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Documentation of the Work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Committee Staff

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Agenda

- I. Climate Change and Displacement

Resolutions Adopted by the Committee

Code	Topic	Vote
UNHCR 1/1	Climate Change and Displacement	Adopted with acclamation
UNHCR 1/2	Climate Change and Displacement	Adopted with acclamation

Summary Report

The topic before the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Committee was “Climate Change and Displacement”, in line with the topics given for the MUN Refugee Challenge. Since this was the only topic to be simulated, it was automatically adopted as the agenda for the Committee. This topic is aimed at getting solutions to prevent the rising crisis of displacement fueled by climate change, and also ways to aid those that have already been displaced by climate change.

There were 25 delegates in attendance. During the first committee session, the delegates spoke at length on the topic and their countries’ positions on the topic. From the second committee session, blocs were being formed. Extensive work on the working papers began from Day 1 of the Conference. The members of the Dais guided the Delegates all through the drafting of the Working Papers.

Three Blocs were formed and at the end of the Conference, two draft resolutions were passed as resolutions, namely UNHCR Resolution 1/1 and UNHCR Resolution 1/2. The resolutions were well drafted and they extensively brought out solutions and recommendations to climate change and displacement.

Code: UNHCR 1/1

Committee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Topic: Climate Change and Displacement

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Recognizing that the definition of refugees under the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) but does not include environmental migrants or persons displaced due to climate change,

Alarmed by the significant environmental challenges that climate change poses making climate refugees unable to return to their homes, thereby requiring their social and economic absorption into their host communities,

Inspired by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), which builds on the principle of “leaving no one behind”; particularly, Goals 4 and 8, which promotes economic growth through access to education for all,

Affirming Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, which notes that every state around the world and many people’s lives are threatened by climate change,

Bearing in mind that all States and stakeholders have common but differentiated responsibilities towards facilitating climate action and environmental protection of migrants,

Acknowledging the important strides, the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (2016) made in converging the international community in order to find solutions to the refugee crisis; but however, did not adequately address climate change and forced displacement,

Recalling Member States dedication to providing health and social care services to refugee communities within their respective national systems under Commitment 83 of the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (2016),

Noting that refugees may be victims of different forms of abuse during migration; hence, they would need adequate care upon their arrival in host countries in line with Commitment 26 of the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (2016),

Deeply concerned by the increasing rate of forced displacement all over the world due to climate conditions,

1. *Recommends* that Member States negotiate an additional Protocol to the 1951 Refugee Convention, particularly taking into consideration of;
 - a. amending the international definition of refugees to include those displaced because of climate change;
 - b. codifying the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) working definition of environmental migrant, contained in the World Migration Report of 2011;
2. *Encourages* Member States to implement criteria for emergency residency permits in the form of humanitarian visas for unexpected disasters as part of the Regional Consultative Processes (RCP) to further facilitate legal migration, including;

- a. Highlighting the importance of having criteria for receiving humanitarian visas that include;
 - i. The citizens of countries affected by natural disasters;
 - ii. The people endangered to be displaced in a foreseeable amount of time due to climate change effects like droughts, floods, the rise of sea-levels among others;
 - b. Suggesting the creation of a comprehensive framework for the issuing process, comprised of;
 - i. Relocation taking place in a regional context to simplify the integration process;
 - ii. Facilitating a joint visa procedure for families as a whole;
 - iii. The issuance of visas by national authorities of countries that are capable to accommodate migrants and displaced persons;
 - iv. Encouraging UNHCR and IOM to lead mobile Humanitarian Visa Application Centres in the countries of origin, with the aim of assisting people and simplifying the issue of humanitarian visas for those affected;
 - v. Partnership with the UNHCR in ensuring that Member States get assistance in the bureaucratic process;
 - c. Endorsing a coverage of the humanitarian visas, following *Articles 23 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)*, which reiterates that everyone has the right to work, and the right to a standard of adequate living conditions, resulting in;
 - i. The Member State granting work permits after an adequate period of time;
 - ii. The Member State ensuring easy access to basic services, such as, but not limited to: shelter, healthcare, education, and legal services;
 - d. Encouraging enhanced pathways for climate refugees through existing migration schemes within Regional bodies, Clusters and Hubs, and other bilateral and multilateral relationships;
3. *Urges* Member States to incorporate similar programs as Vietnam's Urban Upgrading Project over the course of 10 years in order to relieve the pressures on urban educational facilities, thus allowing more access to school systems, work opportunities and health facilities for climate refugees, as this is necessary for their incorporation into host countries' in the aftermath of natural disasters;

4. *Encourages* partnership with the Platform on Disaster Displacement, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Global Forum for Migration and Development, to create community or government support projects to ensure inclusion, access to the social network and health systems of the host country and overall decent living conditions for migrants and vulnerable groups;
5. *Further requests* that Member States integrate comprehensive disaster response training for students, administrators, and teachers, as well as other affected parties in their own Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plans;
6. *Recommends* that the urban planning agencies of Member States incorporate the creation of disaster-resistant safe zones within schools, by relying on funds of other states, supporting the efforts of enabling environmentally displaced people to stay in their home country;
7. *Calls upon* Member States to allocate resources towards providing or enhancing the access to psychosocial and mental health care for disaster-displaced migrants by;
 - a. Creating workshops based on those created by Nepal's Health Emergency Operations Centre, intended to train primary healthcare providers with the knowledge necessary to treat post disaster trauma among disaster-affected migrants;
 - b. Revising national mental health care policies to better reflect the medical concerns of vulnerable groups displaced by climate-induced migration;
 - c. Incorporating psychosocial and mental health care response methods and resources into national DRR programs;
8. *Recommends* cooperation between the UNHCR and relevant national agencies in properly assessing the integrity of existing buildings and infrastructure;
9. *Encourages* Member States to expand from focusing on financial donations to sharing and cooperating through, but not limited to;
 - a. Acquiring knowledge and technologies gained through research;
 - b. Provision of goods and services;
 - c. Skills related to vocational training and DRR;
10. *Recommends* expanding existing non-permanent relocation programs addressing environmental migrants temporarily fleeing natural disasters by;

- a. Increasing cooperation between NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and Member States, with consideration of country origin, transit, and destination countries, through a conversational approach in local communities;
 - b. Establishing cooperation between neighbouring Member States to coordinate temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance;
 - c. Strengthening Member States' relationships with emergency, post conflict, and movement management organizations, to better meet the needs of environmental migrants;
 - d. Leveraging the varied expertise of local community members, state-level policymakers, regional bodies, and relevant CSOs in the development of relevant regional and local migration policy;
 - e. Providing support to state-level policy makers in the formation and implementation of environmental migration and DRR policy;
 - f. Setting regionally-based goals relevant to environmental migration and DRR;
 - g. Endorsing educational plans set forth by UNHCR and IOM and utilizing them in the facilitating of discussions between actors meeting at the Centres;
11. *Supports* governments through UNHCR regional offices to establish an international strategy framework for adaptation to environmental migration, as a result of climate change, cross-border disaster displacement, environmental migration, and DRR, in order to provide scenario-planning and prevention aid by;
- a. The integration of the international strategy framework into domestic policies on environmental migration and DRR, through national legislators and institutions, developed through discussions that include the participation of national legislators and institutions, CSOs, and impacted community members, such that the specificity of each actor's situation is taken into account;
 - b. Educating professionals and governments about strategies and methods of implementation;
 - c. Encouraging enhanced community participation through the adoption of varied scenarios and DRR plans;
 - d. Engaging in the continuous monitoring of progress of implementation of the DRR plans, by establishing a time frame in the social, economic, environmental, and political conditions of each country;

- e. Providing Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) at the regional offices annually on the topic of environmental migration and cross-border disaster displacement, in collaboration with relevant United Nations (UN) organizations and CSOs, in which Member States present a document about their implemented effective practices and previewed goals for the next consultation;
12. *Recommends* the integration of an educational plan through the UNHCR regional offices centred around teaching Member States and local populations how to help environmental migrants in their territory, by promoting the protection of fundamental human rights, as well as emphasizing potential positive actions to assist future integration of these environmental migrants, including, but not limited to;
- a. Teaching the primary causes of environmental migration;
 - b. Prioritizing the protection of disabled, indigenous, children, and women migrants;
 - c. Allowing work and study inside migrants' new territories;
 - d. Utilizing educational frameworks to improve the dialogue between migrants and state legislators;
 - e. Increasing community awareness about potential benefits that migration might bring;
13. *Encourages* the inclusion of both the official language of the state of origin as well as that of the host state into school curricula, especially for new students in refugee settlements, in order to enhance integration into host state;
14. *Invites* Member States to promote the role of youth by including internships with students into, but not limited to the creation of sustainable infrastructures, the implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programs, the rescue team, emergency health programs including;
- a. Coordinating accessible regional health services for migrants in cooperation with civil society organisations and/or NGOs;
 - b. Cooperating with regional governments and NGOs to allow for the education of migrant populations, especially in vocational and job training as well as primary education;
 - c. Urging the establishment and expansion of UNHCR Regional Offices in not yet approached areas in order to provide equally distributed support in regions such as South America, East Asia, and South Asia;

15. *Emphasizes* the cooperation between governments, CSOs, NGOs, and Member States, in the creation, development, and implementation of immediate assistance programs in order to support the integration of displaced migrants in host communities by;
 - a. Taking their capacity and resources into consideration, to provide them access to basic services, such as food, water, healthcare, and housing;
 - b. Following up of environmental migrants via programs that will allow CSOs and NGOs, to better address their needs depending on their status (returning, in transit or permanent environmental migrants), to provide them with the right information and assistance;

16. *Recommends* that the IOM encourage partnerships in order to develop vocational training program for climate migrants and provide them with temporary employment in labour-intensive jobs;

17. *Further recommends* that Member States engage in constructive dialogue with threatened climate threatened states to promote the self-determination and dignity of affected communities in any future responses to climate change displacement;

18. *Suggests* that policy development relating to climate change displacement and migration must be framed with human rights considerations; resettled groups must have access to the same rights and entitlements as those whose country they will make home, including cultural preservation.

Code: UNHCR 1/2

Committee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Topic: Climate Change and Displacement

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Alarmed by the visible lack of recognition and protection of climate refugees under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees Refugee Convention (1951) and its Optional Protocol (1967),

Mindful of the need to effectively plan ahead for future climate refugees and internally displaced persons due to climate change,

Having fully considered the damages caused by climate change and the ensuing loss of lives, property and livelihood due to the lack of preparation,

Recognizing the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (2018) which seeks to protect persons displaced by climate change,

Deeply conscious of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) (A/RES71/1), which recognises climate change and environmental issues as key drivers of displacements and migration,

Expressing concern as regards potential permanent climate displacement and the potential inability of climate change displaced persons to return to their places of origin,

Bearing in mind the need for a concerted and focused fight to protect and aid displaced persons all around the world,

Recognizing the need to address the root cause of climate change displacements as stated in the resolution of the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties (COP),

Recognizing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 which seeks to reinforce adaptive capacity and resilience to hazards caused by climate change,

Acknowledging the importance of SDG 17 and the need for all Member States, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the international community to work together to promote a sustainable future for climate refugees,

Considering the fact that most people are unaware of the vulnerability of certain areas prone to climatic disasters,

1. *Recommends* that the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol be expanded to actively cater for the rising number of climate refugees around the world by;
 - a. Way of amendment to clearly define who a climate refugee is in order to make room for the recognition of climate refugees in international law;
 - b. Liaising with the International Law Commission in drafting this legal framework with recommendations made by the UNHCR;

- c. Ensuring that Member States adopt this legal framework into their national federal laws in order to;
 - i. Protect persons displaced by climate change from ill treatment by the host country;
 - ii. Ensure that old and physically disabled persons are accorded the same status as working-class refugees;
 - iii. Ensure that the basic human rights of those persons displaced by climate change, who seek refuge, are not violated;
 - iv. apply the rights of refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention to persons displaced by climate change;
 - v. ensure that persons displaced by climate change living within their territories receive quality education, in line with SDG 4;
 - vi. provide for standard and subsidized health care facilities and resources for persons displaced by climate change in line with SDG 3;
 - vii. guarantee safe shelters and good living conditions for climate refugees under the provision of SDG 11 and its targets;
2. *Urges* Member States to offer financial assistance to host countries to adequately prepare for the incoming surge of climate change displaced persons by;
 - a. creating a fund through which member states can pool financial resources;
 - b. ensuring that the funds will serve as a well-rounded approach in preparing for a volatile future;
3. *Recommends* that more attention be paid in predicting the impact of future climatic changes which are likely to occur by;
 - a. constantly monitoring environmental changes through the use of forecast systems and technologies;
 - b. sharing the information received from the forecast systems amongst developing Member States to enable them prepare for any impending disasters;
4. *Further recommends* the creation of a climate refugee acceptance quota;
 - a. Which will contain a minimum benchmark through which member states commit to accept a specific number of refugees, with the option to accept even more;
 - b. Which will commit member states to accepting refugees who are set to permanently exit their home country due to permanent climate disasters such as the submersion of the state as a result of rising sea levels;

5. *Suggests* that a 30-year global vision agenda similar to the SDGs should be created which would;
 - a. be named the Climate Displacement Goals (CDG) 2050;
 - b. put the international community on its toes in planning towards the reduction and protection of climate change displaced persons all around the world by the year 2050;
6. *Recommends* that the impact of climate change be reduced by a focused effort through reforestation which will;
 - a. Reduce atmospheric carbon the leading cause of climate change by 25% and thus reduce climatic disorders;
 - b. Serve as a double plan for refugee employment, as refugees are employed to plant, water, and prune trees;
7. *Encourages* Member States to increase efforts in combating climate change by;
 - a. taking active steps to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions to protect and preserve life on land in accordance with SDG 15 by investing in Safe and Clean Energy practices like construction of nuclear plants;
 - b. implementing Green project initiatives to create welfare facilities through refining reusable waste products to be used as construction materials for infrastructural development;
8. *Endorses* citizens and independent bodies to create more Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that would focus on reaching a wider audience of persons displaced by climate change, as they are currently few NGOs that focus on climate refugees, thus increasing the aid and assistance they receive, and reducing the workload on the States;
9. *Appeals* to Member States to adopt new models of planned urbanisation that foster architectural resilience in order to reduce the vulnerability of their territories to climate disasters by;
 - a. developing a risk reduction mechanism that reduces the impact of climate change induced disasters through;
 - i. building new sea walls, dykes, polders;
 - ii. agricultural and food security which would ensure that sufficient amount of food is being stored up in food banks to prevent scarcity of food and hunger, in line with SDG 2;
 - iii. warning about imminent disasters which would help prepare for evacuation and relocation of persons likely to be affected by the disaster;

- iv. conserving plants and animals;
- b. identifying disaster sites and relocating persons prone to natural disasters;
creating eco-friendly refugee camps as most refugees seek refuge in areas
highly susceptible to climate change;

10. *Recommends* that Member States create an initiative aimed at educating the masses on;

- a. The vulnerability of certain areas to climatic change, as well as the effect of this
through;
 - i. The incorporation of this into the educational curriculum;
 - ii. Broadcasting using various means of communication such as television, radio
and social media platforms;
- b. The need to seek professional advice on the vulnerability of a certain area before
erecting any structure.