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The MUN Youth Assembly

Fourth Committee: MUN, Climate Change, and Civil and Social Responsibility Among Youth

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The role of Model United Nations in raising awareness on climate change and developing civil social responsibility among youth.

Report of the UA-MUN Youth Assembly Secretary General

Introduction:

MUN is an extracurricular activity predicated on fostering youth leadership in developing individuals. MUN offers a prominent intersection between education, youth development, the values and evolving goals of the United Nations, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Youth Assembly 2017 is designed to provide a platform for leaders, experts, and achieved veterans in the Global Model UN landscape. The Assembly is predicated on discussing significant issues pertaining to the MUN community from an organizer's perspective. The theme of this year's conference is "The Correlation between Education, Youth Development, Model UN, and Agenda 2030 - Let's Make MUN Change the World."¹ As a youth leader, it is up to the delegate to identify the significance of the outlined points of discussion, and recognize that in what may be considered an issue lies opportunity. Resolutions at the Youth Assembly create a global impact, as they are premised on changing how MUN functions and require implementation.

Since the Industrial Revolution, atmospheric CO₂ has incremented exponentially². As a circumstance of rapidly increasing carbon emissions, more than 1.6 million people across the globe have died between 1990 and 2013 in internationally reported disasters caused by climate change, with annual deaths trending upwards. Climate change and its effects can be manifested by the European summer of 2003. The prolonged and intense heat killed between 22,000 and 35,000 people, particularly elderly individuals. And the economic consequences of the un natural phenomenon resulted in losses of over 13 billion dollars (IFRC, 2004)³.

In 2009, the GA created resolution 63/32 entitled protection of global climate for present and future generations. Climate change has been recognized as a critical issue. When examining climate change in accordance with weak institutions, extreme poverty, political and socio economic fault

¹ <https://www.unitedambassadors.com/munassembly-unhq-committees>

² <https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

³ "The impacts of climate change on the risk of natural disasters." Maarten K. van Aalst, *Disasters* (2006), 30(1): 5–18

lines, and an inadequate access to information, the point of discussion can be considered to be a threat multiplier⁴.

As Model UN stands as a valuable educational and youth development platform, the responsibility of Model UN regarding action, requires further pronouncement for the achievement of further positive development. In the previous years, climate change has been discussed in multiple conferences around the world. Considering this, the aims of this report will consider how MUN as a field can contribute to addressing climate change and reflect on how MUN can develop Civil Social Responsibility, in general, yet not limited to a restriction pertaining to climate change.

I. Background:

In the late 1980s, increasing awareness pertaining to international environmental issues exasperated a shift in the climate change debate. Transitioning from the scientific to the political realm, a paradigm shift occurs through which people become concerned about man made climate change. A report⁵ was published in 1990 that highlighted the link between human greenhouse gas emission and global warming. This report was highly influential. It received international attention and prompted states to create the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 9 May 1992⁶. In 2008 the UNFCCC had been ratified by 191 nations, including the European Union (EU). This scale of ratification gives the Convention almost worldwide membership making it one of the most universally supported international agreements.

Climate change is already affecting the most vulnerable countries and populations. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year. Malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress have already been directly linked to climate change. The direct economic impact on failing human health (i.e. excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation), which estimated to be between US\$ 2-4 billion/year by 2030⁷.

Globally, the number of reported natural disasters related to climate change has more than tripled since the 1960s. Every year, these disasters result in over 60 000 deaths, mainly in developing countries⁸. Pollen and other aeroallergen levels are also higher in extreme heat. This is cause for concern as high levels of these allergens are cause for asthma, which affects around 300 million people. Ongoing temperature increases are expected to increase this burden⁹.

Moreover, increasingly variable rainfall patterns are likely to affect the supply of fresh water. A lack of safe water can compromise hygiene and increase the risk of diarrhoeal disease, which kills over 500 000 children aged under 5 years, every year¹⁰.

⁴ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/sbsta/eng/misc21a01.pdf>

⁵ <https://ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/spm/sres-en.pdf>

⁶ http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/6031.php & <http://unfccc.int/timeline/>

⁷ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en/>

⁸ http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44203/1/9789241563871_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1

⁹ https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf

¹⁰ Death toll exceeded 70,000 in Europe during the summer of 2003. Robine JM, Cheung SL, Le Roy S, Van Oyen H, Griffiths C, Michel JP, et al. *C R Biol.* 2008;331(2):171-8.

Furthermore, the sustainable development agenda of 2030 is imperative for the purposes of tackling poverty, and building a sustainable world for future generations. According to the evidence from the IPCC, every one of these goals could be affected by climate change, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, combating climate change is critical to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Past international actions :

From individual movements to political action, from the sub-national level to international agreements. Actions against climate change aim to build social awareness, political and financial support, and reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases. Other actions speak to the ethical aspects of climate justice.

Many NGOs from considerably numerous backgrounds have united on this issue. A coalition of 50 NGOs launched Stop Climate Chaos in Britain in September 2005, to highlight common ground in climate change mitigation efforts. Groups such as NextGen Climate and Climate Hawks Vote are working in the US to elect officials who will make action on climate change a high priority. Moreover, activists from organizing campaigns such as Critical Mass, Campaign against Climate Change strive to shift the focus onto pressuring governments by using protest movements in order to create the necessary influence through which action at the political level can be taken.

The European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) was the first large greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme in the world, and remains the biggest. It was launched in 2005 to combat global warming.¹¹

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted unanimously in 1997 and it entered into force on 16 February 2005. The protocol's major feature is that it has mandatory targets on greenhouse-gas emissions for the world's leading economies, which have accepted it.¹²

The Paris Agreement, is an agreement within the UNFCCC focusing on climate change mitigation, adaptation and finance activities pertaining to climate change until the year 2020. The language of the agreement was negotiated by representatives of 195 countries at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Paris and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015. The Paris Agreement's 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 from pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius¹³.

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets_en

¹² <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

¹³ <http://bigpicture.unfccc.int/#content-the-paris-agreemen>

Political groups:

There are a number of alliances and strategic groups within the negotiations on a new climate policy.¹⁴

The G77 and China mainly consists of developing countries generally working through the group to establish common negotiating positions. It has over 130 members, however, as the G77 and China is a diverse group with differing interests on climate change. Developing countries are more recalcitrant intervening in the debates hindering progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development agenda.

The G77 and China stresses that urgent action is required presently to fully implement the commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, especially those on financing for the adaptation and technology transfer¹⁵.

The G77 and China feels that developing countries should be provided with greater access to cost-effective, efficient and affordable advanced clean technologies which can contribute to their development sustainably¹⁶.

Therefore the G77 and China stresses that all member states should have equal access to green technologies in order to secure a sustainable development for all and patents on green technologies should be dissolved¹⁷.

The European Union consists of 27 countries, but also states that are seeking to join the EU are working closely with the group in negotiations pertaining to climate change.

The EU has entered into a legally binding commitment predicated on the reduction of its member states green-house gas emissions by 20% by 2020. If other industrialised countries similarly reduce their emissions the EU will increase its commitment to 30%¹⁸.

It is the opinion of the EU that all countries except the least developed should contribute to the financing of the struggle against climate change in developing countries on the basis of a universal, comprehensive and specific contribution strategy.¹⁹

¹⁴ http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/6343.php

¹⁵ <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=070924>

¹⁶ <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=080212>

¹⁷ <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=090922>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/eccp/docs/second_eccp_report_en.pdf

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/eccp/docs/120815_final_report_en.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/eccp/docs/mitigation_shale_gas_en.pdf

Possible solutions:

In the past, Member States have already been led initiatives on promoting the integration of a gender perspective into environmental and climate change policies. The aims of this notion, is to better strengthen and provide the adequate resources necessary towards achieving the full and equal participation of women in decision making.

However, though a number reports and conferences have shown and discussed that there are multiple ways of minimising the negative impacts of climate change, there are still action gaps which present a serious challenge to policymakers and to humanity.

There are several reasons for this action gap including a number of related sociological, psychological and political problems²⁰. Notably, there are two related reasons that both explain the action gap, and could be used to address it. The first is the absence of credible national-level strategy for addressing the problem. In the UK, for example, there has been a vast array of different roadmaps, targets and plans for how to tackle climate change, but there is a lack of any clear, coordinated strategy. The second reason for the action gap is the failure to explain the problem of climate change, and its solutions, in a compelling manner.²¹ Therefore, there exists a need to promote community empowerment and civic engagement. There's necessity to monitor both mitigation and adaptation.

²⁰ Towards a unifying narrative for climate change (April, 2016). Simon Bushell, Dr Mark Workman and Thomas Colley.

²¹ Bushell, S. Closing the Climate Change Action Gap : the Role of Strategy and Strategic Narrative. (2014).

Questions to consider:

The following questions should be used as a guide for your research, as you write your position papers and prepare for the Conference. These questions will also serve as a launchpad for our committee discussions, helping us focus on devising innovative, concrete solutions to tackling climate change and the threats it poses to sustainable global development.

How can MUN as an educational tool contribute in developing and increase awareness on climate change?

How can MUN as a youth development platform continue to thrive a sense of civil social responsibility?

Can you address the power and limitations of MUN as a field in mobilizing projects that take action on climate change and develop civil social responsibility?

How do discouraging statements that question the validity of climate change affect youth leaders worldwide?

How can youth leaders worldwide contribute to the movement "Climate Change is Real"?

What specific threats is climate change posing to the achievement of the SDGs in your country? Detail particular goals, and the impacts of climate change on the achievement of these individual goals.

Climate Change is a cross-cutting issue: essentially, no SDG can be achieved without considering the links with climate change. As you research, consider what measures we should take, and what strategies we should implement to ensure that climate change is treated as a cross-cutting issue across our efforts to achieve the various SDGs and their targets.

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“The concept of economic diversification in the context of response measures technical paper by the secretariat.” UNFCCC Report, 6 May 2016. <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/tp/03.pdf>

Further Reading

Recommended sources for further reading include but are not limited to the UNDESA, UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP and IPCC, COP Global Reports referenced in this SG report, as well as reports drafted by other organizations such as the United States Government, Asia and the Pacific and the aforementioned NGOs.

Moreover, of course, it is strongly recommended to review and reference the UN climate change frameworks and resolutions that have been cited throughout this report.

http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_and_data_reports.shtml

These are published materials composed of the full scientific and technical assessments of climate change, generally in three volumes, one for each of the Working Groups of the IPCC

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/climate-and-disaster-resilience/climate-change.html> UNDP’s main page including recent updates on climate change and connected issues

<http://web.unep.org/climatechange/> (UNEP main page on climate change)

<http://newsroom.unfccc.int/> (UNFCCC and the updates on COP 22)

