

Research Report

General Assembly 3



***The issue of slow progress made
regarding targets set in the Paris
Climate Agreement***

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Model United Nations Alfrink
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Introduction

In a year in which the world has suffered under the grip of a deadly pandemic, can we be excused for momentarily losing sight of the worrying threat of climate change? No, obviously not, because by doing so, issues like shifting weather patterns that threaten food production and rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding get the chance to thrive. It is extremely important to realise that the impact of climate change is of utmost global concern. Humanity is evidently nearing a point of no return. We have two choices: do nothing and face the dreadful consequences of a dying planet or take meaningful action today and start acting responsibly.

Hoping to achieve the latter option, in 2016, the Paris Climate Agreement emerged. The agreement is a framework for global climate action. These actions include the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, providing support for developing nations, and the transparent reporting and strengthening of climate goals. Central to the agreement's goals is research by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which calculated that the planet is on a trajectory for a temperature rise of between 2°C and 4°C by 2100. This would have a devastating impact on ecosystems and human health and well-being.

As of February 2021, 191 members of the UNFCCC are parties to the Paris Climate Agreement. Iran has not ratified the agreement. Brazil and the Russian Federation have signed the agreement, however, they have abandoned the treaty. The United States of America is seen as critical to the success of the Paris Climate Agreement.

The committee

Our committee will be the "GA3, Environmental, Humanitarian and Health issues". This year our issues are:

1. The issue of slow progress made regarding targets set in the Paris Climate Agreement.
2. The issue of coordinated efforts to vaccinate the world's population for COVID-19.

This committee works in the same way as most of the other committees; we present the issues by means of this research report, then you will have to write a resolution. After seeking support from other delegations, you submit the resolution for approval. Following approval the resolution is debated on in the committee and is, if necessary, amended. The resolution is then voted upon.

A little known fact about our committee: the 3rd committee of the UN inspired this committee. This committee also addresses significant problems such as, but not limited to, the lack of women's rights around the world.

Keywords

Paris Climate Agreement = The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably 1.5 degrees of Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is an international environmental treaty addressing climate change.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions = Several gasses, especially carbon dioxide, that prevent heat from the earth escaping into space, resulting in the greenhouse effect.

World Health Organisation (WHO) = A specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.

Overview

The Paris Agreement has several key aims:

- To keep the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above preindustrial levels and limit any increase to 1.5°C.
- Require that all parties report regularly on their greenhouse gas emissions and implementation efforts to assess collective progress.
- Governments agree to take swift action in accordance with the best available science in order to achieve a balance between emissions and removals in the second half of this century.

Since the United States of America has a new president, Joe Biden, they have rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement. The president has an ambitious list of climate goals:

- Put the U.S. on a path to net-zero carbon emission by 2050, which scientists say could have significant implications for the 1.5°C target.
- Restore the U.S. as a world leader in climate action.

China, the world's single largest source of emissions, has said it will cut climate pollution faster than initially promised, aiming for carbon neutrality by 2060.

Iran's energy sector accounts for around 77% of its total emissions. Its national plan said cutting greenhouse gas emissions 'will be facilitated and speeded up, only in the absence of any forms of restrictions and sanctions.'

Brazil has a 2020 commitment to reduce deforestation by 80% from 1996 – 2005 levels, and its Paris Agreement commitments include a target of no more illegal deforestation in the Amazonia by 2030.

The Russian Federation has made little progress in climate action implementation in general. It is not only turning its back on policy implementation, but also threatening to constrain international climate efforts.

Arguments in favour of the issue:

- Climate-related disasters have resulted in a loss of nearly \$2.3 trillion over the past two decades. Without action, these disasters will continue to occur and threaten lives.
- Air pollution poses a huge financial burden. According to the World Health Organization, air pollution is responsible for more than seven million premature deaths every year – that is more than many other health risks including malnutrition, alcohol use and physical inactivity.

Arguments against the issue:

- The Paris Agreement is expensive and has many negative side effects. If carried out, the energy regulations agreed to in Paris by the Obama administration would destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs, harm American manufacturing, and destroy \$2.5 trillion in gross domestic product by the year 2035.
- The targets set in the Paris Climate Agreement are not strict enough and so they are too limited to slow global warming. The overall goal in the Paris Agreement is to keep global warming well below 2°C. However, climatologists have long said that an elevation of just two degrees in terms of temperature will still cause a worldwide catastrophe.
- The agreement is not legally binding. If the countries do not follow their Paris pledges, they do not face any punishments. With little international pressure, some nations view this treaty as meaningless.

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Timeline of Events



Resolution

To solve this issue, we must agree upon a resolution. It is therefore your task to write a resolution to resolve the issue of slow progress being made regarding targets set in the Paris Climate Agreement. Think of ways in which the United Nations could ensure that countries keep their word and reach the targets set in this agreement. Are the targets reasonable? What could be done to raise awareness for the importance and relevance of the issue? Should another agreement be established? Etc.

In order to write this resolution, you should consider your country's stands on this issue and think of ways of how your country would approach and tackle it.

If your country does not seem to be directly involved in the issue, make sure to research the countries with which you are allied diplomatically and look at the stance they take on this issue. In that way, you should know which resolutions to help with and vote on.

Research Report
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2021

Links and sources

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