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UNGA

STUDY GUIDE

—

Addressing the Impact of Climate Change as the Most Significant Threat to Future Generations.

To the Esteemed Delegates of the UNGA Committee,

Greetings from the Executive Board of the United Nations General Assembly!

It is both an honour and a privilege to welcome you to this year's session of the Model United Nations, where you will take part in one of the most pressing and globally resonant discussions of our time: "Addressing the Impact of Climate Change as the Most Significant Threat to Future Generations." As representatives of a world increasingly shaped by the decisions we make today, you hold the extraordinary responsibility—and opportunity—to shape meaningful discourse on an issue that transcends borders, cultures, and generations. Climate change is no longer a distant or abstract concern; it is a present and escalating crisis that is reshaping ecosystems, economies, and lives. But it is future generations who will inherit the full weight of our actions, or our inaction. This agenda calls on you to explore a broad spectrum of topics: The intergenerational equity principle and the rights of youth and unborn generations; Transitioning to sustainable energy and carbon-neutral development; Climate-induced displacement and the protection of climate refugees; The role of international cooperation and climate financing mechanisms; & Climate adaptation strategies for vulnerable populations and regions. We encourage each delegate to approach this agenda not only with intellectual rigour but also with empathy, creativity, and a commitment to multilateralism. Think deeply, debate passionately, and seek consensus wherever possible. Consider the moral imperative we face: to act now, decisively, and justly, so that our children and grandchildren inherit a livable planet. We look forward to witnessing your diplomacy in action and the resolutions you will craft—ones that reflect the vision, urgency, and cooperation that the real world so desperately needs. May your words be powerful, your resolutions bold, and your legacy lasting.

Yours sincerely,
Mansvi Bangarh
President – UNGA Committee

Climate Catastrophe or Collective Courage? Addressing Climate Change as the Defining Challenge of Our Time

In the grand theater of global affairs, where diplomatic debates sculpt the destinies of nations, one crisis looms above all — not as a distant threat, but as an accelerating catastrophe: climate change. It is the great equalizer, indifferent to borders, politics, or privilege. In this century-defining battle, the stakes are not merely policy preferences or political ideologies, but the very habitability of our planet for future generations. From the arid sands of the Sahel to the sinking shores of the Pacific Islands, climate change is not a future forecast. Rising sea levels gnaw away at coastal communities, erratic weather patterns cripple agriculture, and once-in-a-century storms now arrive with unsettling regularity. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a clarion call: the window for meaningful action is vanishing, and with it, the hopes of billions unborn.

Descriptive Analysis: Addressing the Impact of Climate Change as the Most Significant Threat to Future Generations. The threat posed by climate change transcends borders, ideologies, and generations. It is not a far-off scenario conjured by alarmist rhetoric but a pressing, visible crisis manifesting in the present—and one whose consequences will reverberate most violently in the lives of future generations. Climate change is not merely an environmental issue; it is a full-spectrum humanitarian emergency. Rising sea levels threaten to engulf small island nations and coastal cities. Prolonged droughts displaced entire farming communities. Unpredictable weather patterns destabilize food systems, collapse biodiversity, and spark conflicts over diminishing resources. The Earth's fever is not breaking —it is intensifying. Yet, the most sobering truth is this: the ones who will suffer most from devastation are those who have contributed to it the least. Children born today are inheriting a planet on the brink world where basic survival may one day be considered a privilege. Scientific consensus warns that if the current trajectory continues, the world could breach the 1.5°C threshold within decades, unleashing irreversible tipping points—from the melting of polar ice caps to the collapse of coral reefs. The future we are hurtling toward is not theoretical, it is calculable.

Addressing this crisis requires more than pledges; it demands bold, immediate, and unified global action. The principle of intergenerational equity must guide policy, ensuring that today's choices do not condemn tomorrow's citizens to hardship. Sustainable energy transitions, climate-resilient infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and the integration of climate education into national curricula are no longer optional—they are vital imperatives. Moreover, climate justice must be at the core of every dialogue. Vulnerable nations, indigenous populations, and youth voices must not only be included in climate negotiations—they must lead them. The climate crisis is not a story of powerlessness; it is a call for unprecedented collaboration and moral clarity. In MUN, we are tasked not merely with debating policy but with envisioning the world as it should be. Addressing climate change as the most significant threat to future generations is not a single resolution; it is a generational responsibility. Let us rise not with words alone, but with the courage to act, the humility to listen, and the wisdom to protect what is irreplaceable: the future. The United Nations General Assembly stands at a pivotal crossroads in human history—one where the decisions we make today will shape the fate of generations yet unborn. Among the many issues that come before this body, none looms as large or as urgent as the escalating impact of climate change. It is not a distant threat on the horizon, it is the defining crisis of our time and the most significant existential danger to future generations. The scientific community has spoken with clarity and urgency: the Earth is warming at an unprecedented rate, and the consequences are unfolding in real time. From catastrophic floods in South Asia to devastating wildfires in the Mediterranean, from the vanishing Arctic ice to rising food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, no region remains untouched. This is not just an environmental emergency, it is a cascading global threat that undermines health, security, development, and peace. Children born today will inherit a world markedly different from that of their parents—a world of climate-induced displacement, resource scarcity, and economic instability if immediate action is not taken. For many, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), climate change is not a future issue; it is a daily reality. Yet these nations often lack the means to adapt and respond, despite contributing the least to the problem.

As the main deliberative body of the United Nations, the UNGA holds a unique and powerful mandate to coordinate global efforts and reaffirm international commitments. The Paris Agreement and the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) provide the framework, but it is political will and concrete action that will determine success.

To truly address this threat, the General Assembly must prioritize:

Strengthening climate financing mechanisms to support adaptation and mitigation in vulnerable countries, especially through the Green Climate Fund. Advocating for intergenerational justice by integrating the voices and rights of youth into climate policymaking and development planning.
Accelerating the transition to renewable energy through coordinated policy, technology sharing, and capacity building. Ensuring accountability by calling for transparent national reporting on emissions, adaptation efforts, and climate resilience planning. This is a moment not for rhetoric, but for resolve. The decisions made within this chamber must reflect the urgency of the moment and the moral obligation we hold to those who will follow us. Climate change is not confined to national borders, and neither can our solutions be. Let this Assembly be remembered not for what it discussed—but for what it did. Let us act boldly, cooperatively, and decisively to protect our planet and preserve a livable future for all humanity.

Major Problems and Key Issues: Addressing the Impact of Climate Change as the Most Significant Threat to Future Generations

1. Rising Sea Levels and Displacement

One of the most visible and devastating consequences of climate change is the rise of global sea levels, largely driven by melting polar ice caps and thermal expansion of oceans.
Example: The Republic of the Maldives and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face the possibility of complete submersion by the end of the century. Entire populations may become climate refugees.
Key Issue: There is no comprehensive legal framework for climate-induced displacement under current refugee law, leaving millions at risk without protection.

2. Extreme Weather Events and Natural Disasters

Climate change has intensified the frequency and severity of extreme weather events—hurricanes, floods, heatwaves, and wildfires—causing

widespread destruction and loss of life.
Example: Pakistan's 2022 floods submerged one-third of the country, displacing over 30 million people and causing over $30 billion in damages.
Example: California wildfires and Australian bushfires (2019–2020) burned millions of acres, destroyed ecosystems, and released massive carbon emissions.
Key Issue: Many nations lack adequate disaster preparedness and resilient infrastructure, especially in the Global South.

3. Food and Water Insecurity
Climate variability disrupts agriculture and water cycles, endangering food production and water access, especially in regions already facing scarcity.
Example: In Sub-Saharan Africa, erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts have led to crop failures and food crises.
Example: The Horn of Africa experienced its worst drought in 40 years (2020–2023), pushing millions into acute hunger.
Key Issue: Youth and future generations in agrarian economies face long-term nutritional deficits and stunted development.

4. Impact on Health Systems and Vulnerable Populations
Rising temperatures contribute to the spread of diseases like malaria and dengue, while heatwaves and air pollution exacerbate cardiovascular and respiratory conditions.
Example: India experienced a deadly heatwave in 2024 with temperatures exceeding 50°C, overwhelming hospitals and increasing mortality rates.
Key Issue: Health infrastructure in developing nations is often ill-equipped to handle the compounded impacts of climate-related health emergencies.

5. Climate Inequality and Environmental Injustice
The effects of climate change are disproportionately borne by nations and communities that contributed the least to global emissions.
Example: The Global North (especially the U.S., EU, and China) accounts for the majority of historical emissions, while Pacific Island Nations and African countries bear the brunt of the damage.
Key Issue: There is a growing demand for climate reparations and loss and damage funding, but implementation remains limited and politicized.

6. Failure to Meet International Commitments
Despite global agreements such as the Paris Agreement, many countries are falling short of their emission reduction targets and adaptation pledges.

Example: According to the UNEP Emissions Gap Report, current pledges put the world on track for a 2.7°C rise—far above the 1.5°C target.
Key Issue: Lack of enforcement mechanisms and political will weakens multilateral climate efforts.

7. Inadequate Climate Education and Youth Exclusion
Younger generations, who will be most affected by climate change, are often excluded from decision-making processes and lack access to adequate climate education.
Example: Climate strikes led by youth activists like Greta Thunberg and organizations like Fridays for Future highlight the generational frustration with policy inaction.
Key Issue: Youth representation in international climate negotiations remains symbolic rather than substantive in most forums.

8. Technological and Financial Gaps
Transitioning to a green economy requires access to clean technology and financing resources that are unevenly distributed.
Example: Many Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are still reliant on fossil fuels due to a lack of infrastructure for renewable energy.
Key Issue: Failure to provide technology transfer and adequate financing (e.g., unmet $100 billion annual climate finance pledge) hampers global progress.

9. Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Collapse
Climate change accelerates the extinction of species, disrupts ecosystems, and reduces natural carbon sinks like forests and oceans.
Example: The Great Barrier Reef has lost over half its coral due to ocean warming and acidification.
Key Issue: Ecosystem collapse weakens the planet's natural resilience, further amplifying climate risks.

Overview of International Treaties, National Laws, and Potential Solutions

I. International Treaties and Agreements

1. The Paris Agreement (2015)
   Overview: A legally binding international treaty under the UNFCCC

aiming to limit global warming to well below 2°C, ideally 1.5°C.
Key Elements: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), climate finance for developing countries, and global stocktakes.
Example: European Union pledged to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 levels.

2. The Kyoto Protocol (1997)
   Overview: An earlier treaty setting binding emission reduction targets for developed countries.
   Limitations: Excluded major developing emitters; lacked universal participation after U.S. withdrawal.
3. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)
   Overview: The foundational treaty that established the framework for future climate negotiations.
   Key Achievement: Created the Conference of the Parties (COP), the annual climate summit.
4. Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26, 2021)
   Overview: Reinforced the 1.5°C target, called for phasing down coal, and doubled adaptation finance.
   Example: India announced its "Panchamrit" plan, including net-zero by 2070 and 50% renewable energy by 2030.
5. Loss and Damage Fund (COP27, 2022)
   Overview: A major breakthrough providing funding for vulnerable countries facing climate-related destruction.
   Challenge: Actual mobilization and implementation remain slow.

II. National Laws and Policies

1. Germany: Climate Change Act (Klimaschutzgesetz)
   Mandates: Legally binding carbon neutrality by 2045, sector-specific emission targets.
   Impact: Constitutional Court ruled in 2021 that the act must better protect future generations.
2. Kenya: Climate Change Act (2016)
   Mandates: National Climate Change Council, integration of climate in development planning.
   Example: Kenya is investing in geothermal energy, which now accounts for over 40% of its electricity.

3. India: National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)
   Mandates: 8 “missions” including solar energy, sustainable agriculture, and energy efficiency.
   Example: International Solar Alliance, co-led by India, aims to mobilize $1 trillion in solar investments by 2030.
4. New Zealand: Zero Carbon Act (2019)
   Mandates: Net-zero carbon emissions by 2050; independent Climate Change Commission to guide policy.
   Youth Focus: Includes intergenerational equity as a principle.
5. United States: Inflation Reduction Act (2022)
   Mandates: Largest climate investment in U.S. history (~$370 billion).
   Focus: Clean energy, electric vehicles, carbon capture, climate justice investments in disadvantaged communities.

III. Global and Local Solutions

1. Renewable Energy Transition
   Goal: Shift away from fossil fuels to wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal.
   Example: Denmark aims to produce 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.
   Challenge: Financing and infrastructure gaps in developing nations.
2. Climate Education and Youth Engagement
   Goal: Empower youth to participate in climate policy and adaptation.
   Example: Italy made climate change education compulsory in schools in 2019—the first country to do so.
   MUN Application: Advocate for UNGA resolutions to promote climate education across national curricula.
3. Nature-Based Solutions
   Goal: Use ecosystems for mitigation and adaptation (reforestation, wetland restoration).
   Example: Costa Rica has doubled its forest cover through strong conservation policies.
   Challenge: Need for sustainable financing and local community inclusion.
4. Climate-Resilient Infrastructure
   Goal: Adapt cities and infrastructure to withstand climate impacts (flood defenses, drought-resistant roads).

Example: The Netherlands has built “Room for the River” projects to control flooding innovatively.

5. Climate Finance and Green Bonds
   Goal: Mobilize public and private funding for clean energy, adaptation, and loss and damage.
   Example: Green Climate Fund (GCF) supports projects in vulnerable countries; however, the $100 billion annual pledge remains unmet.
   Policy Idea: Propose a UNGA initiative to tax global carbon-intensive industries to fund LDC adaptation.
6. Legal Recognition of Environmental Rights
   Example: In Colombia, the Supreme Court recognized the Amazon rainforest as a legal entity entitled to protection.
   MUN Application: Encourage member states to recognize environmental rights in national constitutions or through international frameworks.

Local and Non-State Climate Action

Case Study: Corporate-Led Reforestation as a Climate Mitigation Strategy

Hitachi Lift India in association with India Is Us – "Go Green, Breathe Clean" Initiative

On **22 February 2025**, Hitachi Lift India, in collaboration with the NGO *Nav Nirman Vidnyan Prabodhan* and supported by INDIA IS US, launched the *Go Green, Breathe Clean* initiative—a grassroots effort aimed at addressing urban pollution and ecological degradation through community-driven afforestation.

As part of this initiative, **60 indigenous saplings** were planted to enhance urban biodiversity, reduce particulate air pollution, and foster environmental stewardship among local communities. This initiative exemplifies how corporate actors can go beyond sustainability pledges to implement tangible, climate-positive actions at the local level.

By integrating tree-planting with long-term environmental education and public awareness, the initiative supports multiple SDGs—particularly **Goal 13 (Climate Action)** and **Goal 15 (Life on Land)**—and embodies the principle of intergenerational equity, ensuring future generations inherit a healthier planet.

Conclusion

A unified response to climate change must combine binding international frameworks, robust national legislation, and grassroots solutions. For future generations, this is not merely a policy agenda, it is a survival imperative. In MUN, delegates are called to represent their nations, but also to act as stewards of a shared planet.

Key United Nations Resources

1. IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2021–2023)
   Website: https://www.ipcc.ch
   Provides scientific consensus on climate change, projections, and mitigation strategies.
2. UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
   Website: https://unfccc.int
   Covers global negotiations, national contributions (NDCs), COP decisions.
3. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – Emissions Gap Report
   Website: https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report
   Analyzes the gap between current policies and what's needed to stay under 1.5°C.
4. UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goal 13: Climate Action
   Website: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13
   Links climate action to broader development goals.

Governmental and Intergovernmental Reports

1. World Bank – Climate Change Overview
   Website: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange
   Focuses on economic impacts and resilience strategies for developing nations.
2. OECD – Climate Change Policy Frameworks
   Website: https://www.oecd.org/environment/climate-change/
   Policy recommendations for governments addressing environmental and economic challenges.

Scientific and Research-Based Sources

1. NASA – Climate Change and Global Warming
   Website: https://climate.nasa.gov
   Data visualization and scientific insights into Earth's changing climate.
2. National Geographic – Climate Change Explained
   Website: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/climate-change
   Accessible scientific content with visuals and case studies.

3. Pew Research Center – Global Attitudes Toward Climate Change
   Website: https://www.pewresearch.org
   Survey data on public perception of climate change across regions.

Policy and Legal References

1. Paris Agreement (2015)
   PDF:
   https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf
   Key international treaty guiding global climate action.
2. The Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26)
   Summary: https://ukcop26.org/the-conference/cop26-outcomes/
   Updated commitments post-Paris Agreement.

Youth & Future Generations' Voices

1. UNICEF – Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis
   Website: https://www.unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis
   Focus on intergenerational justice and youth vulnerability.
2. Fridays for Future (Greta Thunberg movement)
   Website: https://fridaysforfuture.org
   Youth-led climate activism with speeches and campaigns.