



| STUDY GUIDE

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**Humanitarian Aid and Protection of Populations Displaced
by Climate Change**



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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



1. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear delegates and faculty advisors of PUCP MUN 2025,

It is an honor to address you as the Secretary-General of the 14th edition of PUCP MUN 2025. Over the past seven years of participating in Model United Nations, taking on various roles and engaging at both national and international levels, I have had the privilege of experiencing the transformation these events bring to young people. This experience has given me a unique perspective on MUN: they are one of the most powerful tools for youth education and empowerment, more than we often realize. MUN has changed my life, offering me the chance to enhance my leadership, public speaking, and teamwork skills, as well as gain a deep understanding of international issues. This long but rewarding journey has now led me to the honor of leading the biggest conference in the country, with the primary goal of providing you with a unique and formative experience at all levels.

For this edition, we have managed to bring together more than 1,000 participants and, through great effort, we have established valuable connections with the United Nations and other international organizations. With the support of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, this conference is grounded on three fundamental pillars: academic and organizational excellence, decentralization, and the formative experience we offer.

From my perspective, we have identified three key issues that will guide this conference. First, closing educational gaps to provide an accessible space for all students. Second, bringing Model United Nations closer to the real work of the United Nations. And third, placing the human factor at the center of discussions, recognizing that behind every committee and every debate are human lives directly impacted by the issues we address.

I deeply thank the team that has made this edition possible, as well as PUCP for its unwavering support. To you, delegates and participants, I assure you that you will experience a journey filled with learning and personal growth during PUCP MUN 2025. We eagerly await your participation and hope that you make the most of this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micaela Loza Rivera".

Micaela Loza Rivera
Secretary General of PUCP MUN 2025



STUDY GUIDE

2. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950, is the principal international organization mandated to protect, assist, and find durable solutions for people forced to flee their homes due to persecution, conflict, or violence. Initially created to address the massive displacement that followed the Second World War, UNHCR's original mandate was limited in both scope and duration, intended to operate for only three years to help resettle European refugees. However, as global displacement crises expanded in both scale and complexity, the organization's mandate evolved and its role grew exponentially. Today, UNHCR operates in more than 130 countries, assisting over 110 million displaced persons, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless individuals, and returnees, making it one of the largest humanitarian agencies in the world.

UNHCR is the custodian of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, which together form the cornerstone of international refugee law. These instruments define a refugee as someone with a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." The Convention also sets out key principles, such as non-refoulement (the prohibition on returning refugees to places where their lives or freedoms would be threatened), and delineates the rights and responsibilities of both refugees and host states. While these legal frameworks have proven durable, they were conceived in a post-war political context that did not foresee the emerging challenges of climate-induced displacement and environmental degradation.

In the 21st century, the UNHCR has recognized that the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, prolonged droughts, floods, and increasingly severe storms, are forcing millions from their homes. These forms of displacement blur the traditional distinctions between refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons, creating what experts describe as a "protection gap." Although the 1951 Convention does not explicitly include environmental causes, UNHCR has expanded its interpretive and operational reach to support those affected by climate-related disasters. The agency works closely with partners such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to strengthen international coordination and to ensure that displaced populations receive timely humanitarian assistance, protection, and access to long-term solutions.

To structure its response, UNHCR developed the Strategic Framework for Climate Action, built around three interconnected pillars. The first, Law and Policy, focuses on interpreting existing legal instruments and encouraging states to integrate climate displacement into their protection frameworks and national adaptation plans. The

second, Operations, emphasizes enhancing the resilience of displaced and host communities through sustainable resource management, disaster preparedness, and environmentally responsible infrastructure. Finally, the Environmental Footprint pillar seeks to minimize UNHCR's own environmental impact by adopting greener technologies, renewable energy solutions, and sustainable practices in field operations. Together, these pillars reflect UNHCR's recognition that protecting those displaced by climate change is not only a humanitarian imperative but also a crucial step toward achieving long-term global stability and climate justice.

3. Introduction to the Topic

Climate Change as a Driver of Displacement

Climate change has become one of the most defining and complex humanitarian challenges of the 21st century, fundamentally reshaping patterns of human movement and displacement across the globe. Its impacts go far beyond environmental degradation, climate change acts as a "threat multiplier," amplifying existing vulnerabilities related to poverty, food insecurity, water scarcity, and social instability. As rising temperatures disrupt livelihoods and ecosystems, entire communities are being forced to leave their homes in search of safety, resources, and viable living conditions. Unlike traditional displacement caused by war or persecution, climate-induced movement is often gradual, multidimensional, and intertwined with economic and social pressures, making it particularly difficult to categorize and address within existing legal and humanitarian frameworks.

The scale of the phenomenon is staggering. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), disasters triggered 26.4 million new internal displacements in 2023, the vast majority of which were directly linked to weather- and climate-related hazards such as floods, cyclones, and wildfires. By the end of that year, an estimated 7.7 million people were still living in conditions of internal displacement caused by disasters, unable to return to their homes or rebuild their lives. The World Bank's 2021 "Groundswell" report projects that, without decisive global climate action, 216 million people could be internally displaced by 2050, with the largest movements expected in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. These numbers highlight that climate displacement is not a distant concern, it is already a lived reality for millions around the world.

Across the planet, the manifestations of this crisis vary by region but share a common root in environmental stress. Small island developing states (SIDS), such as Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Maldives, face existential threats from rising sea levels that could render their territories uninhabitable within decades. In Africa, prolonged droughts in the Horn of Africa and Sahel are destroying crops, killing livestock, and fueling competition over shrinking resources, often triggering violent conflict and secondary displacement. In

South Asia, recurrent floods and cyclones have devastated communities in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, while in Latin America, hurricanes and droughts have intensified migration flows from Central America's "Dry Corridor." Even in industrialized nations, events like the wildfires in Australia and California and flooding in Europe demonstrate that no region is immune to climate disruption. What unites all these cases is a shared injustice: those who are most affected by climate change are often those who have contributed the least to global greenhouse gas emissions.

The protection gap

Despite the magnitude of the crisis, international law has not yet caught up with the realities of climate-induced displacement. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (the foundation of refugee protection) define refugees as individuals fleeing persecution based on specific grounds such as race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Environmental degradation, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events, however, do not meet this legal threshold. As a result, millions of people forced to flee their homes because of climate change find themselves in a "legal limbo." They are not recognized as refugees under international law, yet they cannot safely return to their homes due to conditions that are increasingly uninhabitable.

This protection gap presents a profound challenge for the international community and institutions like UNHCR. Without formal recognition, climate-displaced persons often lack access to asylum, residency rights, humanitarian aid, and basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment in host countries. This lack of status also complicates data collection and policy planning, leaving governments and humanitarian organizations without the tools they need to respond effectively. Furthermore, climate displacement frequently occurs within countries, blurring the line between refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and straining national capacities to manage mass movements.

The situation raises several urgent and interconnected questions. How can the international community protect those displaced by climate change within and across borders? Should the existing legal definition of "refugee" be expanded to include climate-induced displacement, or should a new framework be created? What operational mechanisms (such as planned relocation, humanitarian visas, or regional agreements) can ensure timely and dignified protection? And finally, how can financial mechanisms like the Loss and Damage Fund or climate adaptation financing be mobilized to assist vulnerable populations before, during, and after displacement?

Answering these questions requires not only a rethinking of traditional humanitarian approaches but also a reaffirmation of the principles of solidarity, equity, and climate

justice. As climate change continues to accelerate, addressing this protection gap will become an essential test of the international community's capacity to uphold human rights and shared responsibility in an era of global environmental transformation.

4. Historical Background

The recognition of climate change as a driver of displacement has evolved steadily over the past three decades, transforming from a marginal scientific observation into a central concern of global humanitarian and legal policy. The journey began in 1990, when the First Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made a groundbreaking statement: that the greatest single impact of climate change could be on human migration. This early acknowledgment set the stage for decades of debate and research into how environmental stressors such as droughts, floods, and sea-level rise can force people from their homes. At the time, however, migration linked to environmental change was largely treated as a development issue rather than a protection challenge, something to be managed domestically, not internationally.

Nearly two decades later, the issue began to enter the political mainstream. In 2009, the African Union's Kampala Convention became the first legally binding regional instrument to explicitly recognize displacement caused by natural disasters as requiring protection and assistance. This was a landmark development, establishing a precedent for integrating environmental causes into the broader framework of human mobility and internal displacement. The following year, in 2010, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Cancun Adaptation Framework, which formally acknowledged climate-induced migration, displacement, and planned relocation as key areas for adaptation action. This moment marked the first time that the intersection of human mobility and climate change was recognized within the global climate regime, highlighting the need for proactive policy solutions rather than reactive responses to disaster-driven displacement.

Between 2012 and 2015, the Nansen Initiative, a state-led consultative process co-chaired by Norway and Switzerland, played a pivotal role in building global consensus on how to protect people displaced across borders by disasters and the effects of climate change. This process culminated in the Protection Agenda, which outlined practical measures for states to prevent, prepare for, and respond to disaster displacement. The Nansen Initiative's legacy continues through its successor, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), established in 2016, which focuses on operationalizing these tools and promoting best practices among states and regional organizations.

A major breakthrough came in 2018, when both the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) were adopted by the UN General Assembly. Together, these compacts signified a historic shift in the

international community's approach to human mobility, explicitly recognizing climate change and environmental degradation as drivers of displacement and migration. The GCR emphasized the need to integrate climate risks into refugee responses and strengthen resilience in host communities, while the GCM dedicated several objectives to minimizing the adverse drivers of migration, including through climate adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development. This was a turning point in global governance, as states collectively acknowledged that climate change was not merely an environmental issue, but a structural force shaping global migration patterns.

In 2020, the UN Human Rights Committee issued a landmark ruling in the case of *Teitiota v. New Zealand*, involving an individual from Kiribati who sought asylum due to rising sea levels and environmental degradation threatening his homeland. The Committee determined that returning someone to a country where climate change poses an imminent threat to life could violate the principle of non-refoulement, thereby extending human rights protections into the realm of climate displacement. Though the case did not grant refugee status under the 1951 Convention, it set a powerful precedent for recognizing that climate change can endanger fundamental human rights, including the right to life, security, and dignity.

Most recently, in 2023, the Loss and Damage Fund was operationalized at COP28, representing one of the most significant steps toward climate justice in recent years. Designed to assist developing nations suffering from irreversible climate impacts, the Fund provides a dedicated financial mechanism to address the human, social, and economic costs of climate-related disasters and displacement. For millions of vulnerable people, this fund symbolizes a tangible acknowledgment by the global community that those most affected by climate change deserve targeted support and compensation.

Altogether, this historical trajectory reflects a growing international consensus that climate change is not just an environmental or economic challenge, it is a humanitarian crisis with direct implications for human rights, migration, and international stability. The gradual evolution from scientific recognition to policy action underscores the urgency of developing a coherent global framework to protect and assist populations displaced by the worsening impacts of climate change.

5. Problem definition

The committee will examine the "protection gap" that exists between current international refugee law and the emerging reality of climate-induced displacement, a growing phenomenon that is transforming global patterns of human mobility and testing the limits of the international protection regime. This gap lies at the heart of one of the most pressing humanitarian dilemmas of our time: millions of people are being forced to leave their homes due to climate impacts (rising sea levels, desertification, extreme heat,

floods, and prolonged droughts) yet they fall outside the legal definition of a refugee as outlined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Although terms such as “climate refugee”, “environmental migrant”, or “climate-displaced person” are frequently invoked by the media, activists, and policymakers, they lack any formal legal recognition or consistent international framework. As a result, affected individuals often face an uncertain legal status, denied access to asylum, residency rights, or humanitarian protection, and left vulnerable to exploitation, statelessness, or forced return to unsafe environments.

This absence of clear status has left millions in a state of legal and humanitarian limbo, particularly in regions such as the Pacific Islands, the Sahel, and South Asia, where climate impacts are already making entire communities uninhabitable. People displaced by gradual processes like sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and desertification (often referred to as “slow-onset” disasters) rarely receive emergency assistance, even though their displacement is no less permanent than that caused by sudden catastrophes like hurricanes or floods. The international community has yet to agree on whether existing refugee law can be reinterpreted to include those displaced by environmental factors or whether a new legal instrument should be developed to close this gap. Meanwhile, the UNHCR and partner organizations have taken pragmatic steps, advocating for “complementary protection” within existing frameworks, using principles such as non-refoulement and the right to life to extend protection to those whose return would expose them to life-threatening environmental conditions.

The ongoing debate surrounding this issue revolves around three interconnected challenges: the Legal Gap, the Operational Gap, and the Financial Gap. The Legal Gap pertains to the inadequacy of current international frameworks in addressing the unique nature of climate-induced displacement. While the 1951 Convention provides strong protection for those fleeing persecution, it does not account for the complex interplay between environmental degradation, conflict, and socioeconomic vulnerability. States and legal scholars are therefore debating how existing mechanisms might be expanded, reinterpreted, or complemented by new instruments to safeguard those displaced across borders due to climate change. For instance, regional frameworks such as the Kampala Convention (2009) in Africa and the Cartagena Declaration (1984) in Latin America have shown that broader definitions of displacement can offer valuable precedents for inclusion without overhauling the global refugee regime.

The Operational Gap refers to the urgent need to improve the humanitarian response to climate displacement on the ground. This involves enhancing early warning systems, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction in vulnerable regions, as well as developing planned relocation and resettlement programs for communities whose homes are no longer viable. It also requires closer coordination between humanitarian, development,

and environmental actors to ensure that aid is not only reactive but preventive, helping populations adapt in place wherever possible. UNHCR, alongside agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has been advocating for integrated approaches that bridge the gap between short-term emergency relief and long-term adaptation strategies. However, operational challenges persist due to political resistance, limited data on climate migration, and the lack of consistent funding for durable solutions.

Finally, the Financial Gap represents one of the most formidable barriers to effective action. Climate-induced displacement disproportionately affects developing countries, those least responsible for global emissions and often the least equipped to respond. Addressing this inequity requires substantial, predictable, and accessible financial resources. Mechanisms such as the Loss and Damage Fund, established under the UNFCCC and operationalized at COP28 (2023), are intended to bridge this divide by providing financial support for recovery, relocation, and resilience initiatives in vulnerable nations. Yet, questions remain about how the Fund will be governed, who will contribute, and how resources will be distributed fairly and efficiently. The challenge is not merely financial but ethical, how to translate the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” into concrete action that ensures fairness and justice for those suffering the consequences of a crisis they did not create.

Together, these three dimensions (legal, operational, and financial) illustrate the profound complexity and urgency of the protection gap that this committee must confront. The issue transcends traditional humanitarian boundaries, demanding not only legal innovation but also political will, cross-sectoral cooperation, and global solidarity. Addressing it effectively will require delegates to balance compassion with pragmatism, state sovereignty with shared responsibility, and immediate relief with long-term sustainability. Ultimately, the committee’s deliberations will help determine whether the international community can rise to this challenge and create a protection framework that reflects the realities of a rapidly changing climate and the human displacement it continues to drive.

6. Key terms

- a. **Refugee (1951 Convention):** A refugee, as defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, is a person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return due to a “well-founded fear of persecution” based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. This legal status grants specific rights and protections, including access to asylum procedures, protection from refoulement

(forced return), and, in many cases, access to basic services such as education and healthcare. However, the Convention was written in a historical context that did not account for environmental or climate-related causes of displacement. As a result, individuals fleeing droughts, floods, sea-level rise, or other climate-induced disasters typically do not qualify as refugees under this definition, highlighting a major gap in the current international protection framework.

- b. **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** An Internally Displaced Person (IDP) is someone who has been forced or obliged to flee their home or place of habitual residence (often due to armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, or natural and human-made disasters) but who has not crossed an internationally recognized state border. Unlike refugees, IDPs remain under the legal protection of their own government, even if that government is responsible for their displacement. Because of this, their protection depends largely on national authorities, though international organizations like UNHCR and OCHA play key roles in coordinating humanitarian assistance and promoting the rights of IDPs. Climate change has dramatically increased the number of IDPs worldwide, as disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods continue to force millions to relocate within their own countries.
- c. **Climate-Displaced Person:** The term Climate-Displaced Person (sometimes called “climate migrant” or “environmentally displaced person”) is a broad, non-legal category used to describe individuals or groups forced to leave their homes due to the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. This may include displacement caused by sudden-onset events like storms, floods, or wildfires, as well as slow-onset processes such as desertification, sea-level rise, and salinization of freshwater sources. While widely used in academic and policy circles, the term lacks a universally agreed legal definition, meaning that these individuals often fall outside established protection frameworks like the 1951 Refugee Convention. The growing number of people displaced by climate factors underscores the need for clearer legal recognition and robust humanitarian responses at both national and international levels.
- d. **Non-Refoulement:** The principle of non-refoulement is a cornerstone of international refugee and human rights law, prohibiting the return of individuals to a country where they would face serious threats to their life or freedom. This principle is enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention (Article 33) and reinforced by numerous human rights treaties, including

the Convention Against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Traditionally applied to cases of persecution or torture, the principle is increasingly being interpreted in light of climate-related risks. The UN Human Rights Committee's 2020 decision in *Teitiota v. New Zealand* suggested that returning someone to a place where climate change renders survival impossible could violate the right to life, thereby extending the moral and legal relevance of non-refoulement to the climate crisis context.

- e. **Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD):** The Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) is a state-led initiative launched in 2016 as the successor to the Nansen Initiative (2012-2015). It seeks to address the protection needs of people displaced across borders due to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Rather than proposing a new treaty, the PDD focuses on practical, evidence-based solutions, what it calls a “toolbox of effective practices.” These include developing humanitarian visas, planned relocation frameworks, and regional free-movement agreements that allow people to move safely and with dignity. The Platform also promotes stronger coordination between governments, international organizations, and civil society to ensure that disaster displacement is systematically integrated into national and international policy frameworks.
- f. **Loss and Damage Fund:** The Loss and Damage Fund, operationalized at COP28 in 2023, is a global financial mechanism established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It aims to provide direct financial assistance to developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the unavoidable and irreversible impacts of climate change, impacts that go beyond what can be addressed through mitigation and adaptation. This includes damage to livelihoods, ecosystems, and infrastructure, as well as the costs associated with displacement and relocation. The Fund represents a major step toward addressing historical climate injustice by ensuring that wealthier, high-emission countries contribute to helping those who suffer the most from climate impacts. How this fund is governed, financed, and distributed remains a critical question for future international negotiations.
- g. **Kampala Convention (2009):** The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, commonly known as the Kampala Convention, was adopted in 2009 and entered into force in 2012. It is the world's first legally binding regional instrument to address the protection and assistance of IDPs, explicitly

recognizing natural and human-made disasters as legitimate causes of displacement. The Convention obliges states to prevent displacement, protect those who are displaced, and assist them in finding durable solutions such as return, local integration, or resettlement. Its comprehensive approach has made it a model for other regions seeking to address internal displacement linked to environmental and climatic factors.

- h. **Cartagena Declaration (1984):** The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, adopted in 1984 by a group of Latin American states, is a non-binding regional instrument that significantly broadened the definition of who qualifies as a refugee. Beyond the traditional persecution-based criteria of the 1951 Convention, it includes individuals fleeing “events seriously disturbing public order,” such as generalized violence, internal conflicts, and natural disasters. This broader and more flexible approach has enabled several Latin American countries to extend protection to people displaced by environmental catastrophes and other non-traditional causes. The Cartagena Declaration’s humanitarian spirit and regional cooperation framework continue to influence modern discussions about climate displacement and the evolution of international refugee protection.

7. Past Actions

Over the past decade, the international community has taken remarkable and progressive steps to address the growing intersection between climate change and human displacement, acknowledging that environmental crises are no longer separate from humanitarian ones but deeply intertwined. As the world witnesses increasing instances of droughts, floods, storms, and sea-level rise displacing millions of people annually, states and international organizations have begun to expand their legal, operational, and financial tools to confront this new reality. A major milestone in this evolution was the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in 2018, which, for the first time in a global UN framework, explicitly recognized that climate change and environmental degradation are significant drivers of displacement. The GCR calls upon states to incorporate climate risk assessments into their refugee response strategies, to strengthen the resilience of host communities, and to support the capacity-building of states most affected by climate-induced migration. It emphasizes international cooperation and shared responsibility, encouraging states and donors to work together in providing both humanitarian assistance and sustainable development aid to regions most at risk.

Building on this momentum, the UNHCR’s Strategic Framework for Climate Action (2021) established a comprehensive roadmap for integrating climate considerations across the

organization's policies and field operations. Structured around three key pillars (law and policy, operations, and environmental responsibility) the Framework seeks to reinterpret existing protection mechanisms to cover climate-related displacement, improve the resilience of both displaced and host communities through adaptive and sustainable practices, and reduce the environmental footprint of UNHCR's own humanitarian operations. This strategic shift represents a recognition that climate action must be woven into the fabric of humanitarian response, not treated as a separate issue. It has led to initiatives such as greening refugee camps with renewable energy, investing in water-efficient technologies, and advocating for greater inclusion of displaced populations in national climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans.

Complementing these institutional efforts, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) (established in 2016 as the successor to the Nansen Initiative) has become a leading intergovernmental platform dedicated to finding practical, non-binding solutions for people displaced by disasters and climate impacts. The PDD promotes tools such as humanitarian visas, planned relocation programs, and regional free-movement agreements, which provide flexible and dignified pathways for affected populations. By fostering cooperation among states, the PDD ensures that governments can respond more effectively to disaster-related displacement without necessarily having to create new international treaties. It also plays a crucial role in promoting knowledge exchange and collecting best practices that inform the global policy landscape on climate mobility.

In parallel, the international community has made progress on the financial dimension of climate displacement, recognizing that humanitarian protection cannot be achieved without adequate funding. The Loss and Damage Fund, operationalized in 2023 at COP28, represents a historic development in climate finance. It is designed to support developing nations that are most vulnerable to climate change, helping them cope with irreversible losses (including the destruction of homes, livelihoods, and ecosystems) and to finance recovery, relocation, and long-term resilience initiatives. This fund acknowledges a key principle of climate justice: that countries with the least responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions are often those suffering the greatest impacts. Its establishment marks a significant step toward global solidarity and accountability in addressing the human consequences of climate change.

At the regional level, innovative models have emerged that demonstrate how localized frameworks can complement global action. In Africa, the Kampala Convention (2009) remains the world's first legally binding regional instrument addressing internal displacement, including that caused by natural disasters and environmental degradation. It obliges states to prevent displacement, protect the rights of those affected, and facilitate durable solutions such as return, local integration, or resettlement. In Latin America, the Cartagena Declaration (1984) has long served as a pioneering framework for

refugee protection. Though non-binding, its expanded definition of a refugee (encompassing those fleeing “events seriously disturbing public order”) has allowed states to extend protection to people displaced by natural disasters and other non-traditional causes. Together, these regional instruments embody forward-looking and human-centered approaches that fill critical protection gaps where global frameworks remain limited.

Taken collectively, these global and regional initiatives underscore the international community’s growing awareness that climate change is fundamentally reshaping patterns of human mobility and displacement. They represent meaningful, though still incomplete, steps toward an integrated system of protection that bridges humanitarian response, climate adaptation, and sustainable development. Moving forward, the challenge lies in ensuring that these frameworks are not only implemented in policy but also translated into concrete action, delivering real support, safety, and dignity to the millions of people whose lives are being uprooted by the accelerating climate crisis.

8. Bloc positions

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) represents some of the most climate-vulnerable nations in the world, including countries in the Pacific, Caribbean, and Indian Ocean regions. For these states, climate change poses an existential threat, as rising sea levels, saltwater intrusion, and intensified storms jeopardize not only their economies and ecosystems but their very territorial existence. Some member nations may become uninhabitable within decades, forcing the relocation of entire populations. Consequently, AOSIS has emerged as one of the strongest advocates for international recognition of “climate refugees” and the development of legally binding frameworks to ensure their protection. The bloc calls for mandatory international relocation assistance to guarantee safe, dignified, and planned migration pathways for populations displaced by climate impacts. It also demands direct access to the Loss and Damage Fund, arguing that existing bureaucratic barriers unfairly delay aid to those in immediate peril. Above all, AOSIS frames climate-induced displacement as a matter of climate justice and historical responsibility, emphasizing that high-emission nations have a moral and legal obligation to support those whose homes and futures are being lost due to climate change.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the impacts of climate change are deeply intertwined with existing challenges of poverty, conflict, and governance. The region faces recurring droughts, desertification, and food insecurity, particularly in areas such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where environmental degradation has become a significant driver of displacement and instability. Climate stress often exacerbates local conflicts over land and resources, creating a vicious cycle of violence and migration. African states advocate for robust adaptation and resilience-building projects that can reduce the need for

displacement in the first place, such as sustainable water management, agricultural reform, and ecosystem restoration. They also call for stronger regional cooperation, drawing on the Kampala Convention as a successful legal and operational framework for managing internal displacement. Finally, Sub-Saharan African nations demand greater access to climate finance and humanitarian relief, emphasizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, that wealthier nations should provide increased funding and technical assistance to those least equipped to cope with the impacts of climate change.

The European Union (EU) approaches climate-related displacement through the lens of migration management and border stability, prioritizing strategies aimed at prevention rather than relocation. While the EU recognizes the humanitarian dimensions of climate-induced migration, it tends to focus on supporting adaptation and resilience efforts in origin countries, viewing such measures as the most effective way to reduce migration pressures. The bloc advocates for the strengthening of regional protection and temporary protection schemes, similar to those implemented during the displacement crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. However, the EU remains cautious about any proposal to expand the 1951 Refugee Convention's legal definition, fearing that a broader interpretation could create unsustainable migration flows and legal obligations. Instead, the EU prefers to channel its contributions through multilateral organizations such as UNHCR and IOM, focusing on capacity-building, data collection, and sustainable development funding in regions most affected by climate change.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), the effects of climate change are increasingly visible through hurricanes, floods, droughts, and rising sea levels, which disrupt communities and livelihoods across the region. Given its long tradition of regional solidarity and human rights-based approaches, GRULAC countries emphasize the importance of cooperation and shared responsibility in addressing climate displacement. Many states in this bloc support the flexible application of the Cartagena Declaration (1984), whose broader definition of refugee status allows for the inclusion of individuals fleeing "events seriously disturbing public order," a phrase that can encompass environmental and climate-related disasters. GRULAC advocates for strengthened regional coordination mechanisms to manage migration and disaster response, alongside expanded financial assistance to fund adaptation, relocation, and reconstruction efforts. The bloc also highlights the need to empower local communities and civil society organizations in designing context-specific solutions that uphold dignity, human rights, and sustainable development.

The Industrialized Countries, including members of the G7 and G20 such as the United States, Canada, Japan, and several European powers, hold a critical but often cautious position in discussions on climate displacement. As the primary historical emitters of

greenhouse gases and the largest contributors to humanitarian aid, these nations emphasize the importance of financial support, research, and preventive measures over the creation of new legal frameworks. They advocate for strengthening existing mechanisms under the UNHCR and IOM, supporting programs that build resilience in vulnerable regions and reduce the need for mass migration. However, they generally oppose expanding the legal definition of “refugee” to include those displaced by climate change, arguing that such a move could overwhelm asylum systems and divert attention from root-cause mitigation. Instead, industrialized countries promote data-driven responses, disaster risk reduction, and capacity-building initiatives, often through bilateral aid or global funds like the Loss and Damage Fund. While their financial contributions are vital to addressing the crisis, debates continue over whether these efforts adequately reflect their moral responsibility for the disproportionate role they have played in driving the global climate emergency.

9. QARMAs

- a. How can the UNHCR redefine “forced displacement” to include climate-related movements without undermining the integrity of the 1951 Refugee Convention?
- b. How can national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction strategies integrate displacement prevention and protection measures under UNHCR guidance?
- c. What strategies can be adopted to ensure rapid and equitable humanitarian assistance to populations displaced by climate change, especially in countries most affected by disasters and resource scarcity?
- d. How can host States balance national sovereignty and resource limitations with their humanitarian obligations toward climate-displaced persons?
- e. How can UNHCR promote durable solutions—such as voluntary return, local integration, or planned resettlement—for communities displaced by climate impacts, while safeguarding their human rights and dignity?

10. Position Paper Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of each delegation’s stance, possible solutions, and role within the committee. Delegates are encouraged to follow a structured format when drafting their documents, as this will facilitate the writing process and improve readability for the Director. Furthermore, to be eligible for an award, each delegate must submit a Position Paper before the established deadline.



In the first paragraph, delegates should outline their country's position on the topic, clearly demonstrating an understanding of their nation's policy. In the second paragraph, they may mention the main previous actions taken by the United Nations related to the issue. The impact of these actions on their country should be analyzed, explaining why they were successful or not. Actions taken by other international organizations and by the country itself regarding the issue may also be included.

In the final paragraph, which is the most important, delegates must present their proposals to address the problem. Each proposal should be supported with detailed information, covering the who, what, when, where, and how of its implementation.

The document must comply with the following format specifications: a maximum length of one page, line spacing of 1.15, Times New Roman font, font size 11, and 2.5 cm margins on all sides. A bibliography following APA 7 citation format must be included. It is essential that all references used are properly cited. The document must be submitted to the following email address: positionpaperspucpmun@gmail.com.

11. Bibliography

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