



UNEA

United Nations Environment Assembly
of the United Nations Environment Programme

UNEA Background Guide

Agenda: Reevaluating the Sustainable and Millennium Development Goals
Pertaining to Climate Change in the Context of Recent Developments

Disclaimer: The authors of the document do not claim any copyright over it. All the details, information, and content mentioned in the document is only for educational purposes under the 'fair use' policy. The content established below is in no way related to the personal ideologies of the Executive board. This background guide is authored with a sole intention of giving delegates a direction in the committee and orienting them on the avenues of research.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Delegates, it is with utmost pleasure that we welcome you all to the Conference. We are eager to see you all for three days of intense debate, deliberation, and discussions in this simulation of UNEA at REQMUN. We hope your preparations are going smoothly and are sure that the efforts put in by the management, secretariat, organizing committee, and all the Executive Board members will culminate in an unforgettable conference for all of you.

This background has been written to provide insight into the committee, agenda, and how it is relevant to the modern scenario. It also consists of all the information necessary for it to act as a foundation for all your further research. Please note that this background guide is neither the beginning, nor the end of your research. It should simply act as a catalyst for you to go above and beyond. It is the first step towards understanding the agenda. Remember, understanding a problem is the first step towards solving it.

From a first-timer's perspective, we understand that an MUN conference can be overwhelming. That being said, please do not hesitate to contact any of your Executive Board members during the duration of your research for any sort of clarifications.

New ideas, by their very nature, are disruptive.

Finally, we cannot wait to see all the new ideas and solutions all of you are going to come up with and all the very best.

Best regards,

Chair: Kingshuk

Vice Chair: Zohreh Tejam

Rapporteur: B Rushikesh Reddy

Note: We strongly encourage you to conduct a **PESTAL analysis** of your assigned portfolio, covering the following areas:

- 1. Political Landscape:** Understanding the domestic and international policies shaping education.
- 2. Economic Factors:** Evaluating the financial infrastructure, investments, and funding models supporting development.
- 3. Social Demographics:** Examining cultural, ethnic, and social factors that influence public participation.
- 4. Technological Development:** Investigating advancements in science, facilities, and training techniques.
- 5. Analysis of Current Events:** Staying up to date with the latest trends and data relevant to the agenda.
- 6. Legal Framework:** Understanding the legal environment governing regulations and policies at both national and international levels.

What do you need to do?

Basic Preparation and Research

1. The most basic thing to do in a Model UN is to research, speak and rebuttal.
2. Do a basic **PESTAL analysis** of your country which is connected with the agenda.
3. Prepare around **2 to 3 speeches** for the General Speakers' List (GSL). Such speeches are generally **60 - 90 seconds** long. Their length should never exceed more than **200 words**.
4. Always **give your remaining time to questions** while ensuring that you try to get more speaking time from others through something called **"yields"**.
5. Prepare a list of **at least 3 subtopics**. Have a **60 second speech** ready for each mentally.
6. It's crucial that you **listen to speeches of other delegates**. This helps you find questions and rebuttal points for future speeches. More than research, questions involve **logic**.
7. **Have some solutions ready beforehand in an "Operative Clause" format**. Solutions in a MUN follow a very legal and diplomatic language which can be noticed in the past UN documents and resolutions. Refer to the following link - bestdelegate.com

Techniques to Write Good Speeches

1. HPA Method - Hook, Point, Action

[How to Write an Opening Speech - Best Delegate Model United Nations](#)

2. LEET Method - Label, Explain, Example, Tieback

[Example of LEET](#)

3. FLL Approach - Fact, Legality and Logic

This is a very technical and substantive approach to certain subtopics. You need to analyse the facts of the situation along with the legal realities surrounding it. Then one needs to connect both the facts and legalities through logic to weave a story and frame a narrative which they wish to portray to the public/audience.

4. PEN Method - Punchline, Example, Nail in the Coffin

This is a more aggressive style of debate which is relevant for defensive arguments or rebuttals to allegations. One can start with a "punchline" which is generally the main observation or summary of the speech delivered in a humorous, satirical, aggressive or fairly dramatic fashion. One needs to back such an observation with substantive arguments, examples or legal references. Then, similar to a Tieback, you need to put the nail in the coffin with a concluding statement to remind the audience why you believe your particular interpretation of the subject matter is the right one.

5. IRAC Method - Issue, Rule, Application and Conclusion

This method is usually used in a lot of MUNs. The methodology of IRAC is something which covers the aspects of the agenda.

Issue - Issue here means that you are bringing up the problem of the agenda to the purview.

Rule - Now that you've brought the issue to the purview. Defend this Issue with relevant UN international laws, treaties, declarations and conventions

Application - After the Rule, talk about your country's stance on the agenda and if required use the laws established by your country's government in relevance to the agenda and committee

Conclusion - As the name suggests, conclusion is to conclude what has been stated so far.

"A good speaker is not one who only knows how to start it well, but to also end it well."

Important Points to Remember A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

1. Procedure: The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of the agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.

2. Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

3. Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.

4. Nature of Source/Evidence: This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

a. United Nations: Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as credible proof to support a claim or argument. Multilateral Organizations: Documents from international organizations like OIC, NATO, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

b. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.

c. NewsSources:

i. Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.

ii. *State operated News Agencies*: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are– RIA Novosti (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency (People’s Republic of China), etc.

*****Please Note: Reports from NGOs working with UNESCO, UNICEF and other UN bodies will be accepted. Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India, etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.****

Hierarchy of evidence Evidence can be presented from a wide variety of sources but not all sources are treated as equal. Here is the hierarchy in which evidence is categorized:

Tier 1: Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of the Nations’ official organs or committees; any publication, statement, or document released by a UNmember state in its own capacity. The evidence falling in this tier is considered most reliable during the simulation.

Tier 2: Includes: any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state. E.g.: Xinhua News (China), Prasar Bharti (India), BBC (United Kingdom) etcetera. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable in case no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.

Tier 3: Includes: any publication from news sources of international reputation such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etc. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations

Foreign policy, in simple terms, is what your country aims to achieve in regard to the issue at hand or in general with its relations with other countries.

1. What role must foreign policy play in your research?

Understanding the foreign policy of your country must be a checkbox that you tick off at the very beginning of your research. Your foreign policy should dictate everything from the arguments you make, the reasoning you give for making those arguments, and the actions you take in the Council.

2. Where do I look to find foreign policy?

Most of the time, foreign policy is not explicitly stated. It must be inferred from the actions and statements issued by the country. Reading the meeting records from previous meetings of UNSC

(or any other UN body where your country might have spoken on the issue) is a great place to start. If such records are unavailable, look for statements from your country's Foreign Ministry (or equivalent like Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs etcetera) and top leadership (PM, Pres., Secretary of State, Defence Minister). Foreign Relations on the other hand refers to the diplomatic ties that one country has with another and considers elements such as the mutual presence of embassies, consulates, ambassadors & diplomatic dialogue. More often than not, foreign policy is what will be of your primary concern during your MUN, but it is important to also consider any extremities in your allotted country's foreign relations.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the world's highest-level decision-making body on environmental matters, established in 2012 as the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Comprising all 193 UN Member States, UNEA meets biennially in Nairobi, Kenya, to set priorities for global environmental policy and develop international environmental law

Its inclusive platform allows governments, civil society, scientists, and the private sector to collaborate on solutions to pressing environmental challenges.

MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS

❖ *UNEA's mandate includes:*

- Reviewing global environmental policies and trends
- Setting priorities for environmental action
- Developing legally binding and non-binding instruments to protect the environment
- Promoting environmental governance and international cooperation
- Coordinating UNEP's programme of work

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION

- ★ UNEA decisions are adopted by consensus or, where necessary, by a two-thirds majority vote

The committee works through:

- ***Resolutions and Decisions:*** Formal policy outcomes
- ***Declarations:*** Political commitments
- ***Reports:*** Background and progress documentation
- ***Ministerial Statements:*** Outcomes of high-level segments
- ***Draft resolutions*** are negotiated in open-ended meetings, refined by working groups and formally adopted at plenary sessions

Background

The accelerating impacts of climate change demand a critical reassessment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in light of recent developments. Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation highlighted by UNEP and IPCC reports are undermining progress on poverty reduction, health,

and environmental sustainability. While the MDGs provided a foundation and the SDGs integrated climate action, gaps in financing, technology transfer, and implementation persist. Strengthening global cooperation, aligning targets with updated science, and prioritizing resilience for vulnerable populations are essential to ensure that climate commitments support long-term sustainable development in an era of escalating environmental risks.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGS)

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in September 2000 following the United Nations Millennium Summit, where 189 countries adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing to a global partnership aimed at reducing extreme poverty and improving human well-being by 2015. The MDGs translated this vision into eight measurable goals with 18 targets and 48 indicators, with the first goal directly targeting those living on less than one U.S. dollar a day, and the remaining goals addressing the root causes of poverty, including lack of education, gender inequality, poor health, environmental degradation, and insufficient global cooperation. In 2005, during the World Summit, the framework was revised to include four additional targets: full and productive employment and decent work for all, access to reproductive healthcare, access to treatment for major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and the protection of biodiversity. These became measurable with new indicators introduced in January 2008.

The eight goals were: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development. While the MDGs achieved notable successes such as significant reductions in extreme poverty and improvements in school enrollment and disease control progress was uneven across countries and regions, with some states making substantial advances and others lagging far behind. A major criticism was that environmental sustainability was treated as a subsidiary objective rather than a prerequisite for all development, creating an inherent tension between economic growth and ecological preservation. Furthermore, the uniform global targets often failed to account for local and regional contexts, and resource constraints limited implementation, particularly in conflict-affected and least developed countries. Despite these shortcomings, the MDGs played a critical role in mobilizing political will, international cooperation, and targeted aid flows. They also laid the foundation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, which expanded the framework to 17 goals, placed greater emphasis on climate action as Goal 13, and sought to integrate sustainability as a central pillar of all development efforts, recognizing that long-term prosperity depends on a healthy and stable planet.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 by all United Nations member states as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, replacing and expanding upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unlike the MDGs, which focused primarily on developing countries, the SDGs apply universally to all nations, recognizing that global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation are interconnected and require collective action. The SDGs comprise 17 official goals with 169 targets, aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, ensuring sustainable economic growth, protecting the planet, and promoting peace and prosperity for all by 2030. A central principle of the SDGs is to “leave no one behind,” ensuring that development benefits reach even the most marginalized populations. Importantly, the SDGs explicitly recognize climate action (Goal 13) as integral to achieving all other goals, addressing the MDGs’ shortcoming of treating environmental sustainability as a secondary concern. The framework calls for integrated

approaches where economic, social, and environmental objectives are pursued together, supported by partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society. In some recent discussions, policymakers, academics, and advocacy groups have also proposed the idea of a “Goal 18” focused on digital access, data governance, and emerging technologies to ensure that technological transformation benefits all and avoids widening global inequalities. Although Goal 18 is not officially part of the UN SDGs, it reflects growing recognition that equitable access to technology, digital literacy, and ethical AI governance are now essential for sustainable development in the 21st century.

The goals are:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels

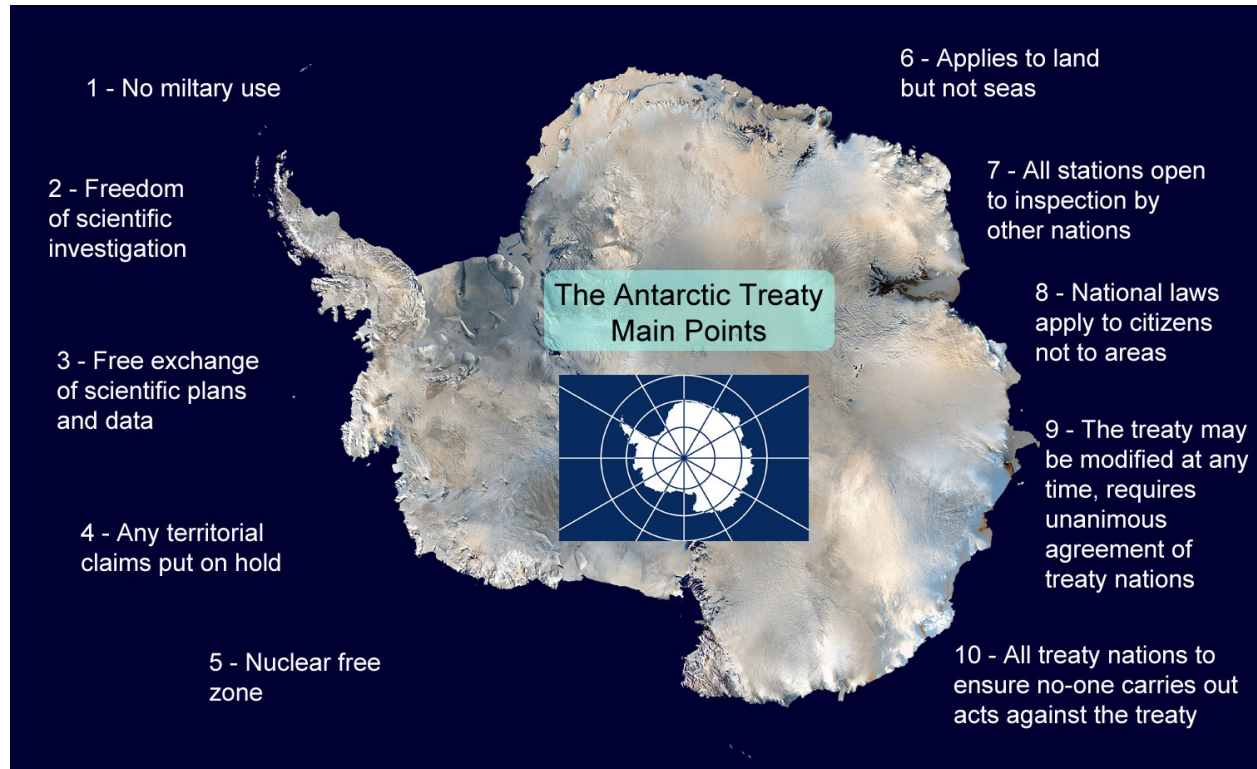
Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Proposed Goal 18: Ensure equitable access to digital technologies, promote digital literacy, and establish ethical governance of emerging technologies to support inclusive and sustainable development



Antarctic Treaty (1959)

- Signed: December 1, 1959
- Entered into force: June 23, 1961
- Initial Signatories: 12 countries conducting Antarctic research during the International Geophysical Year (1957–1958)
- Purpose: Preserve Antarctica for peaceful purposes and scientific research
- ❖ **Key Provisions:**
 - Prohibits military activity and weapons testing in Antarctica
 - Bans nuclear explosions and radioactive waste disposal
 - Suspends territorial sovereignty claims
 - Encourages free scientific investigation and data exchange
 - Environmental Significance: Early example of environmental governance and protection of a global commons
 - Current Status: Over 50 parties, including major world powers



Montreal Protocol (1987)

- Signed: September 16, 1987
- Entered into force: January 1, 1989
- Objective: Phase out substances that deplete the ozone layer (ODS), e.g., CFCs, halons
- Background: Based on scientific evidence linking ODS to ozone depletion and increased UV radiation
- ❖ **Key Features:**
 - Legally binding reduction schedules for developed and developing countries
 - Financial assistance and technology transfer via the Multilateral Fund
 - Regular amendments and adjustments (e.g., Kigali Amendment 2016 for HFCs)
- ❖ **Achievements:**
 - Universal ratification by all UN member states
 - Significant recovery of the ozone layer projected by the mid-21st century
 - Prevention of millions of cases of skin cancer and cataracts



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC (1992)

- Adopted: May 9, 1992
- Entered into force: March 21, 1994
- Purpose: Stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations to prevent dangerous climate change
- ❖ **Principles:**
 - Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).
 - Precautionary approach and sustainable development
 - Key Provisions:
 - Requires regular reporting of emissions
 - Establishes annual Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings
 - Serves as an umbrella treaty for the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

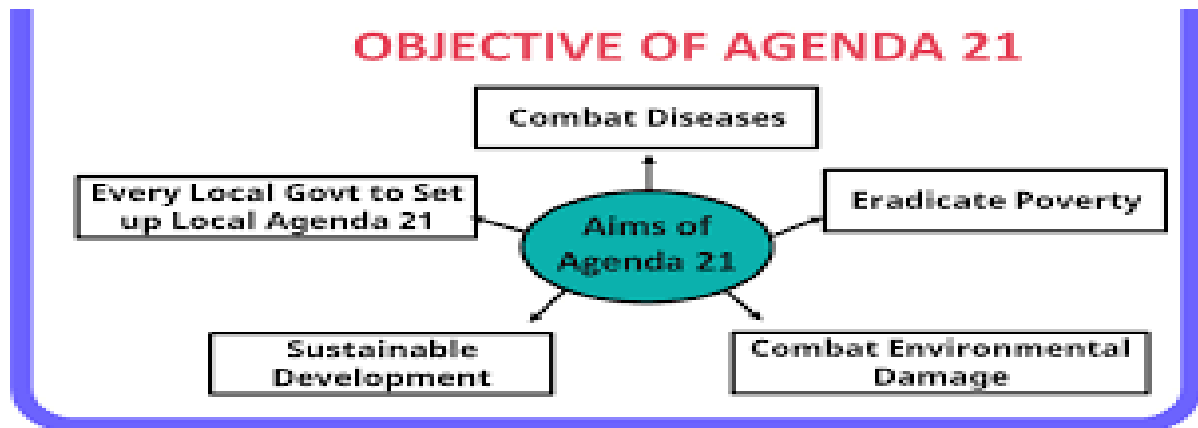
Agenda 21 (1992)

- Adopted: At Rio Earth Summit (June 3–14, 1992)

→ Nature: Non-binding action plan for sustainable development in the 21st century

❖ **Structure:**

- Social & economic dimensions (poverty, health, population)
- Conservation & resource management (forests, biodiversity, atmosphere)
- Role of major groups (youth, women, indigenous peoples)
- Implementation (finance, technology transfer, capacity building)
- Impact: Inspired local and national sustainability plans worldwide



Kyoto Protocol (1997)

→ Adopted: December 11, 1997

→ Entered into force: February 16, 2005

→ Objective: Legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries

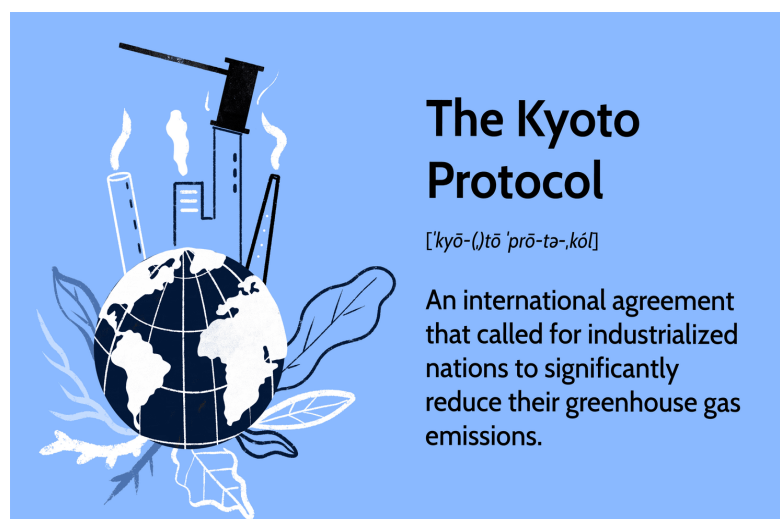
→ Commitment Period 1: 2008–2012; average 5% reduction below 1990 levels

❖ **Mechanisms:**

- Emissions Trading
- Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
- Joint Implementation (JI)

❖ **Limitations:**

- The US never ratified.
- No binding targets for developing countries
- Withdrawal by Canada in 2011



Paris Climate Accord(2015)

- Adopted: December 12, 2015
- Entered into force: November 4, 2016
- Goal: Limit warming to well below 2°C, pursue 1.5°C
- Approach: Universal participation through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

❖ Key Elements:

- Five-year review and enhancement cycle.
- Adaptation and resilience building
- Climate finance of \$100 billion annually (by developed countries)
- Loss and damage recognition
- Differences from Kyoto: Applies to all countries, not just developed ones; focuses on voluntary national targets
- Current Status: 196 Parties; ongoing COP negotiations to enhance ambition

PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT



Mechanisms for accountability include:

- Domestic environmental liability laws
- Regional environmental agreements (e.g., OSPAR Convention for the North-East Atlantic)
- UNEA resolutions and international treaties addressing transboundary pollution

Key Environmental Protocols

- ★ *Aarhus Convention – 1998 (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters)*
- Adopted: 25 June 1998 in Aarhus, Denmark, under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
- Entered into Force: 30 October 2001
- **Core Principles:**

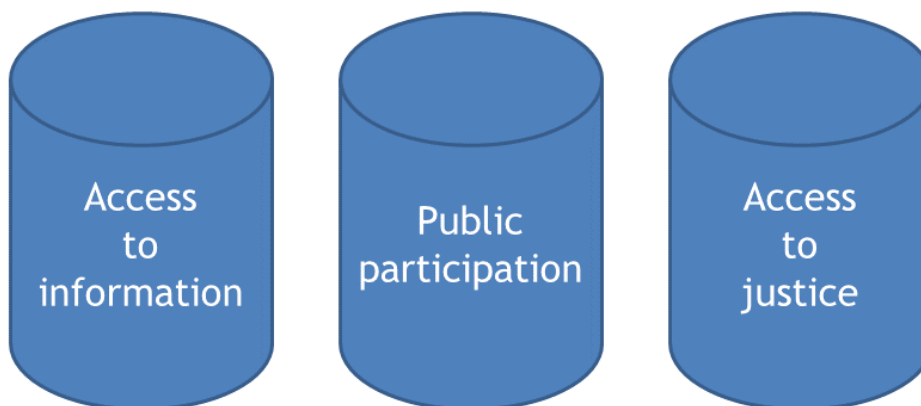
1. Access to Environmental Information – Governments must make environmental information available to the public, proactively and upon request, without needing to justify interest

2. Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making – Citizens have the right to participate in the preparation of plans, programs, and policies relating to the environment, as well as in decision-making on specific activities that may have environmental impacts

3. Access to Justice – The public can challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting the above rights or environmental law in general

- *Relevance to Climate Change Agenda:* Ensures transparency and inclusiveness in climate policy-making, empowering civil society to hold governments accountable for SDG 13 and MDG-aligned environmental goals

Participatory and Procedural Rights in Environmental Matters



Three pillar System

★ ***Espoo Convention – 1991 (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context)***

- Adopted: 25 February 1991 in Espoo, Finland, under the UNECE
- Entered into Force: 10 September 1997
- **Core Requirements:**

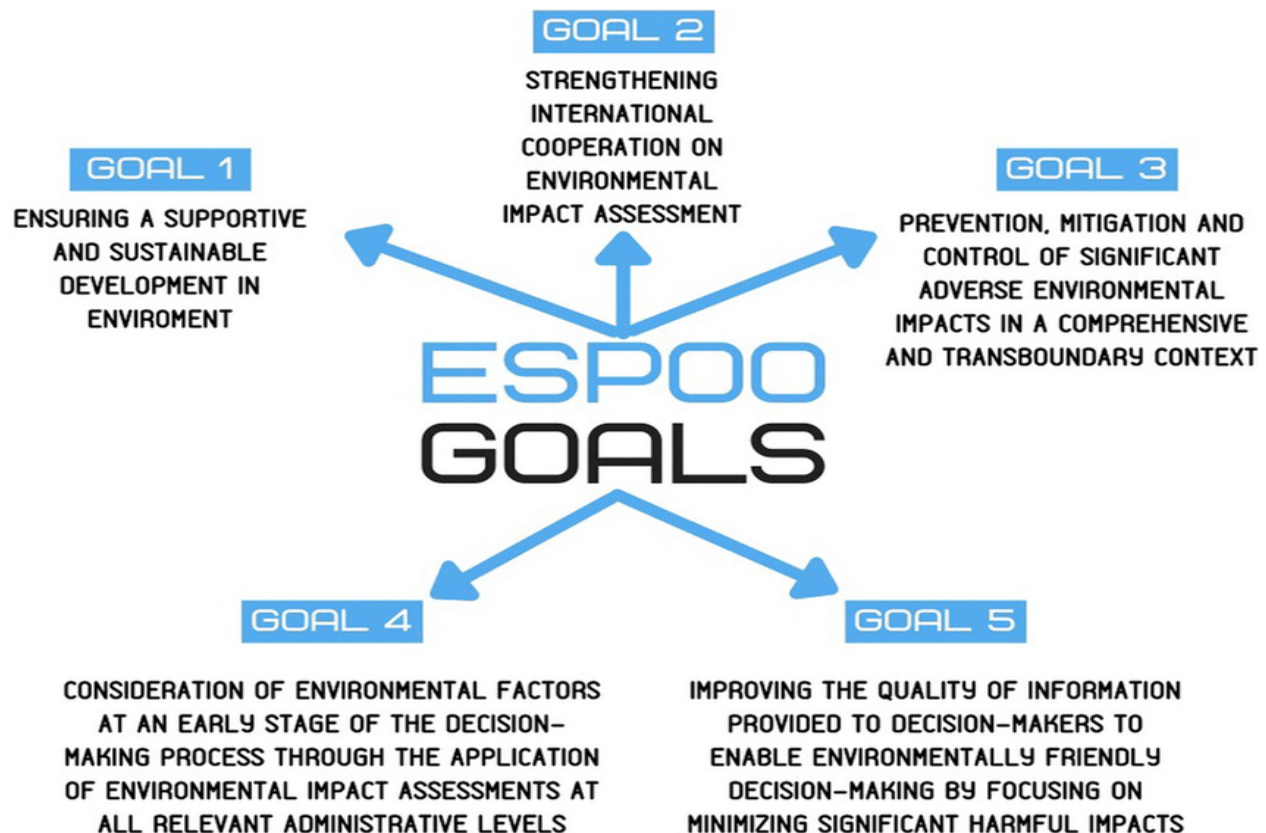
1. Cross-Border Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – States must notify and consult each other on all major projects that are likely to have significant adverse environmental impact across borders

2. Notification Process – Countries must inform potentially affected states early in the decision-making process

3. Public Participation – Affected populations in both the country of origin and the potentially impacted country must have an opportunity to participate in the EIA process

4. Dispute Resolution – Provides a framework for settling disagreements over transboundary environmental issues

- Relevance to Climate Change Agenda: Helps prevent large-scale infrastructure or industrial projects from worsening environmental degradation and climate risks in neighboring countries important for aligning climate action with sustainable development goals



Timeline

Pre-MDG Era: Setting the Stage (1970s–1990s)

- **1972 – Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment**
 - First major global meeting to recognize environmental protection as essential to human well-being
 - Created the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- **1987 – Brundtland Report (“Our Common Future”)**
 - Introduced the term “sustainable development”
 - Warned about overconsumption, inequality, and environmental degradation
- **1988 – Establishment of the IPCC**
 - Joint initiative of UNEP and WMO to provide scientific assessments of climate change
- **1992 – Rio Earth Summit (UNCED)**
 - Adopted Agenda 21, the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Rio Declaration
 - Defined principles of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR)
- **1997 – Kyoto Protocol**
 - First legally binding GHG reduction commitments for developed countries

MDG Era: 2000–2015

- **2000 – Millennium Development Goals Adopted**
 - 8 goals, 21 targets, 60 indicators
- **2001 – Marrakesh Accords**
 - Operational rules for Kyoto Protocol’s carbon trading and CDM projects
- **2005 – Kyoto Protocol Enters into Force**
 - Despite U.S. non-participation, it became binding for signatories
- **2007 – Bali Action Plan**
 - Framework to negotiate post-2012 climate agreement
- **2009 – Copenhagen COP15**
 - Recognized need to limit warming to 2°C but failed to produce binding commitments
- **2010 – Cancun Agreements**

→ Established the Green Climate Fund to mobilize \$100 billion annually by 2020

- **2012 – Rio+20 Conference**

→ Called for new universal sustainable development goals to succeed MDGs

SDG Era: 2015–Present

- **2015 – Adoption of the 2030 Agenda and 17 SDGs**

→ Integrated environmental, economic, and social pillars; universal application

Introduced Goal 13: Climate Action

- **2015 – Paris Climate Change Accord (COP21)**

→ Legally binding under the UNFCCC framework; set 1.5°C aspiration

- **2016 – Kigali Amendment to Montreal Protocol**

→ Targeted phase-down of HFCs, a potent greenhouse gas

- **2018 – IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C**

→ Warned that limiting warming to 1.5°C requires halving global emissions by 2030

- **2019 – Global Climate Strikes & Youth Movements**

→ Greta Thunberg and millions worldwide mobilized for urgent climate action

- **2020 – COVID-19 Pandemic**

→ Temporarily reduced emissions; disrupted SDG progress; intensified calls for a green recovery

- **2021 – COP26 (Glasgow)**

→ Glasgow Climate Pact; commitments to phase down unabated coal; net-zero pledges from major economies

- **2022 – COP27 (Sharm el-Sheikh)**

→ Established a “Loss and Damage” fund for vulnerable countries

- **2023 – COP28 (Dubai)**

→ First Global Stocktake under Paris Agreement; stressed need to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030

Recent Developments (2024–2025)

- **2024**

→ Intensified extreme events (record heatwaves, wildfires, and flooding) across multiple continents

→ Surge in renewable energy investment; solar and wind become cheapest power sources in most regions

- Discussions on “Goal 18” for digital equity, AI governance, and climate-tech access
- **2025 (Current Year)**
- Midpoint review of SDGs reveals significant lag on climate-related targets
- Calls grow for SDG “refresh” to integrate emerging issues like climate migration, AI in climate adaptation, and loss & damage financing mechanisms
- Preparations for COP30 (Belém, Brazil) focus on integrating climate action with poverty reduction and biodiversity preservation

Current Human Concerns

1. Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

- ★ Intensifying extreme weather events (heatwaves, floods, wildfires, hurricanes) affecting lives and livelihoods
- ★ Sea-level rise threatens low-lying coastal cities and small island states
- ★ Accelerating biodiversity loss and collapse of ecosystems that sustain food, water, and health systems
- ★ Increased desertification and land degradation impacting agriculture and rural communities

2. Global Inequality

- ★ Widening gap between developed and developing countries in climate resilience and adaptation capacity
- ★ Climate injustice: those least responsible for emissions suffering the most severe impacts
- ★ Unequal access to climate finance, green technologies, and adaptation resources

3. Food and Water Security

- ★ Shifting rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts reducing crop yields
- ★ Threats to fisheries and marine food chains due to ocean warming and acidification
- ★ Competition over scarce freshwater resources leading to regional conflicts

4. Health Risks

- ★ Rise in climate-sensitive diseases (malaria, dengue, cholera)
- ★ Heat-related illnesses and deaths are becoming more frequent
- ★ Air pollution from fossil fuel burning causes respiratory and cardiovascular problems

5. Economic Instability

- ★ Loss of livelihoods in climate-vulnerable sectors (agriculture, tourism, fisheries)
- ★ Supply chain disruptions due to disasters and extreme weather
- ★ Rising costs of insurance and climate adaptation measures

6. Displacement and Migration

- ★ Climate-induced migration from flood-prone, drought-affected, or uninhabitable areas
- ★ Strain on urban infrastructure and social services in receiving regions

7. Energy Transition Challenges

- ★ Balancing rapid decarbonization with energy access for the poor
- ★ Dependence on fossil fuels in many developing economies creating political and economic resistance
- ★ Ethical sourcing of critical minerals for renewable technologies

8. Technological Disruption

- ★ Unequal access to digital infrastructure and AI tools for climate adaptation
- ★ Risks of technology-driven inequality if clean tech is monopolized by a few nations or corporations

9. Governance and Policy Gaps

- ★ Lack of enforcement in international climate agreements
- ★ Political instability hindering long-term sustainability planning
- ★ Slow progress in operationalizing Loss and Damage funding

10. Intergenerational Equity

- ★ Growing youth frustration at inaction, with calls for climate justice and stronger accountability
- ★ Ethical debates on leaving a livable planet for future generations

Key International Frameworks

1. UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme (1972–Present)

- Mandate: Acts as the leading global environmental authority; coordinates environmental activities within the UN system

- Role: Secretariat and implementing agency for multiple environmental conventions (e.g., Montreal Protocol, Minamata Convention)
- Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya

2. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982)

- Sets legal framework for all marine and maritime activities
- Establishes rights and responsibilities of nations regarding ocean use, resources, and conservation

3. Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) (1995)

- Addresses land-based pollution sources affecting oceans, such as agricultural runoff, sewage, and plastics

4. SDG 14 – Life Below Water (2015)

- Goal: Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources

5. SDG 13 – Climate Action (2015)

- Goal: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

6. London Convention (1972) and London Protocol (1996)

- Prohibit dumping of certain wastes at sea; aim to protect marine environment from pollution

7. Basel Convention (1989)

- Regulates transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal

8. Stockholm Convention (2001)

- Targets elimination or restriction of persistent organic pollutants (POPs)

9. Paris Agreement (2015)

- Legally binding treaty under the UNFCCC aiming to limit warming to well below 2°C, preferably 1.5°C

10. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)

- Global blueprint for reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience

11. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)

- Successfully phased out most ozone-depleting substances; indirectly contributed to climate mitigation

12. Minamata Convention on Mercury (2013)

- Protects human health and environment from anthropogenic emissions of mercury

13. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1992)

- Framework for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components

14. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)

- Parent treaty of the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement; establishes framework for climate cooperation

15. Kyoto Protocol (1997)

- First legally binding emission reduction commitments for developed nations

16. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1973)

- Regulates international trade in wildlife to prevent species endangerment

17. Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (1994)

- Focuses on sustainable land management and reversing desertification trends

18. Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter – MARPOL (1973/1978)

- Prevents pollution from ships, covering oil, chemicals, and waste

Case Studies

1. Bagamoyo District, Tanzania – Coastal Erosion & Saline Intrusion

- ★ Coastal villages such as Mlingotini and Kitonga have seen major changes in tidal patterns and rainfall distribution due to climate change
- ★ Saltwater intrusion has contaminated groundwater supplies, reducing access to potable water and impacting rice farming and horticulture
- ★ Erosion has destroyed homes, roads, and fishing infrastructure, forcing migration of vulnerable households
- ★ The decline in fish stocks from habitat degradation has worsened food insecurity
- ★ This case shows the intersection of SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)

2. Bay of Plenty, New Zealand / Sunshine Coast, Australia – Adaptive Coastal Planning

- ★ Regional councils integrated IPCC projections into hazard mapping, identifying areas at risk from 0.5–1.0 m sea-level rise over the century
- ★ Strategic zoning limits future development in high-risk areas and recommends adaptive infrastructure design
- ★ Resistance from developers and property owners has caused political friction, demonstrating the trade-offs between climate resilience and economic interests
- ★ The case aligns with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) and the Sendai Framework for risk-informed land use planning

3. Odisha, India – Ecosystem-Based vs. Engineered Coastal Protection

- ★ In Satabhaya, seawalls built without mangrove restoration disrupted natural sediment flow, causing rapid erosion and submergence
- ★ Penthawada saw failure of geosynthetic tube barriers due to neglect of ecological systems and lack of community involvement
- ★ Losses included farmland, housing, and biodiversity demonstrating the risks of purely engineered solutions in complex coastal systems
- ★ This case highlights the value of ecosystem-based adaptation and community engagement in line with SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 14

4. Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP)

- ★ Funded by the Green Climate Fund, TCAP involves raising land elevations, constructing sea walls, and reclaiming land to protect against storm surges
- ★ Incorporates LIDAR mapping and advanced hazard modeling to guide infrastructure placement.
- ★ Strong emphasis on local skills training ensures communities can maintain adaptation measures long-term
- ★ Aligns with SDG 13 and supports national survival in face of existential threats from climate change

5. Fiji – Climate-Induced Relocation Challenges

- ★ Villages such as Muani and Vunidogoloa face loss of habitable land due to sea-level rise and cyclones
- ★ Despite having a relocation trust fund and guidelines, financial limitations slow the process
- ★ Emotional and cultural ties to ancestral land create resistance, making relocation as much a social challenge as an environmental one
- ★ Reflects the interplay between human rights, climate justice, and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

6. Pacific Islands – Threat of Nation Loss

- ★ IPCC warns that exceeding 1.5°C warming could lead to complete inundation of some small island states
- ★ Loss of land would mean loss of sovereignty, marine resources, and cultural heritage
- ★ Raises complex legal questions about statehood, citizenship, and EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) rights under UNCLOS
- ★ Calls for urgent climate diplomacy and adaptation finance in line with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)

7. Bangladesh – Intensifying Storm Tide Hazards

- ★ Climate models predict storm tide heights in coastal Bangladesh could increase to 5.4 m by 2100
- ★ Combined with land subsidence, this creates extreme flooding risks for millions of people.
- ★ The Sundarbans mangrove forest, a UNESCO World Heritage site, faces accelerated degradation
- ★ Aligns with SDG 13, SDG 14, and the Sendai Framework’s priority of “understanding disaster risk.”

8. Alexandria, Egypt – Community Perception Versus Climate Reality

- ★ In El Max, fishermen notice reduced catches and sinking land but doubt global climate projections
- ★ The government has installed breakwaters and sea walls, but relocation is resisted due to economic dependence on fishing and cultural identity

- ★ Highlights the psychosocial barriers to climate adaptation and the importance of trust in science

9. France – Widespread Coastal Erosion Impacts

- ★ National assessments project over 506,000 hectares lost to erosion by 2100
- ★ This includes high-value tourism and agricultural zones, plus historic sites
- ★ Economic losses could reach tens of billions of euros, requiring integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and relocation strategies
- ★ Demonstrates the need for long-term climate risk governance aligned with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure)

10. Citizen Science in Flood Monitoring – Fiji & Indonesia

- ★ The RISE program engaged residents in low-income, flood-prone areas to collect water-level and contamination data
- ★ Data fed directly into municipal planning systems, enabling faster, more targeted responses to floods
- ★ Empowered communities through capacity building, increased awareness, and ownership of adaptation solutions
- ★ Aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships) and the Sendai Framework's focus on inclusive disaster governance

QARMA (Questions a Resolution must Answer)

- 1. How should climate change be reframed as a standalone goal or as a cross-cutting prerequisite for achieving all development goals?*
- 2. What recent global developments must be reflected in updated climate development strategies?*
- 3. What specific targets will align national and global action with the 1.5 °C pathway and the renewable energy and efficiency goals agreed at COP28?*
- 4. How will adequate climate finance be secured in line with the COP29 target of USD 300 billion/year by 2035, and how will it be distributed fairly?*
- 5. What mechanisms will ensure that adaptation, resilience, and loss & damage funding reach the most vulnerable populations?*
- 6. How will governance and accountability be strengthened to monitor and report on climate SDG integration under the Paris Agreement framework?*
- 7. What measures will support a just transition for workers and communities currently dependent on high-emission industries?*
- 8. How will resilience be built into food, water, health, and biodiversity systems in the face of worsening climate impacts?*

9. *What role will local and subnational actors play in implementing global climate and development commitments?*
10. *How will the resolution prevent trade-offs where economic growth undermines climate action or environmental sustainability?*

Further Readings

1. [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report – Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)
2. [UNEP: Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6 \(2019\)](#)
3. [UNEP: From Pollution to Solution – A Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution \(2021\)](#)
4. [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2015–2030\)](#)
5. [Paris Agreement \(2015\) – UNFCCC](#)
6. [UNCLOS \(United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea\)](#)
7. [Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes \(1989\)](#)
8. [Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities \(GPA\)](#)
9. [Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue Reports – UNFCCC](#)
10. [OECD Report: Responding to Rising Seas – OECD Perspectives on Coastal Adaptation \(2019\)](#)

