



# General Assembly

Thirteenth Session

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## Second Committee – Economic and Financial

This committee wants to improve the world economy to help the poor. They discuss how national, regional and international economies affect the world. They also focus on countries that have special needs. Some examples are the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) or the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

This group believes people in poverty do not have to be poor forever. For this reason, they focus on how developing nations can improve their economies. They also find ways to directly help people in poverty. They might talk about how to help countries get access to money. Or, they might find ways that technology can help countries develop faster.

This committee works closely with the UN Economic and Social Council. Some of the resolutions they have passed deal with sustainable development, harmony with nature, and migration.

## Agenda Item 19.D – Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

### Focus Questions

Climate change is an issue that is not only important to this generation but all future generations. States need to make decisions that reduce the danger of climate change right now. With your fellow delegates you need to find a way to work towards making the following goals a reality.

- How can developing states be protected from the effects of climate change?
- How can all states come to an agreement about how much carbon dioxide can be released into the environment every year? How can states be sure others will stick to the agreement?
- What can states do to adapt to the changes that climate change will bring?

### Background

Have you heard of **global warming** or the **greenhouse gas effect**? Both these terms refer to *climate change*. It is the changing of average temperatures around the world. The average temperature of our planet is rising and is causing our environment to change in ways that are not normal. Polar ice is melting which is raising water levels. Hotter average temperatures change weather patterns. This makes more extreme weather events in places that do not usually have them.

When the sun's rays hit the Earth, it heats the world. Some of the heat is reflected back into space but some of it is trapped by methane and carbon dioxide. These two gases are important because they keep the Earth a stable temperature for life to exist. It is a similar effect to a greenhouse. That is why the gases that trap heat are usually called **greenhouse gases**.

## Background

However, over the last 300 years humans have been creating more and more of these gases. As humans developed we began burning **fossil fuels** (coal, oil and natural gas) in order to make energy. When we burn fossil fuels it releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Since the 1700s we have been releasing more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Climate change is the most pressing issue of our time. Sadly, it is already too late to stop climate change. We know that even if we stop producing greenhouse gases now the average temperature of the Earth will still go up. That is because the CO<sub>2</sub> will stay in the atmosphere. It will take decades and maybe hundreds of years for the temperature of the Earth to cool.

There is still hope, however, to lessen the impact on our environment. We can slow the change by reducing our greenhouse gases. This will slow down the warming. It will also give us something very important: time. We need time to adapt. This means using technology to help prepare ourselves for a changing world. More storms, rising water levels, and warmer temperatures need creative solutions. What can human societies do to protect from these problems?

## Recent Developments

- In the 1980s a hole in the ozone layer was discovered above Antarctica. In 1987, only two years after it was discovered, states came together with a solution! Every single country in the world signed the Montreal Protocol of 1987. The Protocol bans CFCs and other chemicals that hurt the ozone layer.
- In 2015, countries met to talk about climate change in Paris. At the end of the conference, an agreement was reached in order to work towards making less greenhouse gases. On December 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 the document was adopted. This is called the Paris Agreement.
- The Paris Agreement calls for all states to work towards keeping the global average temperature of the world less than 2°C. However, keeping global climate under a 1.5°C would be the best.
- 176 states have signed the Paris Agreement. Many states are making changes in order to meet their targets.
- The UK is getting rid of their coal plants to use cleaner resources.
- China wants 20% of their energy to come from renewable resources by 2030. China is also planning to sell millions of electric cars in the future.
- 52% of the cars sold in Norway are electric or hybrids.
- In 2016, the UN launched the Sustainable Development Goals. States decided together that these are goals we need to reach to live in a fairer and sustainable world. Goal 13 is to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”.
- The average global temperature is 1.1°C higher than normal. Carbon dioxide levels reached a new high in 2017, 407 parts per million. This is the highest it has been in millions of years. Countries need to lower emissions now.
- Climate change is having a negative effect on our environment and damaging our water resources. Climate change is responsible for droughts, floods, and **depleting** water supplies. As the world population grows, so does the demand for water.

## Recent Developments

- Water will play a role in future conflicts if people do not have access to it. We need solutions to provide people with what they need to live so climate change does not cause violence.
- Carbon pricing is a solution to the problem of CO<sub>2</sub>. Carbon pricing is when a government puts a special tax on things that cause pollution. Because it is more expensive people will use it less.
- Another solution for CO<sub>2</sub> is called cap and trade. A government could only allow a certain amount of pollution. This is called a cap. Companies that pollute would have a permit to pollute a certain amount and they could not go over that. But, they could buy pollution credits from other companies that did not use theirs.
- Some people think carbon pricing is a bad idea. Prices will go up and people will have to pay more. Also, companies might just leave to pollute in a country that does not have these types of rules.
- 42 countries now use carbon pricing or plan on using it in the near future. The EU started in 2005 and since then many countries have done the same. Several cities and provinces in China have tested carbon pricing programs. Singapore is planning on a tax in 2019 and will use the money to reduce pollution.

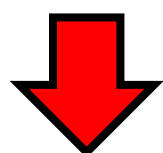
## Treaties &amp; Agreements

**Sustainable Development Goals**

- ✓ Began in 2016 to replace the Millennium Development Goals. These goals are much broader and tackle the causes of poverty.
- ✓ The first goal is to end poverty in all its forms
- ✓ Goal 13 is to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”.
- ✓ Countries will work together to reach the goals by 2030.

**The Paris Agreement**

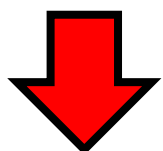
- ✓ An international agreement by 195 countries that seeks to keep the global average temperature from going up more than 2°C.
- ✓ The agreement is consensus. This means they have all decided to do something together because it is the best thing to do for the world.
- ✓ One of its goals is to raise US\$100 billion by 2020 to fight climate change.
- ✓ In 2017, President Trump said the US would leave the agreement.

**By the Numbers: Climate Change**

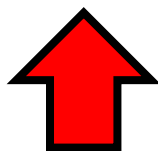
**Ice Sheets: 413**  
Gigatonnes per year



**Sea Level: 3.2**  
millimeters per year



**Arctic Ice: 13.2%**  
per decade



**Carbon dioxide: 407**  
parts per million

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## Research Questions

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1. Is your state at risk because of climate change? How?
2. What is your state's environmental record? Does it recognize the need to protect from climate change?
3. How will your state be affected by climate change?
4. Why would some states not be interested in reducing their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions?
5. How can developed countries support developing countries to reduce emissions?
6. What countries need to reduce their emissions the most? How can other countries convince them to do this?
7. How can countries adapt to climate change?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. How does being a delegate from a different country help you understand this problem in your community?
11. How do the choices you make in your life help resolve this problem?

## Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<b><i>Sustainable Development Goal 13</i></b>	<a href="https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13">https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13</a>	An overview of what goal 13 is trying to accomplish in relation to climate change.
<b><i>The Conversation</i></b>	<a href="https://theconversation.com/if-we-stopped-emitting-greenhouse-gases-right-now-would-we-stop-climate-change-78882">https://theconversation.com/if-we-stopped-emitting-greenhouse-gases-right-now-would-we-stop-climate-change-78882</a>	An article about what would happen if we stopped producing greenhouse gases right now.
<b><i>Live Science</i></b>	<a href="https://www.livescience.com/37057-global-warming-effects.html">https://www.livescience.com/37057-global-warming-effects.html</a>	Talks about what will happen to the Earth because of climate change.
<b><i>National Geographic</i></b>	<a href="https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/sea-level-rise/">https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/sea-level-rise/</a>	Interesting article about how the world's seas are rising.
<b><i>National Geographic</i></b>	<a href="https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/05/100505-science-environment-ozone-hole-25-years/">https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/05/100505-science-environment-ozone-hole-25-years/</a>	A short history of the ozone layer problem of the 1980s.
<b><i>The Paris Agreement</i></b>	<a href="https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement">https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement</a>	Official overview of the Paris Agreement.
<b><i>The Guardian</i></b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2010/may/11/top-50-twitter-climate-accounts">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2010/may/11/top-50-twitter-climate-accounts</a>	A list of the top 50 Twitter feeds to follow if you are interested in climate change.
<b><i>Climate Analytics</i></b>	<a href="http://climateanalytics.org/briefings/1-5c-key-facts.html">http://climateanalytics.org/briefings/1-5c-key-facts.html</a>	Facts about climate change and why keeping the average temperature from going higher than 1.5°C
<b><i>The New York Times</i></b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/06/climate/world-emissions-goals-far-off-course.html">https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/11/06/climate/world-emissions-goals-far-off-course.html</a>	Article about the progress we have made towards meeting climate goals.