



## Issue description

Committee: Special Conference on global balance  
Issue of: Economic and Social Effects of Global Warming  
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### Introduction:

Climate change, the change in our planet's temperature has been happening since the formation of the Earth. For millions of years it was impossible for the humankind to live here, either because of its high temperature or its freezing Ice Ages. Climate change used to be a normal phenomenon in the planet's life, but due to the burning of fossil fuels, large scale of agriculture, industrialization, urbanization and millions of other factors it has been speeded up recently.

Increase in global temperature, frequently called as global warming, has turned into a serious problem, and seems to become more and more dramatic. Plenty of scientists agree, that this phenomenon is owing to the increase of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide and methane. It's a common knowledge, that greenhouse gases (GHG) are needed in our atmosphere, because they allow sun warmth to reach the Earth's surface. When sunlight enters the atmosphere it meets greenhouse gases at first and then sunrays reflect back to space. However, during the last century GHGs have accumulated in the atmosphere excessively, therefore they are trapping the sun rays from reflecting back to space and bringing high temperature to our planet.

Greenhouse gases emitted by numerous human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels including oil, coal and natural gas, activity of industries, deforestation and households using traditional energy sources. Global warming has huge impacts on our planet and these impacts are growing as quickly as populations, economies and standards of living do. It is responsible for the rising of sea levels, extreme weather events, natural disasters. Moreover, these phenomena lead to catastrophic consequences like great amount of casualties, extinction of various species, the loss of food and water supply, fatal diseases and disappearance of cities or even states.



## Definition of key terms:

**Greenhouse effect:** The process in which greenhouse gases keep the warmth of sun rays in the atmosphere to make Earth liveable.

**Fossil fuels:** Dirty energy sources including any combustible organic material as coal, oil or natural gas, derived from the remains of dead organisms.

**Deforestation:** Removal of forests in order to use land for agricultural, urban or other activities.

**Desertification:** The process by which the soil loses its fertility and becomes desert as a result of drought, deforestation or inappropriate agriculture.

**Ecosystem:** A biological community of all the living creatures affected by each other and founded in the same territory.

## General overview:

Global warming is an ongoing issue of our society and is considered one of the most serious and challenging, affecting great economies and the whole population of the Earth. Over the past 250 years, greenhouse gas emission to the atmosphere has increased substantially. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, emission of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is mainly caused by burning fossil fuels and deforestation.

Unfortunately, Member States are more likely to use dirty energy sources that produce GHGs, are not renewable and pollute the environment, because industries have got used to them since the Industrial Revolution and these sources are cheaper than those of clean/renewable energy. Dirty energy sources include coal, crude oil, natural gas and electric power. Coal accounted for 45% of global, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in 2011 and is the world's leading source of energy-related carbon pollution. Additionally, it pollutes the air therefore has several huge impacts on human's health like respiratory diseases or cancer. When people try to replace coal emission they use natural gases such as methane, but they are also dangerous for our society, ecosystems and cause a great amount of water pollution.

Researches show that major contributors to climate change are cities. According to UN Habitat, cities consume 78 percent of the world's energy and produce more than 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast, they account for less than 2 percent of the Earth's surface. The effect of climate change is even worse among low-income communities and rural areas. Populations living in unstable structures, vulnerable to extreme weather and lacking the adequate capacities and emergency response system are in a great trouble. These populations are mainly characteristic for developing countries, where industrialization hasn't happened yet. Nowadays, developed countries are the main producers of GHG emission, but developing countries are becoming more and more threatening to the atmosphere if they plan on using dirty energy sources. Thus, communities emit more and more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere causing global warming and the terrible effects of it. Additionally, it is forecasted, that the aspects of climate change will persist for many centuries, even if emissions are stopped.

Due to the increase of polar temperature, ice sheets and glaciers are melting which leads to the extinction of polar animals, like polar bears and seals. Furthermore, it is responsible for the rising of sea levels. From 1901 to 2010, the global average sea level rose by 19 cm and it is



predicted to rise 24–30 cm by 2065 and 40–63 cm by 2100 relative to the reference period of 1986–2005. Rise of global sea level easily induces huge floods, which can be accountable for the submergence of small Pacific Islands like Marshall Islands. What is more, metropolises lying on the coastline of oceans such as New York or Hong Kong are in great peril by the floods, too. In this case, the sea level rise would cause social problems like homelessness and migration, and the economic damage of the affected states. Beside floods, hurricanes, blizzards, earthquakes and tsunamis take place and generate more and more losses. In the 21th century people are threatened by extreme weathers and natural disasters as a consequence of GHG emission. The destructive impacts of natural disasters are limitless and responsible for many lives withal the absolute damage of the area and infrastructure including buildings, transportation systems and agricultural territories. For developing countries, tackling these problems is a much harder task to fulfil, because they do not have the resources to protect themselves against environmental disasters or to rebuild what has been destroyed. Natural impacts of climate change on the ecosystems are extremely large. With the warming of the troposphere the species migrate poleward and upward, those that cannot adapt to their environment simply die out. Extinction of species can have great effects on humans and economies as well. They may not receive the efficient amount of the given species in pharmaceuticals and food industries. Moreover, with the extinction of photosynthetic species the quality of air worsens causing a great deal of diseases.

Coral reefs are among the most threatened ecosystems on Earth. When conditions like temperature change, corals expel the symbiotic algae living in their tissues, responsible for their colour. A spike of 1–2°C in ocean temperatures lasting for several weeks can lead to bleaching, turning corals white. If corals are bleached for prolonged periods, they eventually die. Over the last three years, reefs around the world have suffered from mass coral bleaching events as a result of global warming. According to UNESCO, the coral reefs in all 29 reef-containing World Heritage sites would cease to exist by the end of this century if we continue to emit greenhouse gases under a business-as-usual scenario. The bleaching of the Australian Great Barrier Reef in 2016 and 2017 killed around 50% of its corals. Despite covering less than 0.1% of the ocean floor, reefs host more than one quarter of all marine fish species and lots of other marine animals. In addition, reefs provide a wide variety of ecosystem services such as subsistence food, protection from flooding, sustaining the fishing and tourism industries. Thus, they directly support over 500 million people worldwide, mostly in poor countries. Their disappearance will therefore have economic, social and health consequences all over the world.

A different type of ecosystem is the Amazonas with its diverse rain forests, sparkling rivers and beautiful animal kingdom. Amazon Rainforest often referred to as the ‘lungs of the earth’, since its trees store a great deal of carbon. Therefore, these carbon molecules are not contributing to the greenhouse effect and aren’t warming the planet as a greenhouse gas. However, degradation and deforestation releases the carbon which is stored within the trees back into the atmosphere at an alarming rate. It is estimated that 11 years’ worth of carbon emissions are stored in the trees of the Amazon, and roughly a third of all carbon emissions come from burning the rainforest. The Amazonas plays a huge role in regulating global weather patterns. It releases water from the leaves of the trees creating clouds that carry moisture causing precipitation around the world. Scientists report that deforestation of the Amazon would lead to significant drying not only of that region, but also areas as far away as the Midwest United States and West Africa. Moreover, the Amazon rainforest is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, with new species being discovered every three days for the past decade. It provides us with ecological services, quite adequate quantity of food and



many of the compounds found in modern medicine originate in the Amazon. If the forest were to be lost, incredibly important resources would disappear along with it.

Global warming induces drought in various places, so it has also turned into a serious problem of our society. Although, desertification is usually caused by human activities like deforestation and over-farming, as a matter of fact without the efficient amount of rainfall drought is easily evoked. Thus, the ecosystem of the area is damaged and deserts are created, where people cannot receive enough water supply and cannot cultivate the land to grow crops and provide food. Affected by this problem, people suffer from famine and other types of diseases and viruses. A perfect example was Somalia in 2011, where people experienced desertification, rising temperatures and heatwaves when the worst drought in sixty years left 14 million Africans without water and food production. A famine resulted, causing outbreaks of Malaria, Cholera, and Measles that put an end to million lives. Rising average temperature not only has economic and natural impacts but also has a great effect on people's health, as it's more probably to induce diseases. Individuals with heart problems, asthma, the elderly, the very young, and the homeless can be especially susceptible to temperature extremes.

### Major Parties Involved:

**World Meteorological Organization (WMO):** WMO became the specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology involving weather and climate, operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences in 1951. There are plenty of intense actions associated with the WMO such as the Global Weather Experiments under the Global Atmospheric Research Programme, contribution to the First World Climate Conference and the First World Conference on Disaster Reduction, setting up the Global Ozone Observing System and the Global Climate Observing System and the establishment of the WMO World Climate and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

**The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP):** It was founded in 1972 as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. UNEP is one of the leading international institutions working to combat climate change. The organization acts as a guide for Member States regarding drafting and implementing policies in reference to global warming, and helps governments work to reduce carbon emissions and deforestation rates. Dealing with adaptation and mitigation policies, UNEP is an essential organization in the fight to curb the impacts of global warming.

**The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** It was established by the United Nations Environmental Programme and World Meteorological Organization in 1988. Its task is to help nations and international organizations with scientific assessments on climate change including the economic and social effects of it and provide them with possible solutions for the future conventions. Since its establishment, it has delivered the five most comprehensive Assessment Reports about global warming worldwide. Beside these, it has produced a range of Special Reports, Methodology Reports and Technical papers in response to requests for information on scientific and technical matters on climate change for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other parties.

**People's Republic of China:** She became the largest greenhouse gas emitter among the Member State after 2000. Due to the large-scale industrialization with a heavy reliance on coal-fired power, China's emissions passed those of the U.S. in 2005, and by 2012 had surpassed the combined contribution of both the U.S. and the European Union. Should recent trends continue, China will be responsible for the most atmospheric carbon dioxide in less than 20 years.

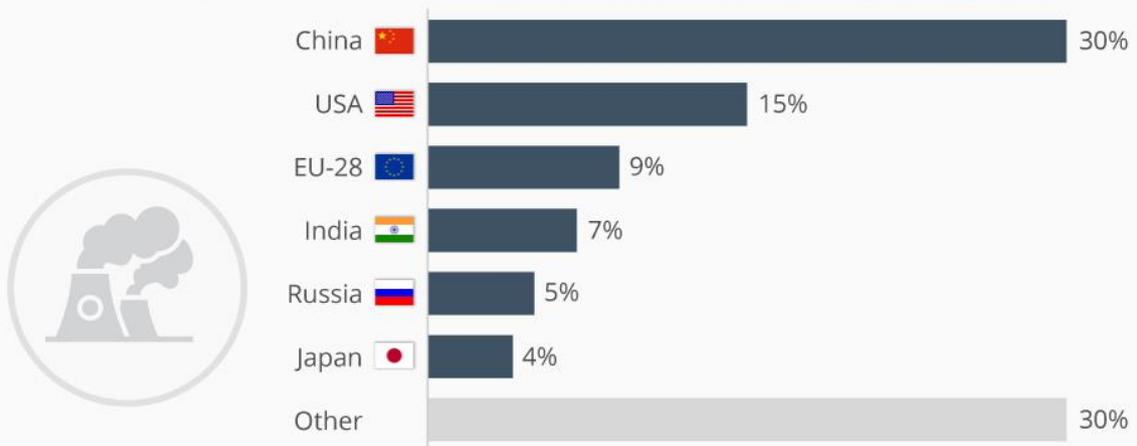


**United States of America:** The United States, the world's second-largest emitter of carbon dioxide, has been a leading carbon cutter in recent years. Trump may have labelled climate change a "hoax" and initiated the process for pulling America out of the Paris Agreement, but U.S. carbon emissions fell by 25 million tons, or 0.5 percent in 2017. The USA must act continuously in order to reduce its GHG, more precisely its carbon emission, because not only the USA is affected as a form of overwhelmed dams in South Carolina, failing crops in the parched Great Plains and a rise in insect-borne disease in Florida, but also the whole planet.

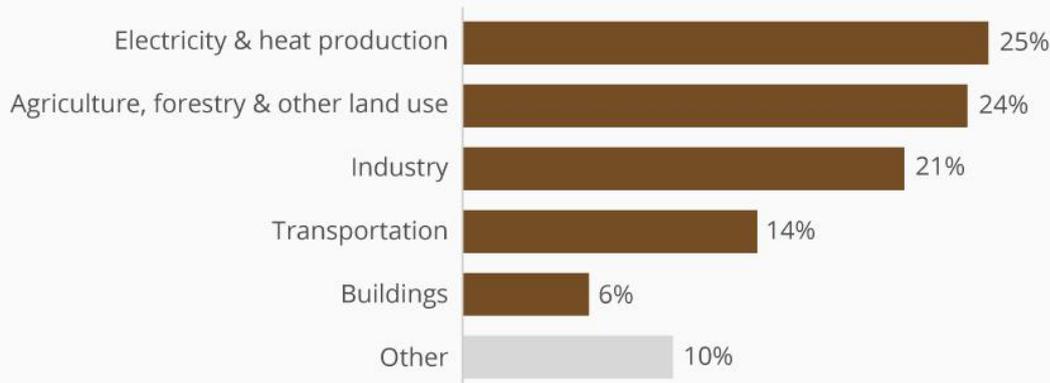
**European Union:** The third-largest GHG emitter is the European Union owing to its size including 28 countries and its industrialized economy. However, the EU works on reducing emission by the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). The EUETS operates in 31 countries which covers the 28 Member States in addition with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It limits emissions from more than 11,000 heavy energy-using installations such as power stations, industrial plants and airlines operating between these countries which covers about 45 percent of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions Worldwide

Global greenhouse gas emission from fossil fuel combustion by country



Global greenhouse gas emission by economic sector



Newest data available respectively, as published 2017  
Source: EPA





## Timeline of events:

**1988:** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is established.

**1994:** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force, ratified by 196 parties.

**1997:** On the third Conference of the Parties(COP3) the Kyoto Protocol was adopted.

**2005:** The first and biggest trading scheme of the world, the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme was launched as an important part of the EU climate policy.

**2015:** On the 21th Conference of the Parties, 195 nations agreed on combatting climate change. This is known as the Paris Agreement and involves a great deal of important policies on global warming.

**2015:** In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States climate action is contained as its 13<sup>th</sup> goal.



## Previous attempts to solve the issue:

As 97 percent of scientists believe that global warming is a threatening issue, there have been several actions taken by nongovernmental organizations and Member States including programmes, reports and conventions.

The WMO and the UNEP jointly established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988 to provide information on global warming to parties. Scientists of the IPCC has established five comprehensive Assessment Reports in which they characterize climate change from different types of aspects in a detailed way.

In the Fifth Assessment Report they inform us of the central aim of the Paris Agreement, the limitation of temperature rise to 1.5 Celsius degrees above pre-industrial level. Thus, policymakers have the opportunity to read about the differences between 2 Celsius and 1.5 C regulations. According to the IPCC, restricting global warming to 1.5 C above pre-industrial level would cover less climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth. Impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, including species loss and extinction are projected to be lower at 1.5°C of increase in global temperature compared to 2°C. These risks depend on the magnitude and rate of warming, geographic location, levels of development and vulnerability, and on the choices and implementation of mitigation and adaptation options. According to the IPCC, limiting global warming to 1.5°C require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, infrastructure and industrial systems. Human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels to 2030, reaching zero around 2050, which means that any remaining emissions would need to be balanced by removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the air. It's necessary to highlight that the Paris Agreement also support developing countries to deal with climate change.

Paris Agreement was produced during the 21th Conference of parties(COP), meeting of the Member States who had ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). UNFCCC was created as a first step in 1992 with the aim of bringing the world together to curb greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. With 197 Parties, the UNFCCC has near-universal membership.

Before the Paris Agreement, there had been 20 COPs held during which nations reached several of their goals. For instance, the Kyoto Protocol was created on the third COP in 1997. The Kyoto Protocol set legally binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European Union. The aims for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol cover emissions of the six main greenhouse gases: Carbon dioxide, Methane, Nitrous oxide, Hydrofluorocarbons, Perfluorocarbons and Sulphur hexafluoride. It also recognizes the specific needs and concerns of developing countries, especially the most vulnerable communities. An Adaptation Fund was also established and is financed with the share of proceeds from clean development mechanism, project activities and other sources in order to help the adoption of developing countries with money, adaptation projects and programmes.



The Millennium Development Goals(MDG) that were launched in 2000 set 2015 as the target year. In 2012, recognizing the success of the MDGs the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The goal of Rio + 20 was to encourage governments to adopt practical measures to further sustainable development in their own nations, based on successful solutions from the past twenty years. Although, the conference only resulted in non-binding goals for nations around the world, it decided on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

As the result of the MDG and Rio 20+, 193 member states of the United Nations reached consensus on the outcome document of the new agenda “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. UN summit for the adoption of new sustainable development agenda with its 17 goals was held in 2015 as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. It had a great deal of connections with global warming as its 13th goal is Climate Action with the motto 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts'. Also, there are 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that directly involve taking action on climate change– in addition to climate change having its own goal.

It is shown by statistics that it's much more economic for Member States to address the issue of climate change as quickly as they can. This is why an independent initiative, the so-called Global Commission on the Economy and Climate was commissioned by seven countries Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Norway, South Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom in order to report to the international community and to examine how countries can achieve economic growth while dealing with the risks posed by climate change.



## Possible solutions and approaches:

In spite of the previous efforts that were taken to reduce greenhouse gas emission and its impacts on humans, ecosystems and economies, the issue of global warming has not yet been solved. To emphasize, a great deal of scientific reports has proved that even if emission is stopped there will be some effects that will persist. Most of the Member States and nongovernmental organizations are taking actions constantly, because there have been several solutions created and the main aim of our century is to accomplish these solutions precisely, in addition with new ideas in order to create a better future for our humans and our descendants and to prevent such dangerous levels of warming that would become inevitable.

In contrast, there are some countries that do not believe in human-induced climate change and are not willing to ratify important, comprehensive conventions including the UNFCCC or the Paris Agreement. What is more, they don't adopt climate policies, because they are occupied by other issues or simply do not have the money to do so. Therefore, Parties to the Convention should encourage nations to act by paying attention to their GHG emission and other factors such as deforestation.

Solving this problem is a truly difficult task to fulfil alone, and there are some retardant factors such as special interest groups funded by fossil fuel and related industries that raise doubts about the truth of global warming by distorting the evidence of climate change. This barrage of misinformation misleads and confuses the public about the growing consequences of global warming and makes it more difficult to implement the solutions. Thus, we need to fight misrepresentations of climate science and provide science-based evidence to help each other communicate the real facts about climate change.

In order to help developing countries, there have been numerous funds and funding mechanisms introduced such as the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund and Extreme Climate Facility. Developed states should contribute more to these funds to achieve the global reduction of dirty energy sources of vulnerable and poor societies and to aid the adaptation of these communities to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

While developed countries help poorer ones by funding and voluntary work, in response they must spend their money whether on the cutback of carbon emission and the expansion of clean energy sources or the rebuilding of their destroyed territories due to natural disasters.

Adaptation to climate change can range from building flood defences, setting up early warning systems and switching to drought-resistant crops to redesigning business operations and government policies. Early warning systems(EWS) use integrated communication systems and ensure preparedness and rapid response to natural disasters. Adopting EWSs will not only save tremendous lives, jobs and infrastructures, but also assist public officials and administrators in their planning, saving money in the long-term and protecting economies.

We need to enhance climate-resistance by reducing environmental degradation and lowering greenhouse gas emissions, through the introduction of improved farming techniques, development projects and better land management. Encouraging proper farming methods can



increase crop tolerance and reduce further environmental destruction. The International Fund for Agricultural Development partnering with the Global Environmental Fund, has helped to mobilize funding in 24 countries for projects that focus on climate change.

Moreover, we must create new green jobs in order to enable millions of people to overcome poverty and enjoy improved livelihoods, in line with one of the aims of the Paris Agreement which underscores the commitment by nations to just transitions and the creation of decent work and green jobs. While there will be some loss of employment, mostly in the petroleum industry, this would be compensated by jobs created in renewable energies and transitioning to a circular economy. According to an International Labour Organization (ILO) report, 24 million new jobs will be have made globally by 2030, provided sustainable practices are implemented.

In rural and developing countries, women play a significant role in supporting their households, as care-takers, providers of food, and income generators for the family.

This is why the UN focuses on women around the world as agents of change, teaching them how to integrate climate-smart solutions in the work they do. These community-driven approaches not only benefit the environment, but also empower women to help improve the quality of life for their families and communities, while advancing sustainable development.

As statistics show, the largest global warming causing societies are among developed or quickly-developing countries and their cities are the main contributors to GHG emission. Therefore, it's essential that we need to reduce the emissions of these countries by mitigation policies including education, communication of information, development of technology and adoption of clean energy sources.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) assigns responsibility to Parties of the Convention to undertake educational and public awareness campaigns on climate change, and to ensure public participation in programmes and information access on the issue. Education can encourage people to change their attitudes, behaviour and to make informed decisions when it comes to taking action. Through its Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development programme, UNESCO aims to 'help people understand the impact of global warming today and increase climate literacy among young people.' The World Metrological Organization (WMO) works closely with weather presenters who are committed to education and who have formed a new network Climate without Borders, which has a daily reach of approximately 375,000,000 people, and aims to 'educate, motivate and activate' weather presenters to reach out to their audiences armed with useful information. These programmes and other educational initiatives, including the Global Action Programme (GAP), Action for Climate Empowerment should be promoted by every nation.

The UNFCCC requires all Parties, keeping in mind their responsibilities and capabilities, to implement programmes and climate technologies that target economic activity with an aim to incentivize actions that are cleaner or disincentive those that result in large amounts of GHGs. They involve policies, schemes which address all sectors including energy generation and use, transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, forestry and other land use, and waste management.



Mitigation measures are translated in the increased use of renewable energy such as solar, wind or hydropower, the application of new technologies like electric cars, paying attention to our personal carbon emission by driving less and biking more, recycling, using green bulbs or eating less meat. Further, they include expanding forests by the planting trees to soak up carbon dioxide, other sinks or machines to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

In conclusion, as Gunnar Luderer, one of the authors of the UN report and senior scientist, said: “There is still a tremendous gap between words and deeds, between the targets agreed by governments and the measures to achieve these goals. Only a rapid turnaround here can help.” in order to fully address the threat of global warming, we must demand action from our elected leaders to support and implement a comprehensive set of climate solutions.

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