



# ECOSOC

**Climate Change and Implications for  
Prevention**

**Haileybury Astana**

**Model United Nations**

**28 February - 1 March 2020**



# Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the first Haileybury Astana Model United Nations 2020 (HASMUN)! We are pleased to welcome you to the UNHCR.

The topics under discussion for the UNHCR are:

1. **The challenges posed by climate change**, including economic hardships, social issues and problems related to forced displacement.
2. **Economic solutions to climate change** intended to minimize the effect of the climate crisis on the world economy and people, prevent the exacerbation of the problem and contribute to restoring the natural rate of climate change.
3. **Challenges faced by governments, citizens and organizations by the implementation of the proposed economic solutions.**
4. **Ways to overcome the economic and social problems created as a result of the implementation of the proposed economic solution**, known as the negative spill-over effects.

Please consider that the following guide, as the name suggests, is merely to provide you with the background of the agenda and cannot serve as a credible source of information. Your real research lies beyond this guide and we hope to see some strong content and debate come our way.

The agenda at hand is both vast and complex, and a successful discussion on it would entail the collective participation of all of you. It shall be your prerogative to decide the direction in which you want to take this committee. This agenda demands to be seen from more than one perspective, one that covers the issue of climate change and possible solutions to the global problem. At the outset, we would like to state that the agenda is to be analyzed from both policy and economic stand-point, as suggested by the committee and topic. We encourage the delegates to view the agenda as having two aspects, economic and policy, and thus, balance between the two.

If you are doing MUN for the very first time, we expect you to read the rules of procedure provided in a separate document. Rest, the same aspect for research applies to you too. Do not feel taken aback on the research, foreign policy and other details of your allotted country.

Do read the questions that have been mentioned in the latter half of the guide. Those questions **might** shape the debate. At the same time, the agenda is open to interpretations and there shall be no direction of debate that shall be provided by the Executive Board. Delegates are required to direct the council at all stages, unless stagnation occurs.

In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Nur-Sultan) on the 26th of February 2020.

We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact our Executive Committee:

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We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

## **Committee overview**

### **Nature of Proof and Evidence**

Documents from the following sources will be considered as credible proof for any allegations made in committee or statements that require verification.

Reuters: Appropriate Documents and articles from the Reuters News agency will be used to corroborate or refute controversial statements made in committee.

UN Document: Documents by all UN agencies will be considered as sufficient proof. Reports from all UN bodies including treaty based bodies will also be accepted.

Government Reports: Government Reports of a given country used to corroborate an allegation on the same aforementioned country will be accepted as proof.

### **Introduction to the committee**

The United Nations Economic & Social Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, responsible for coordinating the economic and social fields of the organisation, specifically in regards to the 15 specialised agencies, the 8 functional commissions and the 5 regional commissions that are under its jurisdiction.

Designed to be the UN's main venue for the discussion of international economic and social issues, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) directs and coordinates the economic, social, humanitarian, and cultural activities of the UN and its specialized agencies. Established by the UN Charter, ECOSOC is empowered to recommend international action on economic and social issues; promote universal respect for human rights; work for global cooperation on health, education, cultural and related areas.

The Economic and Social Council is also the coordinator for the work of agencies like the World Health Organization (WTO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Last but not least the main achievements of ECOSOC are: 1) The diversity of the world's sustainable development challenges, 2) The engagement of the financial and trade intuitions, 3) The advance of the Humanitarian policy Agenda, 4) The support of the transitions from conflict to peace and

development, 5) The response of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, 6) The placement of the woman at the center of the development effort, 7) The connection between development and human rights, 8) The enhance of the partnerships, 9) The 5 engagement of the Civil Society, 10) The expansion of the youth voice, 11) The ad hoc meetings in case of global emergencies.

## **Introduction to the agenda**

It is obvious that the model of economic growth combined with a high level of greenhouse gases must be changed to one with a drastically reduced level of emissions across the world.

Even if existing levels remained as they are at present, by 2050 the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere would be double that of the pre-industrial era, with the associated dangers of global warming, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Their report placed a goal of a maximum of 2°C above pre-industrial levels to stabilize Carbon Dioxide levels which do not constitute a grave danger to the climate system.

At present fossil fuels represent 80% of the world's total energy needs and it has been above all the developing world which has pushed these requirements so high, despite making up only 15% of the total population.

It is also true that there are technological solutions within reach which can allow this change to the proposed model of economic development without emissions. The problem lies with the majority of developing countries, which lack the financial resources, technical know-how and institutional capacity to put them into practice with the urgency required.

The principal challenge is economic growth. It is necessary to eradicate the poverty which separates rich countries from developing ones and it would therefore be unethical to stifle their growth.

The majority of studies undertaken by the United Nations Economic and Social Council insist on the necessity for developed countries to make more of an effort with the challenges associated with climate change. They also underline the importance of developing countries taking part.

The common responsibility for climate change must be assumed by all countries, but the policies for developed and developing countries demand different approaches. The success of these policies

depend on all countries establishing programmes with common objectives for adaptation to climate change, managing forests, energy policies, eliminating poverty and so on.

## **General overview: Past UN and ECOSOC actions**

1990s

1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The United Nations Conference for Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro was the first large international conference focused on global environmental questions since the 1972 UN meeting in Stockholm. Known as the “Earth Summit,” the conference presented and introduced the concept of sustainable development as a strategy for the future to the world public, and developed the action program Agenda 21, both milestones on the path towards sustainability. Also adopted were the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Forest Declaration, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

2000s

16 July 2009: On 14 July 2009, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) conducted a round table discussion on the theme “Towards a UN comprehensive response to the challenges of climate change” as part of its Coordination Segment, and on 15 July 2009, the Operational Activities Segment opened with a thematic panel discussion on “The current economic, food and climate change crises and their effects on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: the role of the UN System’s support to national efforts.”<sup>1</sup>

The strong personal conviction of High Commissioner António Guterres (2005–15) in large part drove UNHCR’s engagement with the issue. His opening statement to the Executive Committee in 2007 was the first to mention environmental degradation and climate change as drivers of displacement.<sup>2</sup> He subsequently called on States to address contemporary circumstances in which

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/ecosoc-discusses-climate-change-during-annual-substantive-segment/>

<sup>2</sup> Key Executive Committee discussions occurred in 2007 and 2011, beginning with the Opening Statement by Mr António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme (Geneva, 1 October 2007) <http://goo.gl/wCztyq> in which he listed environmental degradation and climate change among reasons for flight.

there are ‘more and more people forced to move because of extreme deprivation, environmental degradation and climate change’<sup>3</sup>

May 2008 - Special Event on Climate Change and Development<sup>4</sup>. Against the backdrop of compelling evidence on climate change, a rising tide of public concern and powerful declarations of political will to tackle this global challenge, ECOSOC devoted a Special Event on how to address the growing risks posed by climate change to the timely realization of the development goals. The outcome of the meeting serves as an important input to the forthcoming ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review, which focused on sustainable development. The meeting concluded that it will be poor communities, which generally contributed least to climate change that will suffer most from its negative effects. Investment in adaptation and mitigation will be needed to strengthen the ability of the poor to cope with the negative impacts of climate change. While it will not be possible to avert all negative impacts of climate change on development, they can be minimized by integrating adaptation measures into development planning. At the same time, mitigation efforts are needed that will prevent anthropogenic gases from harming the climate.

2018 - Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) – “Linkages between Climate Change and Challenges to Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in the Sahel”<sup>5</sup>

2019 - The High-Level Political Forum 2019 under the auspices of the UN ECOSOC. The theme was *"Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality"*. As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven. The following goals were discussed:

- [Goal 8](#). Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- [Goal 10](#). Reduce inequality within and among countries

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<sup>3</sup> Statement by Mr António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, 62nd Session (New York, 8 November 2007) <http://goo.gl/MvJLZz>.

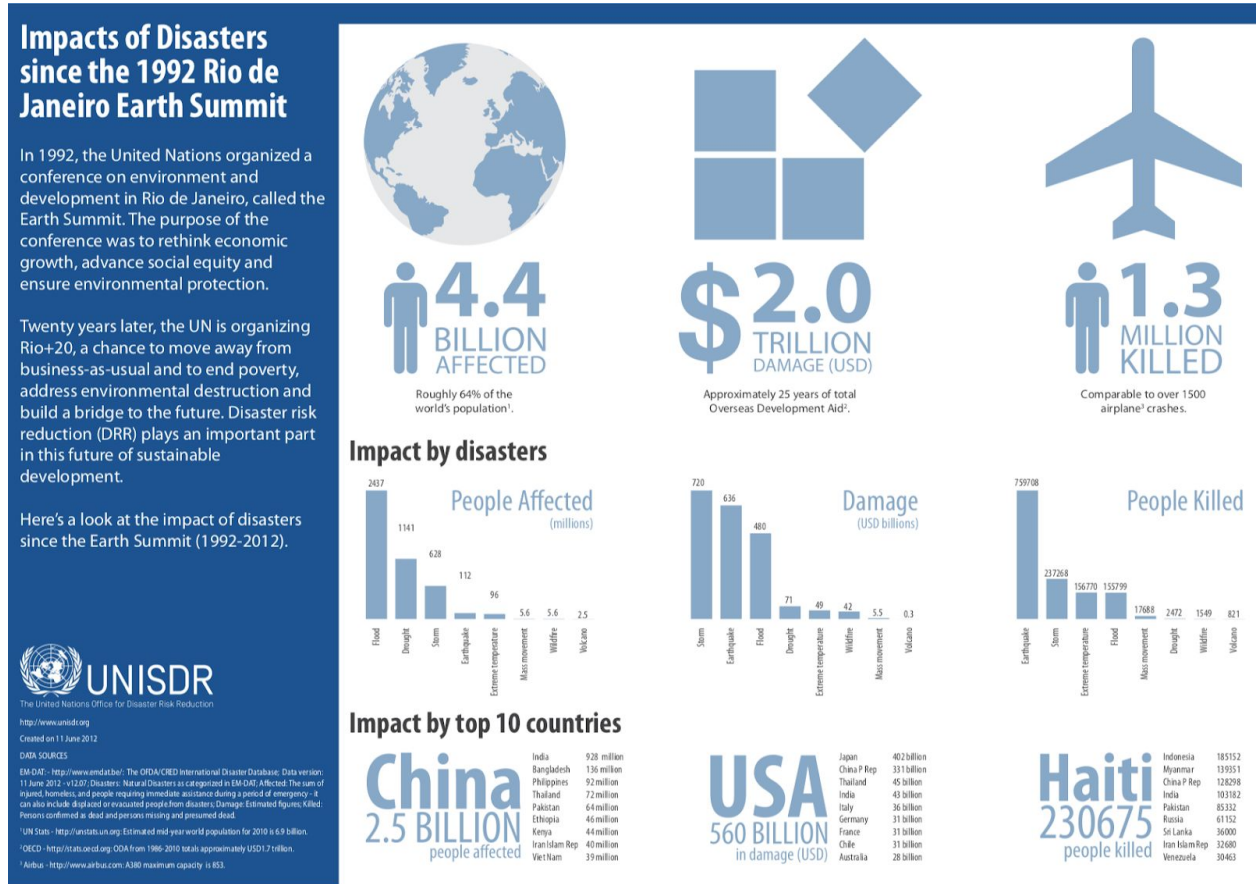
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/climatechange.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2018/joint-meeting-economic-and-social-council-ecosoc-and-peace-building-commission-pbc--->

- **Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- **Goal 16.** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

2019 - ECOSOC High-Level Panel meeting for the future in the face of climate change and weather-related disasters: strengthening preparedness and humanitarian response and collaborating to build resilience and address escalating risks and challenges.

## Statistics





## Definition of key terms

**Smart Subsidies to the Renewable Energy Sector** - Renewable energy is subsidized in order to compete in the market, increase their volume and develop the technology so that the subsidies become unnecessary with the development. Renewable-energy subsidies were \$66 billion in 2010 and will reach \$250 billion by 2035, according to IEA

**Tradable Permits** - a tradable permits (a.k.a. cap-and-trade) program sets a specific target or cap on total emissions and allocates or auctions the necessary number of pollution permits or allowances to polluters to meet that goal. Polluters that are able to reduce their emissions more cost-effectively have an incentive to abate more to avoid purchasing allowances or to sell their excess emission allowances to polluters facing higher costs of compliance. Under this type of market-based approach, emission are set by the cap, but the overall compliance costs may be uncertain [see [Section 6 of EPA Economic Incentives Report, 2001](#) (PDF, 44 pp., 632K, [About PDF](#)) and [Chapter 4 of EPA's Guidelines for Economic Analysis](#)].

**Carbon tax** - Like tradable permit systems, tax-based regulatory systems provide incentives for polluters to find cost-effective solutions to emissions control. Firms will either pay the tax or, if it is cheaper, they will reduce emissions to avoid the tax. In the case of emission taxes, the cost of compliance is known, but emission levels may be uncertain [see [Section 4 of EPA Economic Incentives Report, 2001](#) (PDF, 24 pp., 491K, [About PDF](#)) and [Chapter 4 of EPA's Guidelines for Economic Analysis](#)].

**IPCC** - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations that is dedicated to providing the world with objective, scientific information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of the risk of human-induced climate change, its natural, political, and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options.

**Paris Climate Agreement** - the agreement builds upon the Convention and for the first time brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort.<sup>6</sup> The Paris Agreement central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius

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<sup>6</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

## Questions to be considered

- What should the definition of climate change be?
- What initiatives should be undertaken to minimize the effects of climate change?
- What is the responsibility of individual states, especially LEDC's, Non-Governmental Organizations, and citizens?
- Should the implementation of the economic and social solutions proposed by the states be seen as the priority as opposed to other economic problems and challenges the world faces today ?
- What are the problems posed by the implementation of the economic solutions proposed?
- How could these problems be overcome?

## Further research

- <http://www.un.org/es/ecosoc/> (ECOSOC)
- <http://www.un.org/es/> (United Nations)
- <http://www.ipcc.ch/> (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)
- <http://www.wwf.es> (World Wide Fund for Nature)
- [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/clima/mission/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/clima/mission/index_en.htm) (European Commission. ClimateAction)
- [http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/cambio\\_climatico/](http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/cambio_climatico/) (Spanish Environment Ministry)
- <http://cc2010.mx/es/> (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
- <http://cmpcc.org/> (World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth)
- <http://www.realclimate.org/>
- <http://www.globalchange.gov/> (United States Global Change Research Program)  
<http://www.greenfacts.org/es/cambio-climatico-ie4/index.htm>  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/espana/r-evoluci-n-renovable/>
- [Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and PBC on the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace”](#)
- <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>
- Grubb, Michael. *The Earth Summit Agreements: A Guide and Assessment*. Royal Institute of International Affairs Series. Energy and environmental programme. London: Earthscan, 1993.
- Halpern, Shanna L. "The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: Process and Documentation." Providence, RI: The Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), 1992.
- Reilly, William K. "The Road from Rio: The success of the Earth Summit depends on how well we follow through on its principles and programs." EPA Journal, Sept./Oct. 1992.