INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEXAS/ OSGOOD CENTER

LONE STAR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2023 (LSMUN)

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA)

Background Guide

Garland, February 25-26, 2023

If you can't reuse it, refuse it!

BEAT PLASTIC POLLUTION

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

UN environment

What is the role of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)?

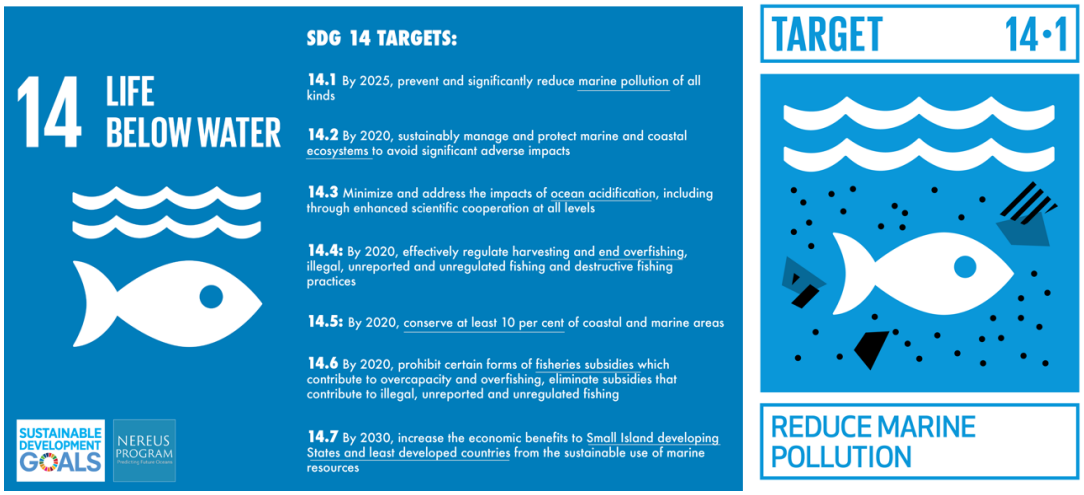
In a world of interconnected ecosystems and global demands, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the highest-level-decision making and universal forum – the only space where representatives from all countries of the world can discuss the environmental threats that the global community faces today. You are probably wondering when UNEA was born, and you will be surprised: UNEA is relatively a "young" body (committee) in the United Nations; **it was created in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20, when world leaders called for UN Environment to be strengthened and upgraded.** In fact, its creation embodies a new era in which the environment is at the center of the international community's focus and is given the same level of prominence as issues such as peace, poverty, health, and security. Its establishment was the culmination of decades of international efforts, initiated at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, and aimed at creating a coherent system of international environmental governance. Today, UNEA plays a significant role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals.

The Assembly meets every two years in person in Nairobi, Kenya, to set priorities for global environmental policies and to develop international environmental law. Due to the COVID-19, the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly had to meet online for the first part of it. The next meeting (sixth session) of the Assembly is scheduled to take place, in a hybrid format, from February 24 to March 1, 2024. You can also check when the other UNEA committees and bureaus are scheduled to meet at: https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea-6

Curious about how things are like? Do you want to hear the real voices of the UNEA representatives? **CHECK** the **STATEMENTS** of diverse countries at the Fifth Session of the Assembly: https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea-5.2/statements

As you might have noticed while listening to the statements, addressing environmental challenges, such as climate change, marine pollution, sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, overfishing, and ocean acidification is at the heart of this once called **"the world's parliament on the environment",** included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly, **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, which aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development".** Goal 14 includes specific targets to tackle and to measure the actions required to address these important issues that affect our largest ecosystems: the oceans. If you want to learn more about this universal goal and the standards used to measure the progress of achieving it, please CHECK these links: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/Goal-14/ and https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14 and **PAY ATTENTION** to SDG 14's specific targets and to its 10 indicators. You might want

to get familiar with all the SDGs: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/overview/ and **EXPLORE** more at: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/



UNEA is a catalyst for change. Its representatives are convinced that it is urgent for all countries in the world to compromise to protect marine life. Just to understand the urgency, UNEA has conducted research, and it has estimated that **"the volume of plastic pollution entering the ocean each year is expected to double or triple by 2040, threatening all marine life."** According to the World Economic Forum, plastic pollution is one the five biggest threats to our oceans. **CHECK:** https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/5-ways-we-can-improve-ocean-health

LEARN about SDG 12. **CHECK:** https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Goal-12-infographic.pdf and **R E A D :** https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/12_Why-It-Matters-2020.pdf

Do you know how many bottles of water are purchased every minute?
If not, **W A T C H:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRS5W7BYKFc

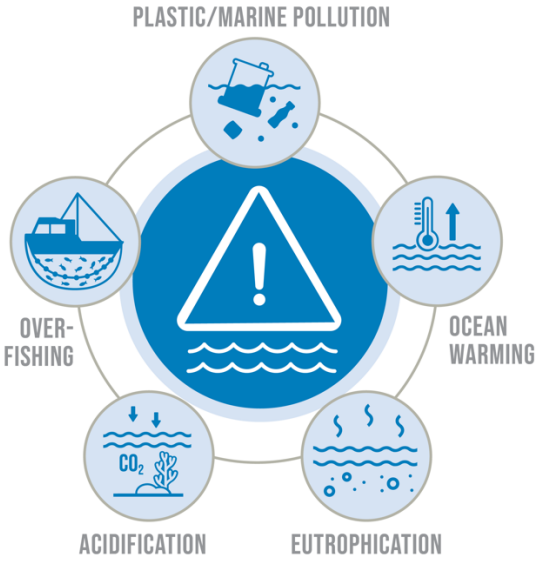
14 LIFE BELOW WATER

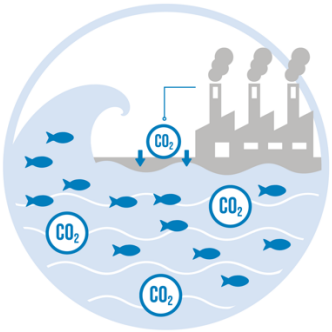
CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OUR OCEAN

THE PLANET'S LARGEST ECOSYSTEM

IS ENDANGERED





INCREASING ACIDIFICATION

IS THREATENING MARINE LIFE AND LIMITING THE OCEAN'S CAPACITY TO MODERATE CLIMATE CHANGE

THE OCEAN **ABSORBS** AROUND **1/4** OF GLOBAL ANNUAL CO_2 **EMISSIONS**

PLASTIC POLLUTION

IS CHOKING THE OCEAN

17+ MILLION METRIC TONS

OF PLASTIC ENTERED THE OCEAN IN 2021

PROJECTED TO **DOUBLE OR TRIPLE** BY 2040

90% OF THE WORLD'S FISHERS ARE EMPLOYED IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

WHO NEED ACCELERATED SUPPORT DUE TO THE **PANDEMIC**

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2022: UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2022/

UNEA matters a lot. Why would that be?

There are a lot of reasons to affirm that this global forum has a relevant job in environmental protection. This entity starts negotiations for new international laws, known as treaties, conventions, and protocols, but its work does not finish in these negotiations (like the ones that you will engage in LSMUN 2023). UNEA experts and stakeholders also identify emerging problems and agree to the next steps to learn and to address them. Its global projects are also of extreme importance because UNEA serves as an international coordinator of their implementation. UNEA oversees the work of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). **LISTEN** to the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, speaking about the importance of UNEA:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk8-Cu8HW50

How will average woman benefit from UNEA? **WATCH:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NpXAQ9klBQ

Governance, Structure and Mandate

You can learn more about UNEA in these links:

Governance and Structure

https://www.iisd.org/articles/unea-governance **READ** with these *key words* (acronyms) in mind: OECPR, IPCC, GEO, IPBES and pay attention to the description of its multiple roles as an international organization to protect the environment)

https://www.unep.org/events/civil-society-events/united-nations-environment-assembly-unep-unea

https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/the-un-environment-assembly-what-you-need-to-know/

https://www.ciel.org/project-update/expanding-engagement-in-international-institutions-the-united-nations-environment-assembly-unea/

Mandate and Rules of Procedure

https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/un-environment-assembly-rules-procedurehttps://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=243&menu=3170

TOPIC 1: TOWARDS ENDING PLASTIC POLLUTION

What is the problem? What did cause this problem?

The problem is that, as it has been summarized by several environmental organizations, **"plastic pollution is ubiquitous (it is everywhere!). It is in our food, our water, the air we breathe, the deepest ocean trenches, and the most remote mountains. It is harmful to human health and ecosystems, and it serves as a carrier for even more potent toxicants that cause cancer and other serious illnesses. Plastic also has an enormous climate impact – if it were a country, plastic would be the fifth- largest greenhouse gas emitter on Earth."** Please **READ** more about it at: https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UNEA-publication-packet_plastics-treaty-1.pdf

"By 2050, single-use plastic production could account for 5-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions."

Others also frame the problem and add **single-use plastic products, microplastics** and even words that you might not heard about like **"platisphere"** to the alarming equation. **CHECK** how the ubiquity of plastic, which is NOT natural in our environment, has gotten us to the current situation that must be addressed with collective actions now: https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/

What are single-use plastics?

Often also referred to as **disposable plastics**, are commonly used plastic packaging including items intended **to be used only once before they are thrown away or recycled**, e.g., grocery bags, food packaging, bottles, straws, containers, cups, cutlery, etc. They also include **packaging** - all products made of any materials of any nature to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery, and presentation of goods, from raw materials to processed goods, from the producer to the user or the consumer. **'Non-returnable' items used for the same purposes shall also be considered to constitute packaging.**

Currently, other organizations and individuals have challenged the solutions that we all have probably be familiar with. One of those "solutions" that we need to evaluate with new eyes is recycling. **CHECK:** https://www.dw.com/en/plastic-recycling-a-myth-as-packaging-explodes/a-63622887
https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-49827945

What is more specifically the problem with these single-use plastic items?

Well, there are many problems that result from the production, management, consumption, and disposal of single-use plastic products. One of them is related to their life cycle.

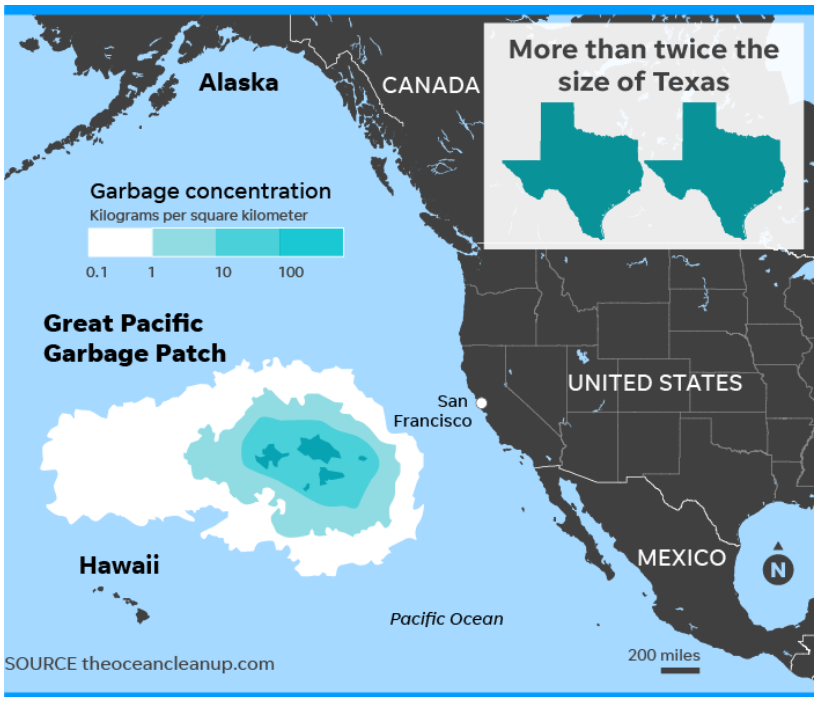
The World Economic Forum has explored the economic factors and new approaches needed to redefine our relationship with plastic. **CHECK:** https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf

Many newspapers articles also remind us that another dimension of the problem is the undeniable negative impact of plastic pollution for other living creatures. **CHECK** this: https://www.newsweek.com/heartbreaking-images-plastic-pollution-ocean-1459494

What is the size of the problem?

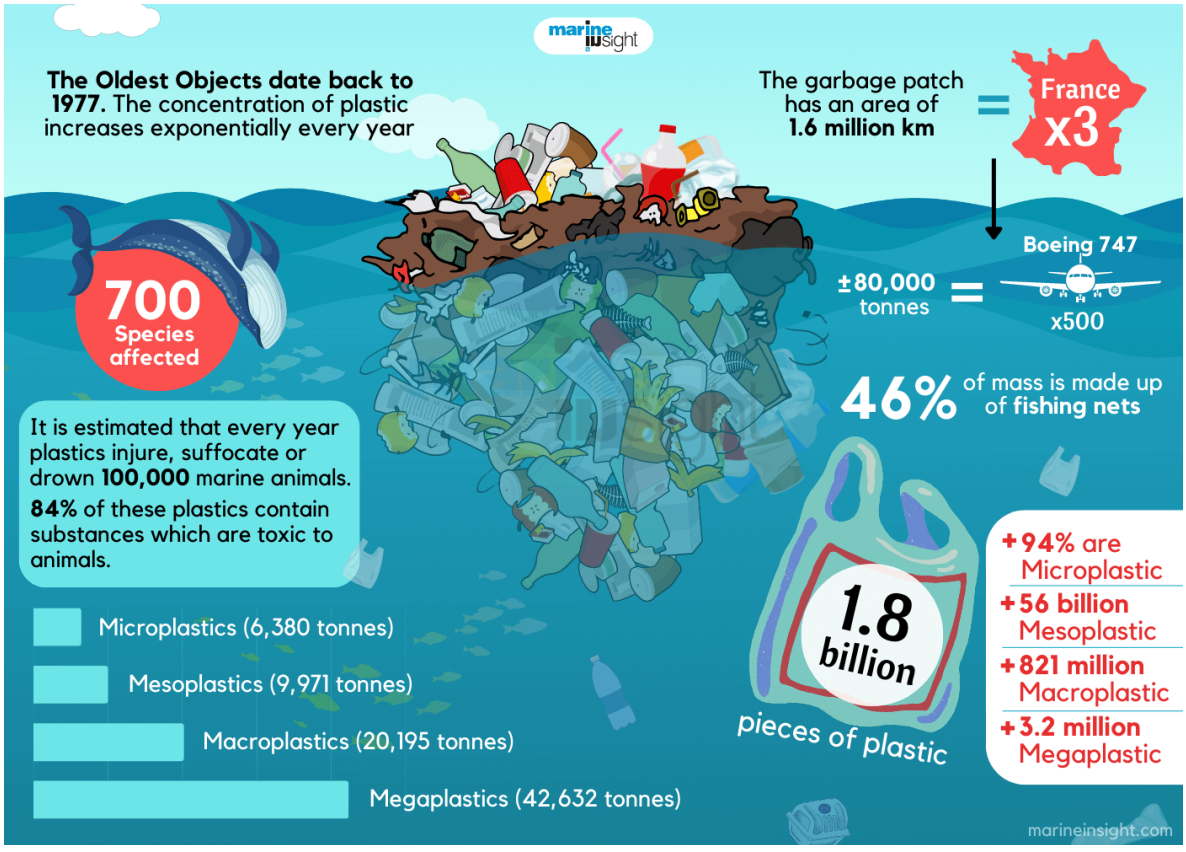
CHECK: http://www.oceansplasticleanup.com/8_Million_12_Tons_Plastic_Marine_Pollution_Per_Year.htm

The problem is huge. https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42225915
The problem is also getting "old."



CHECK the size of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch! 3 times the size of France and more than twice the size of Texas!

The oldest object…dates back to 1977!
You were not even born!



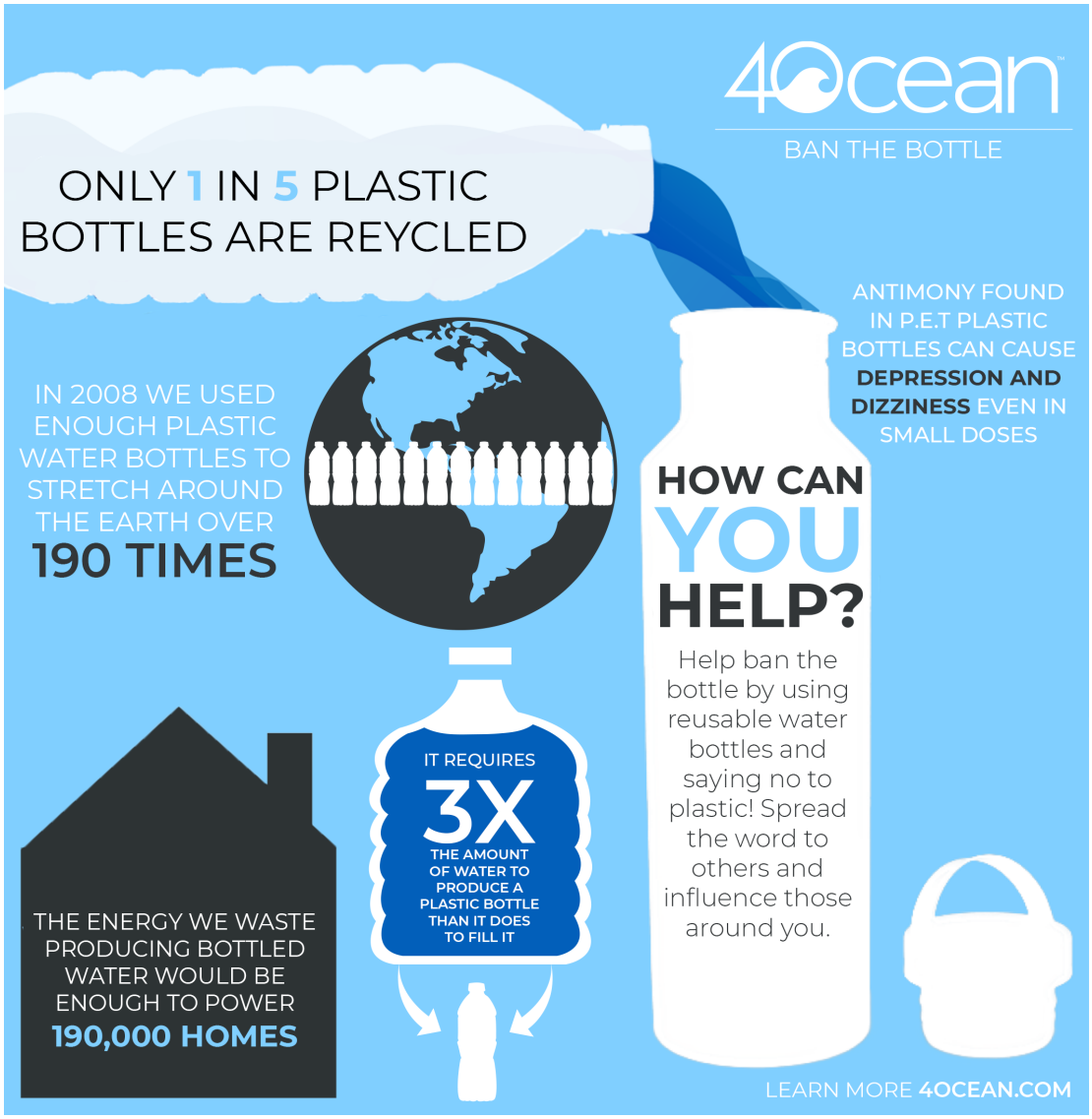
You can CHECK how the currents that make up the five major ocean gyres carry plastic around the world and concentrate it into areas of floating trash commonly referred to as "garbage patches." **CHECK** this link to understand the magnitude of garbage patches" https://theoceancleanup.com/great-pacific-garbage-patch/ and
USE the infographic provided by National Geographic in this link to understand how **the problem of plastic knows NO boundaries. CHECK** this:` https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/drowning-plastic

CHECK: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2022/07/01/unpacking-the-plastics-challenge#group-section-Policy-Solutions-GqmkrC2uRm

Source: https://www.allianzgi.com/en/insights/outlook-and-commentary/unwrapping-the-potential-of-sustainable-packaging

Is there anything that I can do?

In addition, to getting educated as a delegate about the international agreement that should be made and the tools that must accompany it to address the problem of plastic collectively and comprehensively, YOU can take concrete actions. **CHECK** the 4 ways in which YOU can make a great difference in this link: https://www.iisd.org/articles/insight/beating-plastic-pollution-if-you-cant-reuse-it-refuse-it
You can learn interesting things in these links too: https://p.widencdn.net/7ck6ia/Clean-Seas-education-pack-ENGLISH and
https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/



RECYCLING SHOULD BE THE LAST RESORT!

SOURCE: https://www.sdgplus.org/2020/03/26/reduce-reuse-and-recycle-the-three-r-solution-to-the-plastic-pollution/

What is your country doing to manage plastics effectively?

CHECK resources like these:

https://youtu.be/xmSCsIB5aIA

https://www.unep.org/resources/report/single-use-plastics-roadmap-sustainability
(**CHECK** what countries have banned Styrofoam or **READ** some case studies)

https://rethinkplasticalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SUP-Implemetation-Assessment-Report.pdf

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/canada-bans-single-use-plastics/

https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/plastic-bans-around-the-world/

https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chile-says-adios-single-use-plastic-with-new-law-2022-02-11/

https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/01/eu-takes-step-towards-banning-plastic-waste-exports

https://www.oecd.org/environment/ministerial/outcomes/Environment-Ministers-commitments-on-plastics.pdf

https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/turning-tide-plastic-pollution-through-regional-collaboration-southeast-asia

https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/legal-limits-single-use-plastics-and-microplastics-global-review-national

Future Actions

What should your committee discuss?

What's needed now is an effective international convention to direct efforts and take meaningful steps to reverse this toxic tide.

First, your committee should **REVISE** what UNEA has already done to advance the issue in its most recent meetings and get familiar with the history of the issue. **REVISIT** the timeline of the actions taken historically to tackle plastic pollution. **READ** this section and **CONDUCT** serious and independent research:

A Common Understanding to End Plastic Pollution

On 2 March 2022, the president of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) hit a gavel made of recycled plastics and set a historical precedent in environmental protection. When the gavel, produced by Nzambi Matee, a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Young Champion of the Earth (as you could be) hit the committee chair's desk, a new and monumental commitment to stop polluting the planet with plastic waste was born.

UNEP Young Champion of the Earth, Nzambi Matee, produced *a plastic gavel using recycled plastic bottle tops from the Dandora landfill in Nairobi*
Source: UNEP/Cyril Villemain

In a festive atmosphere in Nairobi, representatives from 175 out of 193 endorsed a resolution at the fifth United Environmental Assembly, known as **UNEA-5,** to negotiate an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution by a concrete deadline: the end of 2024. This important agreement, a resolution titled ***End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument.*** You can read the complete text in English here: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39812/OEWG_PP_1_INF_1_UNEA%20resolution.pdf

You can read the complete text in Spanish here: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40597/Plastic_pollution_UNEP_EA.5_Res.14_EPP_SP.pdf?sequence=11&isAllowed=y

In addition to the general analysis of the **1st Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-1)**, under the section Sequencing and Recommended Further Work, **CHECK** what countries' positions were: https://enb.iisd.org/plastic-pollution-marine-environment-negotiating-committee-inc1-summary

UNEA President Espen Barth Eide (right), UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen (center) and Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary of Environment of Kenya, applaud the passing of the resolution.
Source: UNEP/Cyril Villemain

This international agreement is another piece in the history of plastic pollution management. In the last 5-10 years, national, local, and regional governments and international organizations have adopted a growing number of action plans and instruments to address plastic pollution and its interlinkages with biodiversity, climate change, health, and social issues. **At the national level, many countries have moved to limit or to ban single-use plastics. There has also been a surge of interest in addressing the issue at the international (multilateral) level, including:**

- UN Environment's Global Partnership on Marine Litter (2012)
- UN Environment Assembly Resolutions on Marine Litter and Microplastics (2014)

- G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter (2015)
- G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter (2017)
- Ocean Plastics Charter (2018)
- Amendments to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal ("**Basel Convention**") (2019)
- G20 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision and Implementation Framework (2019)
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations ("**ASEAN**") Framework of Action on Marine Debris and the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris (2019)
- ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021–25)
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation ("**APEC**") Roadmap on Marine Debris (2019)
- Caribbean Community ("**CARICOM**") St. Johns Declaration to Address Plastic Pollution in Caribbean Sea (2019)
- Alliance of Small Island States ("**AOSIS**") Leaders Declaration (2021), and
- The Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution (2021)

Has your assigned country signed and ratified these documents?
Did your country lead the efforts to create these regulations?
Was your country a sponsor or a signatory?
CHECK your country's position!

From a legal point of view the problem is that although ubiquitous, plastics are currently NOT subject to any single international treaty regime. For instance, the 2018 amendments to the Basel Convention meant that, for the first time, transboundary shipments of plastic scrap and waste would be regulated, leading to new export and import requirements for many companies. **However, this did not address most plastic products.** In addition, the proliferation of local, national, and regional initiatives has given rise to often differing and incompatible rules, imposing greater costs on the regulated industry.

For these reasons, the resolution ***End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument*** is important. It creates a path to a new international **"Plastics Treaty"**—focused on plastics as the central issue rather than as an incident to other subject areas—increasingly came to be seen as a key step in regulating global plastic production, use, and disposal, and has been advocated by many businesses looking for harmonized regulatory standards, predictable national targets, and common metrics to make their short- and long-term operational and investment decisions. **REMEMBER** that the approach needs to consider several issues. **CHECK** this: https://www.no-burn.org/unea-plastics-treaty/ **TAKE NOTES** about the priorities that have been already identified. **CHECK** this: https://www.no-burn.org/mandate-for-global-plastics-treaty-a-historic-step-forward-in-the-fight-against-plastic-pollution/

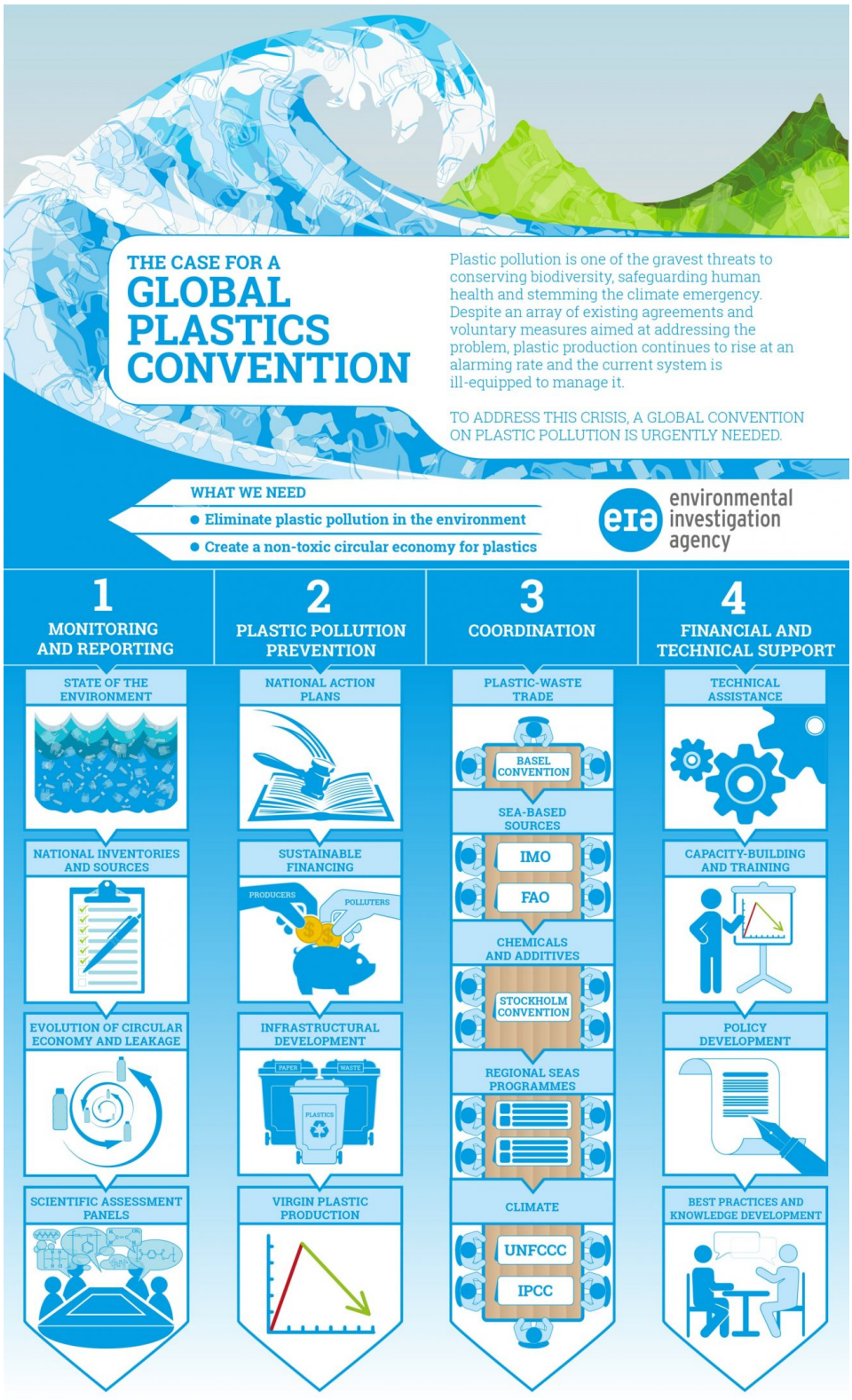
With this resolution in mind and the tools that have already set the scene for a fundamental change, your committee is also encouraged to **CONSIDER** issues like the ones identified by the

Environmental (EIA) and other partner organizations summarized in https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UNEA-publication-packet_plastics-treaty-1.pdf **TAKE INVENTORY** of the pitfalls to be avoided in your negotiations and the recommendations given by diverse individuals and groups. **CHECK** these: https://apps1.unep.org/resolutions/uploads/gaia.pdf https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/default/files/publication/2021/50049-A-New-Treaty-on-Plastic-Pollution-Perspectives-from-Asia.pdf

Finally, another way to think about a new treaty or convention on plastic pollution is to analyze, to categorize, and to outline concrete activities, steps, rules, and actions to address at least four fundamental pillars of a big picture plan that will be collectively executed. This resource can be very useful to think strategically about the steps and areas that must be included in an international tool to globally stop plastic pollution. **CHECK** these: https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/EIA-report-Convention-on-Plastic-Pollution-single-pages-for-print.pdf **In page 5 you will find:**

CONVENTION ON PLASTIC POLLUTION			
PILLAR 1 **MONITORING AND REPORTING**	**PILLAR 2** **PLASTIC POLLUTION PREVENTION**	**PILLAR 3** **COORDINATION**	**PILLAR 4** **TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**
Monitoring and reporting on the state of the environment and implementation	**Measures to reduce plastic pollution and promote a safe circular economy for plastics**	**Coordination with other international and regional instruments on relevant topics**	**Technical support to policymakers and financial support to developing countries**
Harmonisation • Definitions • Methodologies (monitoring, reporting) • Standardised formats **Environmental monitoring** • Baselines (seafloor, seawater, shoreline, biota, freshwater, soils) • Indicator species • Evolution of plastic pollution in marine and other environments **National data reporting** • National inventories and sources: - virgin plastic production and use - recycled plastic production and use - plastic-waste management - plastic-waste trade - land-based sources - sea-based sources - microplastics • Evolution of circular economy and leakage **Reporting on national action** • Submission of national action plans • Periodic review and update **Periodic comprehensive assessments** • Progress toward global objectives • Scientific and socio-economic reviews	**Global objectives** • Long-term elimination of discharges • Safe circular economy for plastics **National action plans** • Policies and legislation: - targets and market restrictions - waste prevention and management - recycling and secondary markets • Sustainable financing mechanisms • Infrastructure investments • International and regional commitments **Microplastics** • Intentionally added (e.g. microbeads, fertilisers) • Wear and tear (e.g. tyres, textiles) • Mismanagement (e.g. pellets) **Standardisation** • Labelling • Product design and additive restrictions • Certification schemes • Voluntary industry standards **Virgin plastic production and use** • Controls and quality standards **Remediation and legacy pollution** • Protocols and guidelines	**Sea-based sources (including fishing gear)** • International Maritime Organization (IMO) • Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) **Plastic waste trade** • Basel Convention • Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and regional instruments **Chemicals and additives** • Stockholm Convention • Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemical Management (SAICM) **Biodiversity** • Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) • Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) • International Whaling Commission (IWC) **Climate change** • United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) • Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) **Agriculture** • Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) **Cross-regional knowledge exchange** • Regional seas conventions and programmes • Regional fisheries management organisations	**Scientific Assessment Panel** • Periodic comprehensive assessments • Ad hoc reports **Socio-Economic Assessment Panel** • Periodic comprehensive assessments • Ad hoc reports **Implementing and bilateral agencies** • Technical assistance: - capacity-building and training - policy development - monitoring and reporting • Best practices and knowledge exchanges **Financial resources and mechanism** • Enabling activities: - capacity-building and training - policy development - monitoring and reporting - institutional strengthening - Pilot and demonstration projects • Incremental costs **Implementation and compliance mechanism** • Implementation guidance • Assistance for countries in non-compliance

If you need to read specifically about the way to monitor, to finance or to focus on specific areas (fishing gear, virgin plastic production), this link can be a great resource. **CHECK:** https://reports.eia-international.org/a-new-global-treaty/essential-elements/



Source: https://reports.eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/08/eia-Infographic-Convention-on-Plastic-Pollution-scaled.jpg

Conclusion

The resolution ***End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument*** came amid a mounting plastic crisis that experts say threatens the environment, human health, and the economy. Research shows that humanity produces around 460 million metric tonnes of plastic a year, and without urgent action, this will triple by 2060. **CHECK:** https://www.oecd.org/environment/global-plastic-waste-set-to-almost-triple-by-2060.htm Furthermore, according to one UNEP study, over 14 million metric tonnes of plastic enters and damages aquatic ecosystems annually, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with plastics are expected to account for 15 per cent of the total emissions allowable by 2050 if humanity is to limit global warming to 1.5°C. **CHECK**: https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution

In summary, as Jyoti Mathur-Filip, Executive Secretary of the INC Secretariat on Plastic Pollution" has put it **"the science is clear: we need rapid, ambitious and meaningful global action to curb plastic pollution."** Working collaboratively with your fellow delegates to pass resolutions to create a legally binding tool to tackle the plastic crisis, you can lay the groundwork needed to implement a life-cycle approach to plastic pollution, which would significantly contribute to ending the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste. **CHECK:** https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/01/24/oceans-more-plastic-than-fish/79267192/

The collaborative work of good delegates can help the world to be, like UNEP has phrased it, in **a good place to move FROM POLLUTION TO SOLUTION. CHECK** this: https://www.unep.org/interactive/pollution-to-solution/

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Climate action

Challenges

ANTHROPOGENIC GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by **ECONOMIC AND POPULATION GROWTH**, and are now higher than ever.

THE WORLD IS WARMING at an alarming rate, damaging our ability to grow food

STORMS, FLOODS, HURRICANES AND DROUGHTS are intensifying, oceans are warming and becoming more acid, ice is disappearing and seas are rising.

Solutions

Inform and inspire people and institutions to **TAKE ACTIONS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE**

Innovate and adopt technological solutions to **MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE against climate change impacts

TOPIC 2: CUTTING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND ADDRESSING INEQUALITY TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Meet the people in the pictures below. The first is Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the second is Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General. Their messages about the urgency of addressing climate change leave no room for doubts. With an assertive, Inger Andersen recently stated **"I am not going to waste your time talking about the impacts of climate change** as the Emission Gap Report 2022 was launched. **CHECK** the **KEY FINDINGS** of the report in this link: https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022 Inger Andersen went further and concluded that **"we all know them (the impacts). We all feel them. We all know they are going to get worse. And still, as UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2022 shows, we still, STILL, aren't doing anywhere near enough to cut greenhouse gas emissions"**.

Andersen is not alone in her assessment. Antonio Guterres was harsher than Inger Andersen when he affirmed that **"we are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator"** as he addressed the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm-el Sheik, in Egypt, and he demanded more concrete actions from the international community to honor previous climate pledges to deliver greater greenhouse emissions cuts.

CHECK some basic scientific facts about the climate crisis connected to greenhouse emissions: https://www.unep.org/facts-about-climate-emergency

The severity in these UN officials echoes the concerns raised by the key findings reported in recent documents. The Gap report, referred to by Inger Andersen, documents that, collectively, the limited number of updated pledges shave less than 1 per cent off projected greenhouse gas emissions in 2030. This is completely insufficient. We need to cut 45 per cent off emissions by 2030, over and above what current policies will deliver, to get on track to limiting global warming to 1.5°C. For 2°C, the challenge is smaller but still significant: 30 per cent by 2030.

You are probably wondering where this leaves us. Well, it leaves us heading for a 2.4°C to 2.6°C increase in temperatures by 2100, depending on whether we analyze conditional or unconditional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). **CHECK** https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/cop27-climate-jargon-explained/ to understand what NDCs are and to learn other important terms (Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol, and loss and damage). Adding in net-zero commitments could bring us down to 1.8. But this scenario isn't credible, particularly when we consider that current policies leave us heading for a 2.8°C temperature rise and that new pledges are so highly insufficient.

The science from UNEP's Emissions Gap Report and indeed science presented by the UNFCCC and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) earlier is resounding: we are sliding from climate crisis to climate disaster.

This report sends us a very clear message. **Our problem is that if we are serious about climate change, we need to kick start a system-wide transformation, now.** We need a root-and-branch redesign of the electricity sector, of the transport sector, of the building sector and of food systems. And we need to reform financial systems so that they can bankroll the transformations we cannot escape.

Source: https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/07/13/these-5-countries-alone-inflicted-nearly-6-trillion-in-climate-damage-on-the-rest-of-the-w

Some people think this can't be done over the next seven years. But we can't just throw up our hands and say we failed before we have even really tried. We must try, because every fraction of a degree matters: to vulnerable communities, to those that are yet to be connected to the electricity grid, to species and ecosystems, and to every one of us. **Even if we don't get everything in place by 2030, we will be setting up the foundation for a carbon-neutral future: one that will allow us to bring down temperature overshoots and deliver other benefits, like green jobs, universal energy access and clean air.**

The main role of your committee is to consider multiple solutions to address climate change. CHECK the https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-fast-facts to get some facts and to explore choices.

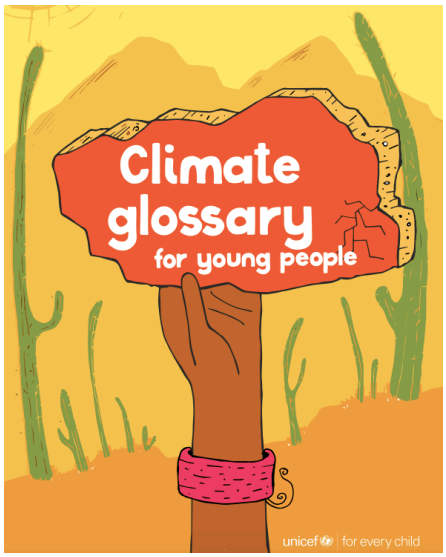
Why are these UN representatives outraged? What are these greenhouse gases? Why are these gases problematic?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a simple yet solid definition of greenhouse gases. As indicated in the agency's website **"Greenhouse gases trap heat and make the planet warmer."** In other words, greenhouse gases wrap the planet, and they trap the sun's heat and rising temperatures. This phenomenon is known as global warming. The **EPA also highlights that "human activities are responsible for almost all of the increase in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the last 150 years**. The largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in the United States is from burning fossil fuels for electricity, heat, and transportation. **CHECK** these resources https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/fastfacts-what-is-climate-change.pdf and https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/greenhouse-gases to quickly learn why greenhouse gas emissions have an extremely negative impact on the environment.

What is climate change?

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) definition, **climate change is a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which occurs in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. Climate change is affecting natural, social, and economic systems.**

Climate change decreases the availability of nutritious food and clean water, and destroys ecosystems and safe living environments. This leads to malnutrition, ill health, and migration, rendering youth particularly vulnerable. The impacts of climate change include, melting glaciers, sea level rise and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, cyclones, or heavy rainfalls.



What are other key terms should I know to negotiate global actions to tackle climate change?

CHECK
https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/19321/file/climate-glossary-for-young-people.pdf to access a complete glossary to be prepared to set goals to advance the work of your committee!

What is the problem? What does it mean that "we need to adapt" in face of climate change? What resources are needed to adapt to changing climate conditions? Who will provide these resources? What does adaption have to do with sustainable development?

Now that you have increased your vocabulary with the glossary, **WATCH** this video documentary **"Adapting to a changing climate"** at https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/resources/adaptation-committee-adaptation-forum-video-documentary-adapting-to-a-changing-climate

Who does provide science-based tools to address climate change?

LEARN about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. **CHECK** this: https://www.ipcc.ch/about/

What is another problem in addressing climate change?

When dealing with climate change in the global stages, part of the problem is that small countries do not get to participate equally in the international conversations. This reality is even harsher because most of the small states are often the most affected by environmental threats and their communities are the most vulnerable to risks. Although they endure great challenges, these small nations receive very limited assistance to deal with environmental risks (cyclones, floods, tsunamis). The inequal treatment is also reflected on the reluctance of some countries to adhere to the principles of the common but **differentiated responsibilities (CBDRs),** which according to the Kyoto Protocol, sets out the principle that

developed countries, which have historically generated the most emissions, should be the leaders in the fight to control climate change.

Moreover, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) includes the term "loss and damage" to refer to the harms caused by man-made climate change. Nonetheless, the appropriate response to this issue has been disputed since the Convention was adopted.

Establishing liability and compensation for loss and damage has been a long-standing goal for vulnerable and developing countries in the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the Least Developed Countries Group in negotiations. However, developed countries have for years resisted calls to have a proper discussion of the issue.

"Six years after the Paris Agreement, which has its own article on loss and damage, small countries still have to fight to have an agenda item on [this] at COP," said a representative of an NGO Climate International during a press conference.

The other big theme of the day: adaptation, also has a finance issue involved as you might have heard when you watched a video previously. Leaders from Small Islands Developing States made clear that last's week commitments on forests, agriculture, private finance, and other matters are still not enough.

Another problem has to do with the countries that are the main emitters of greenhouse gases whether per capita (per citizen or individual or as a whole. **DO RESEARCH** after checking sources like this: https://www.climatewatchdata.org

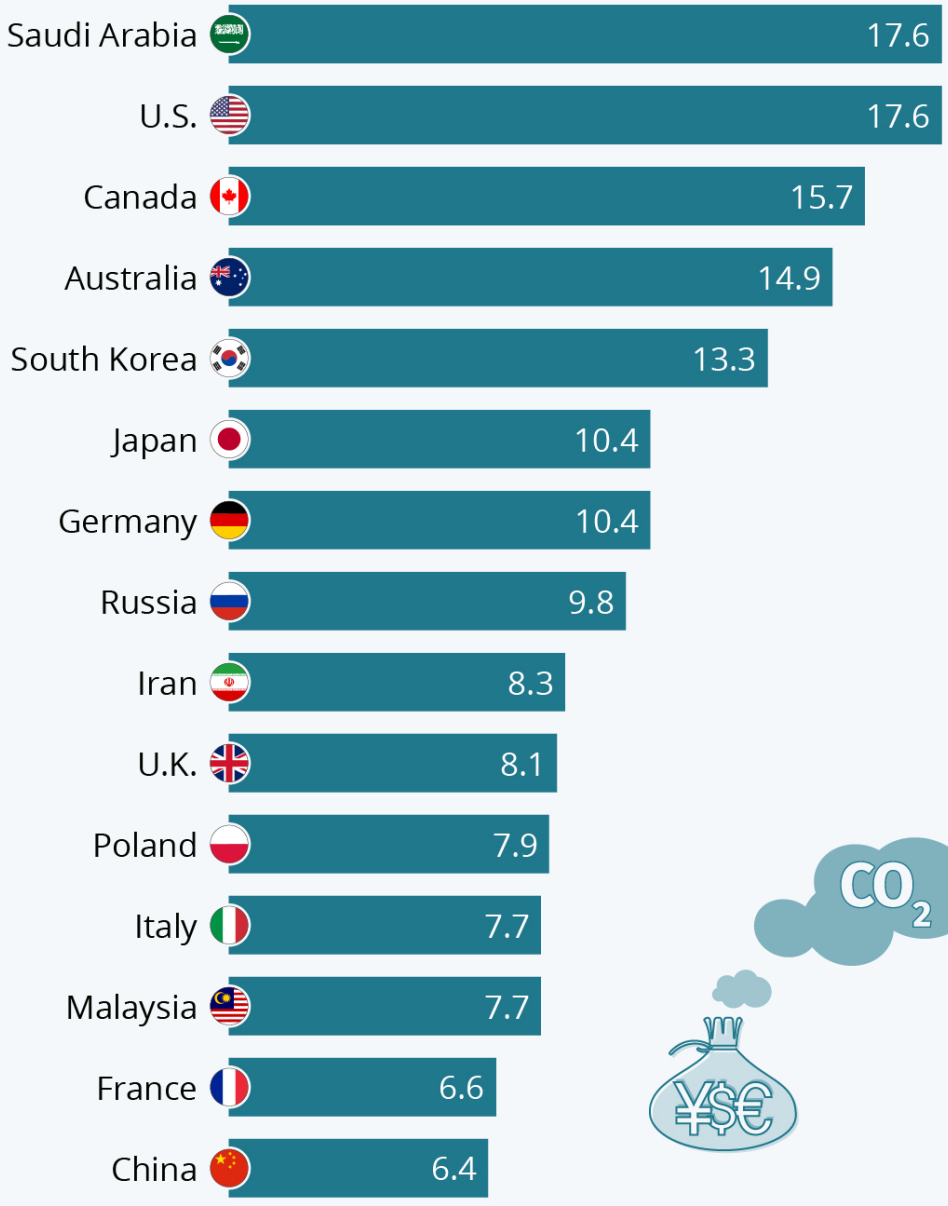
How do countries measure greenhouse gas emissions?

WATCH https://youtu.be/ciRTA5jevko

.

Wealthy Nations Lead Per-Capita Emissions

Countries with highest per-capita emissions, in metric tons CO_2

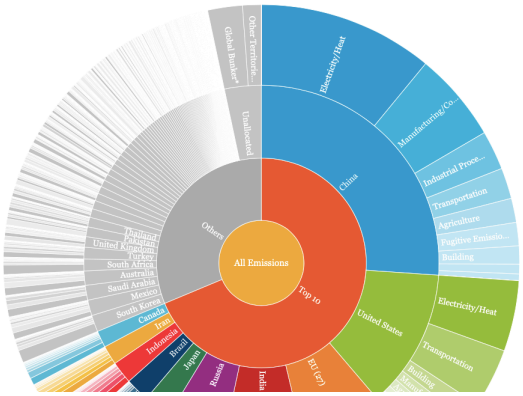


Source: World Bank

LISTEN to the voices of small islands as you want this video to understand:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2uPAHJbkMU

CHECK the interactive tool provided in this link: https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters



Did you know that young people like you have offered their ideas to solve the climate crisis?

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/11/how-to-address-the-climate-crisis-5-young-people-share-their-solutions/

The impact of climate change is felt more intensely as time passes. Storms, hurricanes are more intense, and decisions need to be made. Do communities need to be relocated? Do affected residents need assistance to get access to housing, education, food, health services when displaced by intensifying natural disasters? To rebuild their communities? **WATCH** the video Rebuild or Leave "Paradise": Climate Change Dilemma Facing a Nicaraguan Coastal Town to understand how **"climate affects everyone but it doesn't hit us all the same":** https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/04/learning/film-club-rebuild-or-leave-paradise-climate-change-dilemma-facing-a-nicaraguan-coastal-town.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article

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

CHECK the facts and figures found in this at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/

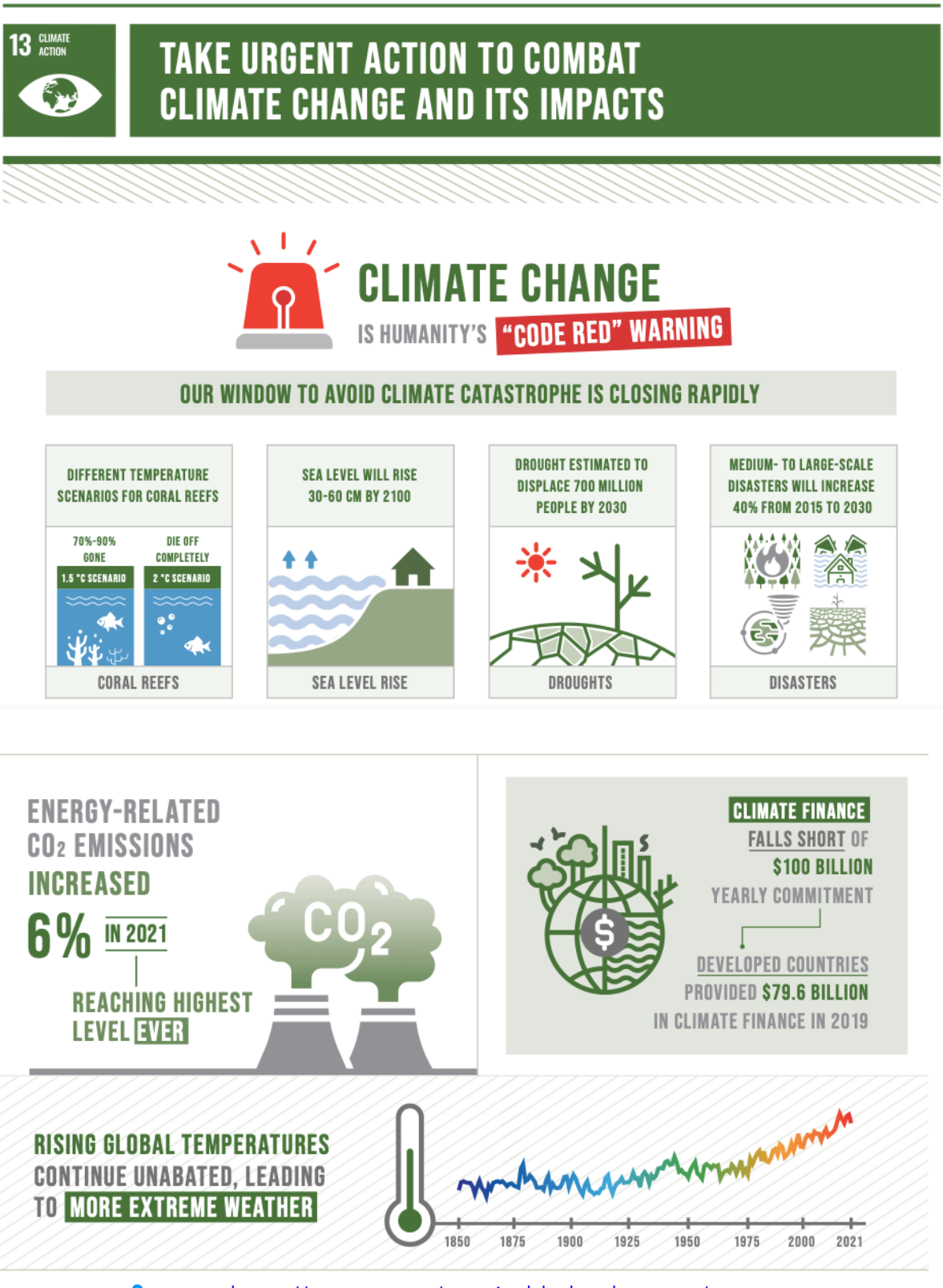
The global temperature has already risen 1.1°C above the pre-industrial level, with glaciers melting and the sea level rising. Impacts of climate change also includes flooding and drought, displacing millions of people, sinking them into poverty and hunger, denying them access to basic services, such as health and education, expanding inequalities, stifling economic growth and even causing conflict. By 2030, an estimated 700 million people will be at risk of displacement by drought alone.

Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its devastating impacts is therefore an imperative to save lives and livelihood, and key to making the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals – the blueprint for a better future – a reality.

In 2020, concentrations of global greenhouse gases reached new highs, and real-time data point to continued increases. As these concentrations rise, so does the Earth's temperature. In 2021, the global mean temperature was about 1.1°C above the pre-industrial level (from 1850 to 1900). The years from 2015 to 2021 were the seven warmest on record.

To limit warming to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as set out in the Paris Agreement, global greenhouse gas emissions will need to peak before 2025. Then they must decline by 43 per cent by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. Countries are articulating climate action plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts through nationally determined contributions. However, current national commitments are not sufficient to meet the 1.5°C target.

In 2021, the global mean temperature was about 1.1°C above the pre-industrial level (from 1850 to 1900). **The years from 2015 to 2021 were the seven warmest on record.**



Source: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Goal-13-infographic.pdf

Future Actions

What should you be discussing?

Your committee should consider the following questions in the discussion of **TOPIC 2:**

- What concrete actions can be taken to address climate change and to meet the goals of curbing greenhouse gas emissions and to fill the gaps by 2030?
- What are the necessary financial commitments to distribute equally the costs of addressing climate change and to implement strategies so countries can **ADAPT** to it and can also mitigate its effects?
- What actions are needed to encourage a better and more equal dialogue between small nations and big states to address climate change challenges together?
- How can the responsibilities be distributed more fairly to tackle climate change and to embrace the Sustainable Development Goals agenda to combat it?