of the SDGs are on track in the year 2024, demonstrating a wake-up call for the international community to revamp their effort to implement meaningful change, especially with only a little over 5 years remaining before 2030.²⁷ Out of 17 SDGs, SDG 13 is directly tied to climate change and is described as the goal to “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.” SDG 13 highlights the importance of addressing climate change as well as the link between people and the planet. Within SDG 13, the goal clearly and succinctly states the current state of the world in relation to global warming and the level

of emissions the world “should” be at. Moreover, SDG 13 also voices the statement that highly vulnerable regions experience a disproportionate level of negative climate change impacts from disasters.²⁸ Although SDG 13 is the goal directly tied to combating climate change, nearly all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are interconnected with another. These goals also inherently discourage acts of conflict such as war. War intrinsically goes against all of the SDGs since conflict damage destroys infrastructure like roads, schools, and hospitals, as well as violates

2024: COP28

Since 1995, The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has launched the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP) every year to discuss goals and responsibilities for assessing climate measures. Attended by thousands of delegates including heads of states and world leaders, the UNFCCC’s Conference of the Parties facilitate conversations with numerous non-government organizations, corporations, and stakeholders to build consensus and spearhead progress in addressing climate change.

One of the most well-known Conference of the Parties to the Convention was COP21 hosted in 2015 in Paris, France. As a result of COP21, the Paris Agreement was adopted and became a legally binding international treaty on climate action. The success of COP21 demonstrated the diplomatic powers of the UN for countries of vastly different industrialization levels to congregate and work together to curb global warming.²⁹ To this day, the Paris Agreement remains as one of the world’s most significant accords in regard to climate change.

COP27 held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in 2022 gave birth to the Loss and Damage Fund. The idea of a fund to compensate for loss and damages was originally proposed in the past but did not gain any traction until now. By bringing up the Loss and Damage Fund, COP27 stressed the importance of assisting poorer nations that contribute

the least to climate change yet face the brunt of its impact. Despite the idealistic direction of this fund, issues arose regarding where the money would come from and who would pay into the fund. The Santiago Network was discussed at COP27 as another means of assisting developing countries via technical support instead of financial funds.³⁰

In the latest COP28 UAE, the convention was held at Expo City, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in the year 2023. Over 85,000 participants were at COP28 UAE, including national representatives, civil societies, businesses, Indigenous People, philanthropy and other international organizations.³¹ During this conference, an emphasis was placed on collaboration across civil society, governments, industries and sectors with the COP28 UAE Presidency believing that the government and private sector must work in tandem to address climate change effectively.³² A remarkable moment from COP28 was the first ‘global stocktake’ of the world’s efforts to address climate change under the Paris Agreement to call on respective governments to transition to renewable energy and away from fossil fuels. The stocktake helped identify that the collective progress towards achieving the stipulations stated in the Paris Agreements were off-track and threatened by the growing concern of climate change, further demonstrating the stain that climate change has on the international community.

Actors and Interests

Businesses

The economic development that businesses and corporations have achieved has positioned certain industries with much power and influence to impact climate change related issues. At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the United Nations clearly acknowledged the impact of human activity on the environment. However, the spread of human activity contributing to global warming is not equal across the globe. In a report generated in 2015, evidence showed that developed countries are responsible for nearly 63% of carbon emissions.³³ Meanwhile, developing countries have experienced nearly

eight times as many natural disasters compared to 30 years ago.³⁴ The level of contributions and impacts experienced by developing and developed countries is vastly disproportionate. The United States, The European Union, China, Russia, Japan, and India account for nearly 70% of the total global emissions from 1750-2021 whereas countries in the Arctic, coastal regions, parts of Africa, South Asia, and South America face the most negative consequences of climate change.³⁵

In fact, a recent report found that 100 energy companies are responsible for nearly 71% of all industrial emissions since 1988. Some of these energy companies include fossil fuel producers ExxonMobil, Shell, BHP Billiton and Gazprom.³⁶ Large corporations have historically profited off of their preexisting business practices and had little incentive to change, namely the oil and gas industry. Especially considering their outsized influence and power compared to governments and individual action, corporations have the influence to drive policy changes and shape the scale and pace of climate change.³⁷

Over the course of the past few decades, there has been a push for corporations to demonstrate accountability for their corporate practices to reflect a climate change friendly commitment. A wide array of factors including risk management, brand image, ethical responsibility, and responsiveness to societal demands motivate corporations to turn the corner and implement a more eco-friendly approach. Thus, corporations have gradually started to employ more environmentally-friendly business practices to reduce their negative externalities.³⁸ Negative externalities are the indirect costs that producers do not bear, therefore the indirect costs are passed onto the society as a whole which may potentially decrease the quality of life.³⁹ Corporations have dedicated resources to search for innovative solutions that are comparable to their preexisting business practices but with a less detrimental effect on the production of greenhouse gasses. Based on a sample of companies in the London Stock Exchange during 2014-2020, evidence finds that corporate

eco-innovation is positively associated with a genuine commitment to climate action. Instead of what critics have voiced regarding the appeal for markets to demonstrate eco friendly initiatives, eco-innovation has demonstrated substantial actions for instigating change. Some eco-innovation practices include methods to efficiently control pollution and save energy.⁴⁰ Other practices that businesses have turned to in an attempt to take responsibility for their negative externalities include charging higher insurances or premiums for operating business in certain parts of the world. However, by placing a monetary sanction to rebuff the negative climate consequences, the corporation still does virtually nothing to prevent environmental damages.

Many industries have begun to take initiative to implement eco-friendly business practices and commit to climate change. The motor vehicle industry has experienced a major shift towards electric and hybrid cars. Tesla has led the charge in transitioning luxury vehicles to be environmentally friendly with zero carbon emissions from the vehicle itself since it is electric. Other motor vehicles companies have followed suit to start the production of electric vehicles to cater to the societal demand to live a more eco-friendly lifestyle. With more transportation relying on electricity compared to gasoline, the Environmental Assessment of a Full Electric Transportation Portfolio, by the Electric power Research Institute (EPRI) and the NRDC argues that the transition to electric can improve air quality.⁴¹ Despite the cultural shift towards eco-friendly practices and sustainability, corporations remain as the largest contributors to the global carbon footprint. The influence and impact of corporations to change their practices to protect the longevity of the environment account for a large portion of the climate change equation. By incentivizing businesses to develop and implement sustainable practices in all aspects of their corporation procedures can be utilized to slow the process of global warming to reduce the strain of vulnerable countries that often face frequent weather extremes. Corporations are the greatest contributors to carbon emissions, but they can also enact the greatest change that can shift the issue of climate change in a better direction, thus,

demonstrating the dire need for UNESCO to engage in cross-sector collaboration amongst governments, corporations, and NGOs.

Governments

Governments on all levels of jurisdiction are involved in the issue of climate change and its relation to conflict. Governments are the bearers of change at the local and national level. With the impact of climate change affecting regions around the world differently, it is important to recognize the significance of local governments and their responses to natural disasters as well as societal demands. Governments are key players in shaping policy that can mitigate disastrous impacts to create a more climate-resilient society.

Motivated to implement energy-efficient technologies to foster a proactive development, the European Union demonstrates how countries have been tackling the issue of climate change. As per the European climate law, countries within the EU are set to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030.⁴² Another legislation that amplifies the message of the European Climate Law is the production ban of gas cars in 2035, thus forcing automobile manufacturers to transition to green technologies to reduce carbon emissions from all cars and vans to zero. This ambitious feat further reflects the power that governments have to influence policy to be eco-friendly.

The United Nations established five regional commissions based on geographical location of countries. The Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia all focus on their specific regional focus to foster effective programs that cater to the specific needs of these areas.⁴³ These five commissions work together with participating country governments to promote regional development. Governments that fall within the bounds of the regional commissions have an entity to

help facilitate regional-specific needs compared to general oversight from the international community. Therefore, by interacting with a subset of the international community, countries can draw inspiration from similarly dispositioned countries in the same region in regard to their approach at tackling climate change issues.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are part of the nonprofit sector and are typically categorized as service organizations or mission-driven advocacy.⁴⁴ With the global issue of climate change often discussed in conjunction with numerous other humanitarian issues, NGOs have been called on to partner with United Nation agencies to fund and support ongoing programs. Especially considering that the funding for most UN programs are acquired through governmental donations and NGOs, it is important to recognize the significance of NGOs and the role they play in ensuring that programs have the resources necessary to execute smoothly. UNESCO has partnered with over 418 NGOs to carry out a diverse range of programs on all levels of local, regional, and international.⁴⁵ Although NGOs range in size and location, their influence is still prominent to advocate for comprehensive policy reforms. Over the years, NGOs have grown in influence to help advise and guide global efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They have been recognized as notable contributors to ongoing knowledge databases that help increase the overall understanding and awareness of ocean biodiversity, arid zones, agricultural systems and capacity building.

NGOs are uniquely positioned as intermediaries between the community and the UN agency. NGOs help understand and consider climate-related specifics in regional areas to communicate findings accordingly to guide policy.⁴⁶ NGOs have advocated for substantial change on all levels of government. By drawing attention to specific climate change related issues, NGOs have forced the hands of politicians and individuals into investing in programs. "Scholarly studies have identified cases where NGOs' lobbying

activity influenced the formation of international and domestic climate change policy in western democracies.”⁴⁷ Therefore, NGOs have the power to set agendas, especially in western democracies that maintain a large assortment of corporations that greatly impact global carbon emissions. NGOs’ ability to set the tone for climate mitigation is an asset that UN agencies utilize in the form of financial investments as well as capital labor contributions in UN programs.

Possible Causes

Consumerism

One major contributor to the worsening climate change crisis is due to human activity and the cycle of unsustainable consumption.⁴⁸ Primarily in developed countries, with the high demand for products, corporations are meeting consumer demand. In doing so, consumers and corporations alike participate in a cycle of mass production and mass consumption. The rise in consumption has shifted into an issue of overconsumption, which has soiled efforts to reduce carbon emissions through the decrease of material and food waste.⁴⁹ Meeting the high demand of consumers and the ever-changing trends means that

suppliers are constantly producing items at a fast pace. Although corporations can attempt to take responsibility for their carbon footprint by paying monetary fines, the damage to the environment cannot be equated to a monetary value.⁵⁰ The environmental damage caused by business practices marginally affect the global climate, which ultimately affects the vulnerable regions the most severely.

However, the responsibility of mass production and mass consumption are not just on the corporations’ behalf, but also on the consumers. The increasing disparities in resources as well as lifestyle choices are key aspects in understanding how consumption patterns exacerbate the climate crisis. In a study conducted in the U.S., individuals in the top 0.1% of the socio-economic wealth bracket had emissions 597x higher than the

average low-income country household.⁵¹ To promote a more environmentally sustainable community, policies and programs need to address the disparity of wealthy households' lifestyle habits to attain sustainability on the regional level. The need to educate local households of their carbon footprint is urgent in order to capitalize on specific needs of a given area as well as consider the extent to which a country can contribute towards mitigating climate change.

Natural Disasters

Planet Earth is often studied as an Earth system with different parts of the environment playing complementary roles. From the atmosphere to the ocean, ice glaciers, ecosystems, to human activity, all these elements are connected and affect one another. With the rate of global warming and the emission of greenhouse gasses not slowing down fast enough, the climate change crisis has already taken its toll on Earth's nature. Earth is facing positive-feedback loops of climate change exacerbating extreme weather events, which then continue to worsen the climate crisis (See Appendix 1.3). This cycle describes how global warming and melting ice amplify the effect of the arctic area's degradation within the climate system.⁵²

Additionally, the "new normal" of worsened weather events have also contributed to furthering the positive feedback loop of damaging ecosystems and societies. Extreme weather events such as severe droughts in the Horn of Africa have wrecked long-term damage on regional agricultural harvests and the daily livelihood of many Eastern African communities by exacerbating the food shortage and the intra-state tensions of resource management.⁵³ In other regions of the world, the rising sea levels also continues to worsen the cycle of climate change. The accelerated process of the historical rise in sea level disproportionately affects coastal communities by putting them at an increased risk for property damage. For coastal communities in the Pacific Island region, their predisposition to water-related natural disasters threatens the longevity of their community's critical

infrastructure such as homes, schools, hospitals, markets, etc. Extreme tropical storms that reach landfall at coastal communities disrupt public life, contribute to environmental degradation, and pitfall the economy. As a result, disaster managers, city planners, and risk committees are often tasked with protecting public property and human life.⁵⁴

Migration of People

Each year approximately 21.5 million people are forced from their homes due to natural disasters.⁵⁵ The unprecedented influx of climate migrants adds stress to nearby communities to house and accommodate for these individuals. As defined by the International Organization for Migration, climate migrants are individuals who leave their habitual homes for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely impact their living conditions. Climate migrants can be temporary or permanent and can move either within their own country or abroad.⁵⁶ Thus the relocation of these individuals creates a complex of overcrowding in temporary refugee camps as well as an issue regarding resource management. In El Salvador habitants are leaving villages at an alarming rate due to crop failure. The climate crisis that adversely impacted their living conditions led to many El Salvadorians to relocate to urban cities. With their new status in a city, these individuals are vulnerable to face violence at their new location such as interpersonal conflict amongst the urban and rural El Salvadorians.⁵⁷

In South Asia, the domino effect of water-based natural disasters such as tropical storms have increased the rate of internally displaced persons (IDP). IDPs that are temporarily relocated to different areas in the country off the shore-line face animosity from locals. Exacerbated by overcrowding and leads to intense resource competition amongst communities, the heightened in-group tension brought about by resource management clearly demonstrates the impact of the climate crisis and the many avenues of negative effects that climate change has on regional areas. More so, the inequality at refugee camps and the unequal access to services continues to heighten tensions and create

a hostile environment for climate migrants and locals alike.⁵⁸

Nearly 143 million people are estimated to be displaced within the next 30 years due to rising sea levels and severe droughts. The urgent need to address climate change as an underlying theme of displacement is urgent to disrupt the feedback loop of one issue exacerbated by another. By finding last solutions to break the cycle and mitigate the chance of relapse, local governments and community members alike can be better prepared for when disaster strikes.

Comparison of Causes

Regional problems centered around resource management creates the opportunity for international conflict to arise because of climate change. Especially considering the inherent vulnerability of regions to natural disasters, human activity that drives global warming only worsens the impact of extreme weather events. With the factor of human activity recognized as one of the prime factors that escalate the ongoing climate crisis, it comes to no surprise when the cycle of consumerism is at the backbone of this issue. Many studies have indicated that consumption is the strongest determinant of global impacts in regard to the cascading climate crisis.⁵⁹ With developed countries indulging in the luxury of mass consumerism, corporations match consumer demand by mass producing items, creating a two-pronged issue to address: mitigating the impact of industrial production and reducing material consumption. However, since consumerism is often linked to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country, it is difficult to confront the issue of reducing carbon emissions without the backing of corporations.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, in regions such as the Horn of Africa, the ongoing climate crisis continues to open the door for geopolitical conflict to erupt. With the rate and severity of natural disasters becoming exponentially devastating, vulnerable regions are left to suffer. The immediate and long-term effects of weather-related shocks threaten food security and critical infrastructure of vulnerable communities, thus, furthering the adjacent issue of

migration. The sudden migration of individuals to a different location intensifies mental health issues as well as erects barriers to access necessary services due to the sudden change in their livelihoods. The integration of migrants into a new society may increase feelings of animosity between established individuals and newly migrated ones. Both these factors of natural disasters and migration of people are strongly correlated with one another. The incapacity to support a larger population means resource competition for services, housing, necessities, as well as economic opportunities.⁶¹ Therefore, On the local level, many scholars have proposed that communities work together to mitigate and adapt to climate change via community intervention management models to empower local participation and spread awareness of climate-resilience to prevent the need to migrant.⁶² The intertwined themes of extreme weather events wreaking havoc on communities and the lack of adequate intervention strategies continues to not only threaten the environment but also peace between communities.⁶³

Projections and Implications

Without the immediate and effective intervention on the regional level to combat the ongoing climate crisis, vulnerable areas that are already predisposed to extreme weather events will continue to suffer direct and indirect consequences. Disaster-prone regions have been found to be less contributors to the global CO₂ emissions overall, but they face the most devastating impacts of the climate change crisis while industrial corporations hold a bulk of the power and influence to enact change.⁶⁴ While developing countries deal with attempting to induce an eco-friendly shift in lifestyle habits and business practices, developed countries attempt to adapt to the devastating impact that extreme weather events have on their own communities on the social, economic, and agricultural levels. At the current rate of the world's CO₂ emissions, the goals stated in the Paris Agreement to "limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels," will not be reached by 2050.⁶⁵

A multi-dimensional approach to tackle the direct issue of climate change as well as the subsidiary effects of food insecurity, lack of sustainable infrastructure, and lack of access to resources would be able to take into consideration the cultural values of specific regions to best suit their needs. Comprehensive programs to prepare for both short-term relief and development programs as well as the investment in long-term resilience and adaptation measures. On the local level, the capacity to monitor climate change and collect data to be able to incorporate this information into climate security risk assessments demonstrates. The international community is called to take action and bear responsibility for their excessive contributions to CO2 emissions and develop means to reduce their carbon footprint as well as increase climate-resilience for necessary regions.

Committee Jurisdiction

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a special agency operated by the General Conference and the Executive Board. The origins of UNESCO's history dates back to 1942 when European countries convened in the United Kingdom for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education to discuss how education systems would be rebuilt post-World War II. The vision of these discussions gained much attraction and was soon proposed as an organization.⁶⁶ Founded in 1945, UNESCO is a long-standing organization with participation from 194 member states and nearly 2,217 staff across 53 regional offices. UNESCO focuses on the mission that "the world needs education, science, culture and information."⁶⁷ UNESCO focuses on its main pillars of Education, Science, and Cultural to spearhead the direction for the programs established. Under education, UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) program advocates for access to quality primary education, especially for girls, minorities, and vulnerable communities. UNESCO often partners with local governments and non-governmental organizations to adequately support programs on the ground across the world⁶⁸. UNESCO's initiative to further the general knowledge of the natural and social sciences positions UNESCO as a

sponsor of many projects to advance research in a given field. By updating and growing the database of information regarding ocean biodiversity, ecosystems, and biosphere reserves, UNESCO places an emphasis on empowering individuals through education and promoting awareness of local issues⁶⁹. The third pillar of culture guides UNESCO to create multifaceted approaches to their projects to ensure collaboration and effective communication. UNESCO sponsors countless World Heritage Sites across the globe to ensure the preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites. UNESCO has deemed 1154 World Heritage Sites, 727 UNESCO biospheres in over 131 countries. By doing so, UNESCO endeavors to cater each and every project to the needs of a regional area and their unique circumstances.

In this committee, delegates will discuss how UNESCO can foster harmony between people and nature for sustainable development through participatory dialogue amongst regional entities. Delegates will collaborate to devise development programs to mitigate and prevent climate change's detrimental impact on the ecosystem, both locally and internationally. The need to address creating sustainable infrastructure as well as implementing climate-friendly practices are pertinent to understanding climate change in the context of specific regions to reduce the likelihood for conflict. Delegates will approach the issue of climate change using multiple angles by using the pillars of UNESCO: education, science, and culture. It is important to understand the multifaceted nature of climate change and its diverse range of impacts on different communities as well as the dynamic of who contributes to climate change while who faces the brunt of it.

The cycle of conflict that is further exacerbated by climate change is becoming more common across the world. Without necessary precautions and protocols established to mitigate and prevent the disastrous impacts of climate change, regional areas will be disproportionately affected, leading to escalated internal and international tensions. As climate change continues to increase the damage-potential of natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides, and mudslides, regional habitants of areas

without the stable infrastructure to handle such an event are forced to take refuge in other areas. Meanwhile, other natural disasters of droughts and floods that create food shortages and competition for resources burdens local communities socially and economically. Overburdened communities that are vulnerable to climate-change induced disasters face the brunt of global warming and the negative impacts which further internal conflict, resulting in a positive-feedback loop of worsening living conditions.

Even on the international scale, climate change continues to open up pathways for diplomatic conflict to spur. As global warming quickens the melting of the Arctic region, territorial claim disputes of new trade routes and the ownership of newly available oil reserves arise between countries such as the United States, Russia, and Canada.⁷⁰ Similarly, as low-lying reefs face erosion, the distribution of fisheries are affected which shifts the desire to heighten tensions regarding disputed territories in the South China Sea. The many implications of climate change have opened up more pathways for maritime boundaries to be contested, which invites conflict regarding international geopolitics.

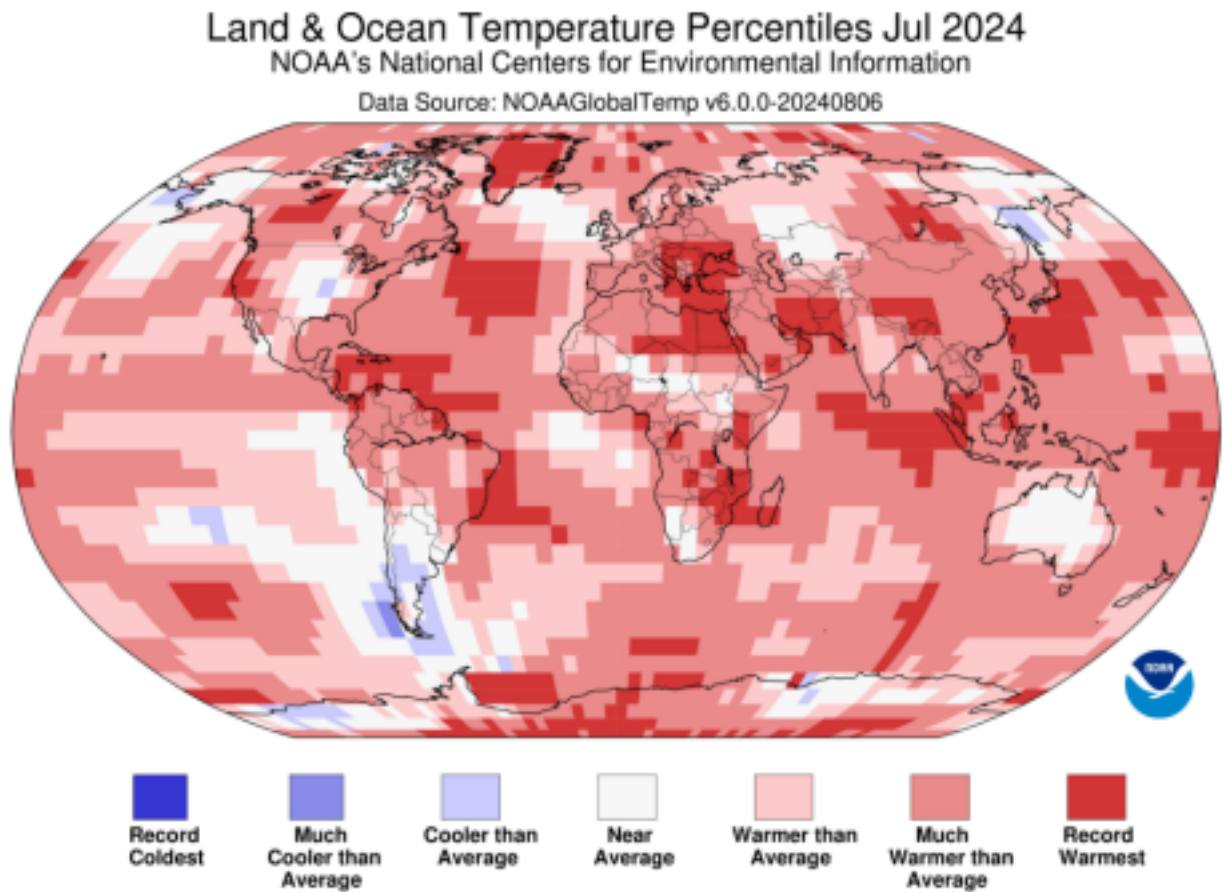
For an issue so extensive and widespread that affects regions of the world in different ways, there is no one solution that can solve it all. UNESCO is tasked with understanding the severity of local and global climate change and is ultimately focused on regional programs to bolster the climate literacy and preparedness of regional areas to fit their specific needs to preserve the longevity relationship between people and planet for the future.

Discussion Questions

- What are the trade-offs between focusing on short term or long-term solutions?
- How can sustainable practices and innovations be implemented in climate vulnerable countries to combat climate change?
- How can UNESCO incentivize countries with industrial powerhouses to take into consideration their negative externalities that damage the environment?

- What is the dynamic between developing countries and developed countries in terms of climate change contributions? To what extent is the disproportionate impact of climate change creating a positive-feedback-loop?
- How does climate literacy contribute to mitigating climate change for local areas to create a more climate-resilient region as a whole?

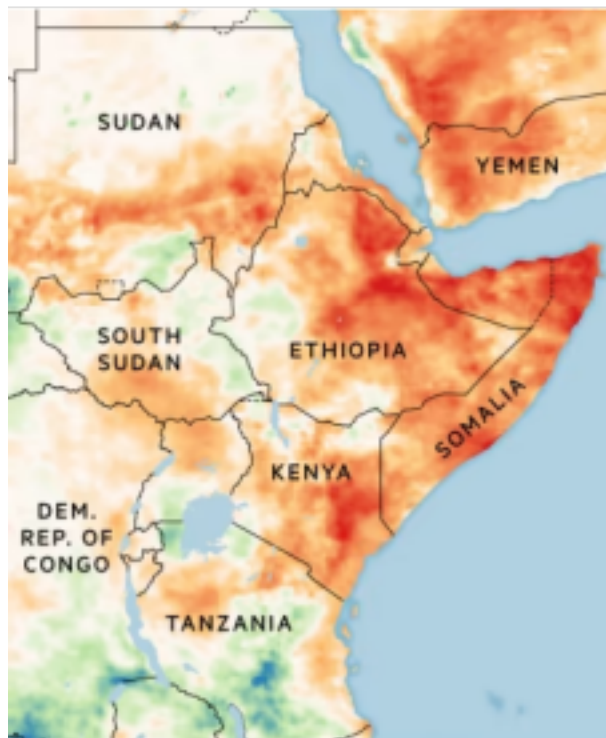
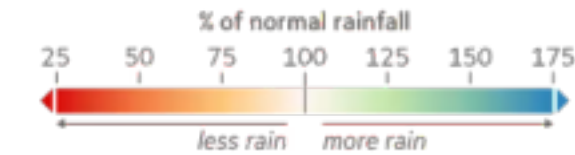
Appendix



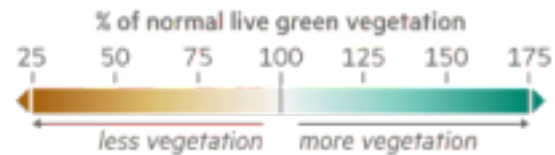
(1.1) Graphic visual of the global temperature changes in comparison to previous standing climate averages.

Eastern Africa's poor 2022 rainfall season

Seasonal rainfall accumulation, Mar-May 2022 compared with 1981-2010 average



Normalised difference vegetation index, May 26-Jun 2022 compared with 2012-2021 average



Source: USGS Famine Early Warning System
© FT

(1.2) Graphic of the Horn of Africa and the visualization of rainfall accumulation as well as vegetation growth. This graphic demonstrates a comparison between current climate and previous averages.

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<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/climate-science-literacy-workshop-climate-change-knowledge-local-languages>.

This case study article from UNESCO details recent efforts to provide accessible climate science literacy workshops to the locals in Nepal. UNESCO’s push to empower individuals with the knowledge of climate change issues specific to their region in the local language can further the overall community’s climate literacy, especially considering Nepal is a country that faces extreme challenges that are exacerbated by climate-vulnerability. Local initiatives such as these climate literacy training offered in different languages allows for the spread of information that can be beneficial in spurring communities to work together to develop and enact sustainable practices in their own day-to-day lives.

Starr, Jared, Craig Nicolson, Michael Ash, Ezra M. Markowitz, and Daniel Moran.

“Assessing U.S. Consumers’ Carbon Footprints Reveals Outsized Impact of the Top 1%.” *Ecological Economics* 205 (March 1, 2023): 107698.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2022.107698>.

This United Nations article details the overall theme of consumerism and its direct relationship to climate change. The article addresses the challenging issues that climate change exacerbates and proposes solutions to mitigate the strong influence of greenhouse gasses emissions. By supporting many of the claims with statistical evidence, the article presents a holistic view of climate change and how it impacts peoples’ day-to-day lives regarding food security.

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This news article posted on the United Nations Development Programme details a case study in Central Asia where early warning systems were implemented to help increase climate-resilience and shorten response times for extreme weather events. The article discusses four key points to increase resilience in the regional area of Central Asia as well as four key points to ensure the effectiveness and viability of employing early warning systems.

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