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EKIN SNY MUN BACKGROUND GUIDE

Committee: ECOSOC

**Topic: Strengthening Humanitarian
Assistance in the Face of Climate Change**



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WELCOME SPEECH/LETTER FROM THE CHAIRBOARD

Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to EKIN JMUN 2025 in Izmir, Türkiye! We are excited to introduce you to this year's United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) committee, a pivotal part of our conference.

This year's staff comprises Chair Fabian Salvador and Co-Chair Aya Farhat! Fabian is coming to you all from Boston, Massachusetts, though he is originally from South Florida and is of Ecuadorian descent. He is in his fourth year at Boston University studying International Relations and Latin American Studies, and he recently finished his last semester of his junior year while abroad in Paris! Fabian has competed in Model United Nations since his sophomore year of high school and has chaired various other committees at collegiate and high school conferences.

Aya is an International Relations professional with a Master's degree from the University of Groningen. She is an author, entrepreneur, and jewelry designer, with a deep passion for diplomacy and global affairs. Having participated in Model United Nations since seventh grade, she brings years of experience in structured debate and policy analysis. Her extensive travels have enriched her global perspective, and as Co-Chair, she is committed to fostering meaningful discussions and collaboration in the committee.



The topic under consideration in our committee is: Strengthening humanitarian assistance in the face of climate change. Without further ado, please allow us to introduce you to our committee: the UN ECOSOC.

The UN ECOSOC was established by the UN Charter in 1945. Its membership is based on geographic representation, with 14 seats allocated to Africa, 11 to Asia, 6 to Eastern Europe, 10 to Latin America and the Caribbean, and 13 to Western Europe and other areas. The Council was initially designed to be a venue for the discussion of international economic and social issues. Nowadays, it conducts studies, formulates recommendations, resolutions, and conventions for consideration by the General Assemblies, and coordinates the activities of various UN organizations. At the World Summit in 2005, UN Member States mandated the ECOSOC to convene annual ministerial reviews designed to monitor progress on internationally agreed development goals and to organize a biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

The ECOSOC's main objectives include:

- Reporting on challenges that countries may be facing to achieve certain targets, given that they differ from more developed to lesser developed nations.
- Developing solutions related to the establishment of a public-private alliance to promote development in rural areas.
- Advocating for countries that might not have a voice in the UN system.
- Establishing task forces and investigative groups to ensure recommendations are being implemented according to the suggestions that are made.

We wish you a fruitful and enriching conference!



The United Nations Economic and Social Council

For the social cohesion of societies worldwide to exist in a regulated context, matters ranging from economic, social, cultural, and health issues to human rights and fundamental freedoms must be addressed. Chapter X, Articles 61-72, of the UN Charter concerns the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which is a body that coordinates work amongst the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies.

The ECOSOC is dedicated to sustainable development by offering guidance and collaboration amongst multiple organizations to maximize the usage of resources in the contexts in which they operate. Through various UN resolutions, reforms over the last decade have strengthened the ECOSOC's role in identifying emerging challenges, promoting innovation, and achieving a balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, environmental, and social sustainability).

Each year, the ECOSOC centers its work around a theme of global importance that shapes how it conducts its efforts while ensuring focused attention among its partners and throughout the entire UN system on one of the world's most trivial issues.

- For a long time, climate change has been a concern of the ECOSOC as it continuously supports international conferences where nations convene to discuss the financing of sustainable development or ways to integrate green technologies into their economies.
- Humanitarian work is also particularly relevant to the ECOSOC's mission. In this regard, the ECOSOC ensures that humanitarian efforts are as streamlined as possible across all UN agencies when engaging with communities needing assistance. Your presence and active participation in this conference are crucial in our collective efforts to address these pressing issues.



Introduction

In the past ten years, 83% of all disasters triggered by natural hazards were caused by extreme weather-related and climate-related events. During the first 6 months of the COVID-19 pandemic alone, more than 100 climate disasters occurred. As the climate crisis worsens, it places a heavier burden on humanitarian groups already struggling with resource and staff shortages. Furthermore, natural disasters like earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods threaten the gains made in regions where populations are exposed to other life-threatening conditions like war, political instability, or famine. This crisis demands our immediate attention and action.

Just when strides have been made in expanding resource access to refugee camps, humanitarian groups find themselves needing to address significant inflows of climate refugees due to climate-induced heavy displacement of populations from their homes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) found that climate-related disasters triggered more than half of new reported displacements in 2022, with nearly 60 percent of refugees and internally displaced people living in countries most vulnerable to climate change. Now more than ever, humanitarian organizations require more excellent financing for larger-scale initiatives meant to address such pressing challenges. As the world's key stakeholders are pulling back and removing themselves from spaces where they can work with civil society—like with the U.S. withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement—humanitarian aid is struggling to reach the people who need it most. We understand the difficulties and are committed to finding solutions together. Many NGOs like the Red Cross and the Red Crescent are working toward developing innovative solutions to remedy the severe consequences of climate change. Nevertheless, there is a struggle to achieve self-sufficiency without consistent support from international donors who can subsidize their efforts across the most vulnerable regions. This calls for greater engagement from national governments worldwide to assume a more proactive role in propelling these groups forward by investing in their work.



This does not necessarily have to involve direct financing; instead, governments can take a mediator approach by connecting humanitarians with potential investors looking to expand their philanthropic portfolios. Experts argue that humanitarian action must move from crisis management to risk management and from prevention to anticipation. To elaborate, instead of merely responding to emergencies as they occur, the focus should shift toward identifying potential risks and implementing measures to mitigate them before they escalate into crises. This proactive approach emphasizes the importance of forecasting and addressing vulnerabilities in advance, thereby enhancing the resilience of communities against future disasters. It is becoming evident that humanitarian work must evolve to meet the needs of an ever-changing globe, as preempting crises before they occur can produce better results than intervening once the crisis has done its damage.

Background

The Climate Crisis as a Humanitarian Issue

In today's status quo, the climate emergency is the most significant strategic challenge facing global humanitarians. Though some are still skeptical of the existence of any sort of climate change, the numbers speak for themselves. Disasters triggered more than 60 percent of the newly recorded internal displacements in 2021, equivalent to 23.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). 94 percent of those disasters were climate-related. It is difficult to ignore such a harsh reality, except many do.

Humanitarian groups need to frame the climate issue as one of greater severity that involves the human rights of others, as disasters often strip people of their most inherent liberties. There should be no controversy regarding whether climate change is a humanitarian crisis, mainly when floods and storms accounted for 91 percent of disaster displacements in 2021, which saw 432 individual disasters. Humanitarianism must shift towards having other areas of crisis intersect with the climate emergency because so much of our existence on this planet depends on us not destroying it before it is too late.

The scale alone of today's climate crisis is expected to disrupt the fabric of our societies as we know them, leading to a constant cascade of worldwide disastrous events that overwhelm the existing human capacity to cope. Catastrophes have become a constant as opposed to isolated incidents in particularly vulnerable regions, with every month bringing new storms, floods, fires, and heatwaves worldwide. For example, California continuously struggles to calm down its rampage of wildfires that have displaced thousands of individuals and led to the loss of a significant amount of wildlife and flora in habitats that bring value to society. This is a pressing issue that should not be sidelined. This is when humanitarian groups need to be proactive and swift in their response to crises, mainly since it will take long periods before the Earth can entirely heal from all the damage humanity has inflicted upon it.



History of Humanitarianism

Humanitarian work has a lengthy past, going back to the creation of the Red Cross in response to the ill-treatment of combatants during war. Nowadays, humanitarian work faces the challenge of adapting to the needs of a planet that is finding it more challenging to sustain itself and humanity.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, developing a sense of urgency surrounding humanitarian work was intended to boost the significance of humanitarian aid and promote it to the forefront of political decision-making and resourcing. Similarly, today, there is a degree of pressure with our planet running out of time, as the climate is already 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than in pre-industrial times. Droughts are endangering the livelihoods of many families across the African region, while heavy rain currents are causing floods in areas across Europe and Latin America. Though humanitarianism arose in reaction to the casualties of war, with the Geneva Conventions established thereafter, today's humanitarian work has found that it must refer back to its historical origins to make the same claim of urgency for today's climate catastrophe. Though the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars marked the birth of humanitarian action, different historical figures, like Henri Dunant and the Duke of Wellington, have recognized the value of creating humanitarian norms and boundaries within which society must function. The humanitarian concept has evolved as history has progressed, with World War I marking the importance of having non-combatant and neutral countries take a more humanitarian approach to their involvement in any conflict. With the innovation of deadlier weapons came a more significant burden for humanitarian efforts to adapt to developing legal frameworks to protect their staff and the individuals they serve against widespread violence and conflict. Humanitarianism is not new to the need for evolution as it is constantly adapting to serve better those whose lives are most at stake.



Past International Actions

Much of today's international framework for climate advocacy serves as a backbone for humanitarian action, especially when holding key stakeholders accountable. In 2015, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached a landmark agreement to intensify the actions and investments needed for the creation of a sustainable, low-carbon future. This agreement is known as the Paris Agreement. It brings all nations together against the threat that climate change poses to the world and aims to keep the global temperature from rising any further to unsustainable levels. 175 world leaders understood the severity of the problem at hand when they signed the agreement in 2016. With President Donald Trump withdrawing the U.S. from the agreement for the second time, humanitarian organizations find themselves more exposed than ever to a world where their work is no longer on the agenda of many nations. Before the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol was established to strengthen the global response to climate change by legally binding country parties to emission reduction targets. There are 192 current parties to the protocol, but some members care more about achieving their targets than others. The European Union (EU) is taking a more proactive approach to diminishing its usage of non-renewable energy sources by investing in green technology as a priority for the future.

Apart from world governments, organizations like the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) have, in the past, taken a stance on working towards reducing the harmful effects of climate change by building frameworks or plans that act as detailed roadmaps for prioritized action in support of governments and in collaboration with many partners, which include humanitarian actors. These organizations mainly engage in work on the ground by assisting displaced communities in preserving and rehabilitating their environment, namely by introducing them to climate-smart water and sanitation services. They also work with local authorities to strengthen social protection services for displaced persons while simultaneously providing resilient shelters to house communities whose homes have been destroyed by a climate disaster. Overall, the international community has operated on multiple levels, whether institutionally through the creation of binding treaties and conventions that hold governments accountable or on a community level through local actions.



Possible Solutions

Firstly, governments need to design investment schemes that can support a green, resilient, and sustainable society so that humanitarian assistance can have a more robust backing to operate. Lack of funding remains a predominant obstacle for humanitarian groups that cannot finance all of the aid they need to provide, with natural disasters happening at a pace that makes it impossible for assistance to reach everyone, especially in a timely manner. Secondly, humanitarian organizations must scale up their usage of forecast technology to better mitigate crises and learn from previous successes in forecasting for early action.

Humanitarian organizations also need to take a more transparent approach to reporting the climate data they collect when tracking local climate and environmental footprints so that they can make stronger links between the environment and humanitarian work. The usefulness of reporting depends on the accuracy, clarity, and conciseness of the collected data. There are other possible solutions that should be considered to strengthen humanitarian assistance, including the roles that can be played by philanthropic donors, the private sector, and day-to-day citizens.



Questions to Consider

1. What humanitarian actors have the biggest stake in climate mitigation in your country?
2. How can governments collaborate with their respective civil societies more effectively to combat the climate crisis?
3. What is the biggest obstacle to natural disaster prevention in your country?
4. Does your country have the resources to preempt a climate catastrophe?
5. To what extent should the UN intervene on behalf of displaced communities when looking to safeguard their rights against homelessness, deprivation of basic necessities, and more?
6. Are there climate refugees in your country?
7. What would it look like for your country to strengthen its own humanitarian response to a climate crisis? What resources do you have at your disposal to achieve this goal?
8. How can your country hold other international actors accountable for their legal commitments?





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