



New York City, NY, USA
2–6 April (Conf. A) / 10–14 April (Conf. B) 2023
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General Assembly Third Committee Background Guide 2023

Written by Johanna Barton, Melissa Salgado, Madison Lindsey Weimer,
and Theodore Christopher Crespo Alberto



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Dear Delegates,

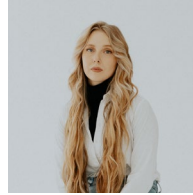
Welcome to the 2023 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly Third Committee (GA3). The topics under discussion are:

1. Healthy Ageing and Age-Friendly Sustainable Development
2. Safeguarding Human Rights of Persons Displaced by Climate Change

Members of our dais this year include:



Johanna Barton, Director, holds a Bachelor of Arts in European Studies from the University of Magdeburg and a Master of Science in Public Sector Innovation and eGovernance from the University of Leuven.



Lindsey Velde, Director, is a graduate student with a background in statistics, marketing, and international relations. She is pursuing her M.S in Applied Statistics for Social Science Research at New York University and works in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations.



Madison Weimer, Assistant Director, graduated from Austin College in Texas works in DC as a Congressional staffer. She loves to learn about new cultures and is very ambitious in her career growth and exploration.



Theodore Alberto, Assistant Director, is a BA Major in Psychology and Minor in European Studies graduate from De La Salle University-Manila in the Philippines. With Model UN and corporate internship experience, he hopes to further develop his career both professionally and academically.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on 1 March 2023 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the NMUN•NY [Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact the General Assembly Department, Dr. Vincent Carrier (Conference A) and Chase Mitchell (Conference B), at usg.ga@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Johanna Barton, Director
Madison Weimer, Assistant Director
Conference A

Lindsey Velde, Director
Theodore Alberto, Assistant Director
Conference B

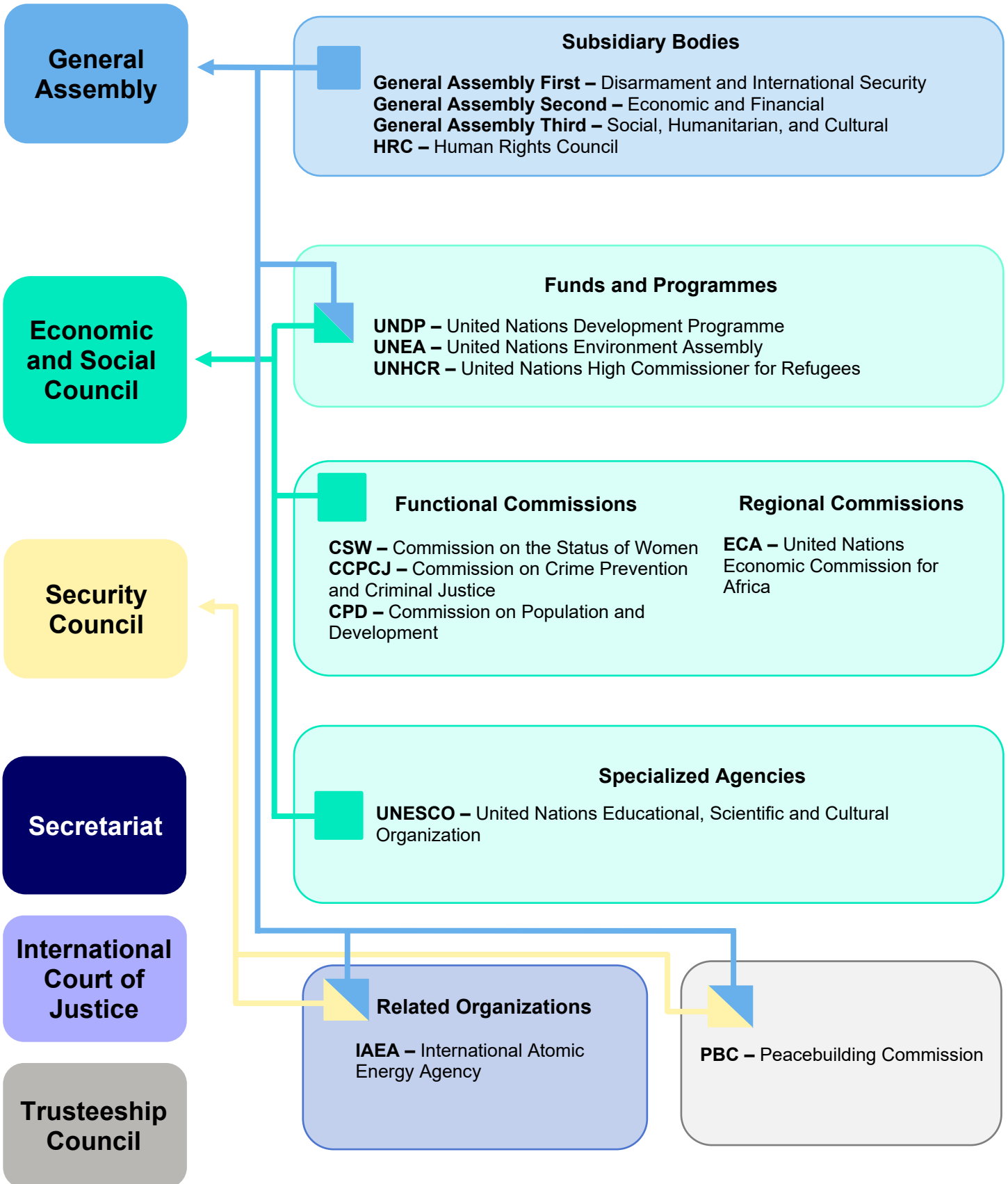


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body in the United Nations (UN) system.¹ With its universal membership, the General Assembly makes policy recommendations to actors at all levels, including governments, regional organizations, and other UN bodies.² Its work is spread across its six Main Committees, each of which discusses topics within a thematic area, adopting resolutions that are then considered by the broader General Assembly Plenary.³

The General Assembly Third Committee is mandated to discuss all matters related to social, humanitarian, and cultural affairs, including human rights issues.⁴ This involves a wide variety of agenda items, including: the advancement of women; the protection of children; the treatment of refugees through the elimination of racism and discrimination; the promotion of fundamental freedoms and the right to self-determination; indigenous issues; and a range of social matters such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.⁵

Mandate, Function and Powers

The first article of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established that one of the purposes of the UN is the achievement of international cooperation in the promotion of human rights.⁶ Its fourth chapter established the composition and capabilities of the General Assembly.⁷ The Third Committee's work is also heavily influenced by the *International Bill of Human Rights*, an overarching framework consisting of three fundamental human rights documents, namely the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the 1966 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.⁸

The Third Committee adopts resolutions, the majority of which are adopted by consensus, meaning no vote is taken and that no Member States have objections to the content.⁹ In line with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the mandate of the Third Committee can be summarized as:

- The General Assembly **will generally**: make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council, other UN bodies and organs, UN specialized agencies, and other international actors; initiate studies and advance efforts to promote international cooperation; and consider or request reports from other UN bodies and specialized agencies.¹⁰
- The General Assembly **will not generally**: dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends, allowing Member States and other bodies to determine and implement operational details; create new bodies, except in those rare instances where ubiquitous international demand requires the consolidation of existing

¹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Main Bodies*. n.d.

² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 1, 52.

³ United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *UN General Assembly Documentation*. n.d.

⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Third Committee*. n.d.

⁵ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 73.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*. 1966; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

⁹ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 37, 52.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 36.

bodies and/or a concept and mandate have been fully developed, typically through years of negotiations; make recommendations on situations under consideration by the Security Council.¹¹

The General Assembly may also directly establish UN observance days, create expert groups or commissions, formulate mechanisms for treaty negotiation, or refer an issue to the International Court of Justice.¹²

The Third Committee tends to focus on high-level policy recommendations, calling for meetings or conferences on specific issues, and the initiation of studies, often relying on bodies with specific expertise.¹³ Additionally, the Third Committee examines the reports of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, which are independent human rights experts mandated to report and advise from a thematic or country-specific perspective.¹⁴

Governance, Funding, and Structure

The General Assembly is comprised of all 193 Member States, with observer status being granted to intergovernmental organizations and states without full membership.¹⁵ Each Member State receives a single, equal vote; observers may not vote on substantive items.¹⁶ The Third Committee adopt resolutions by simple majority, with approximately two thirds of its resolutions adopted by consensus and without a recorded vote.¹⁷ Its resolutions are passed on to the General Assembly Plenary in an annual report.¹⁸ The Third Committee's procedures are managed by a secretariat and elected bureau.¹⁹ The UN Secretariat also assists General Assembly committees by delivering substantive and logistical support.²⁰ All General Assembly meetings and events are funded through the United Nations regular budget.²¹

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- ¹¹ United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Are UN resolutions binding?* n.d.; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.* n.d.; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council.* n.d.; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations.* 1945.
- ¹² UNFOLD ZERO. *UN Bodies.* n.d.
- ¹³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Functions and Powers of the General Assembly.* n.d.
- ¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.* 2022.
- ¹⁵ International Service for Human Rights. *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs.* 2017. p. 7.
- ¹⁶ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly.* 2017. p. 13.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.; International Service for Human Rights. *Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs.* 2017. p. 30.
- ¹⁸ International Service for Human Rights. *Third Committee of the United General Assembly: A Practical Guide for NGOs.* 2017. pp. 37-38, 62, 68.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. p. 12.
- ²⁰ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly.* 2017.
- ²¹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2022-23.* 2022. p. 408.

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New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2022-23*. 2022. Retrieved 15 October 2022 from: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Peace-Rights-and-Security/Our-work-with-the-UN/UN-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>

The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have been updating a valuable handbook of information regarding the structure, governance, financing, and other details of the different entities of the United Nations for several decades. The guide provides a comprehensive overview of the UN's principal organs, its budget, and subsidiary bodies. Because the United Nations General Assembly provides policy recommendations for a wide array of UN organizations, delegates will benefit from reading this handbook to gain a better understanding of the role of each.

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. Retrieved 9 September 2022 from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA_Final.pdf

The Permanent Mission to the United Nations of Switzerland regularly publishes this handbook as introductory guidance material for the General Assembly. The handbook is an ideal starting point to understand the General Assembly, its processes, and organizational structure. It gives succinct summaries and provides context to better understand the functioning of the General Assembly and its committees. Furthermore, delegates should consult this source to not only better understand the General Assembly in its entirety but also to gain more information on the existing rules of procedure, structure of resolutions, and workflow to help familiarize themselves with the formal structures of the body's work.

United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Retrieved 10 September 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

The Charter of the United Nations is the document that created the organization and laid the framework for its main organs, including the General Assembly. It is foundational in outlining the structures and objectives of the United Nations. Delegates may want to read the entire document to gain a general understanding of the foundational mechanics of the United Nations, but should certainly read the preamble, which established the justification for the organization's creation, and Chapter IV, which established the mandate of the General Assembly.

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United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966. Retrieved 9 September 2022 from: [http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200\(XXI\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200(XXI))

United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*. n.d. Retrieved 10 September 2022 from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>

United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. n.d. Retrieved 10 September 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/>

1. Healthy Ageing and Age-Friendly Sustainable Development

Introduction

The proportion and size of the world's population classified as old is growing at a quicker rate than ever before.²² This demographic shift will affect our health and social service systems, the economy, and our physical and social environment.²³ There are currently over 1 billion people aged 60 or older, the majority of whom live in low- and middle-income states.²⁴

Leaving no one behind is the central goal of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁵ Addressing and supporting an ageing population is critical to achieving many of the goals of the SDGs, including poverty eradication, good health, gender equality, and reduced inequalities.²⁶ To achieve truly transformative, inclusive, and sustainable development outcomes, older people must be recognized as active agents of societal development.²⁷ The World Health Organization (WHO) defines healthy ageing as the ability to develop and maintain functional ability, referring to people's ability to meet their basic needs, learn, grow, and make decisions, move around, form and maintain relationships, and contribute to society.²⁸ In order to be an active part of society, it is important that older people develop and are able to maintain their functional ability into older age.²⁹

Despite the efforts of the international system, millions of older people face human rights breaches, including age-based prejudice, exclusion from social and political life, mistreatment in healthcare and retirement settings, neglect in refugee camps, and obstacles to accessing quality healthcare and other basic services.³⁰ Many people of older age are likely to face age-based discrimination and elder abuse, thus decreasing their ability to function in society.³¹ This can stem from ageism, which is defined as how people think, feel, and act towards people based on their age.³² Moreover, older people can disproportionately be impacted by a lack of access to health resources in the means of long-term care, access to medicines, and treatment.³³

As the General Assembly's committee responsible for human rights, humanitarian affairs, and social issues, the Third Committee is mandated to deal with the issue of ageing.³⁴ The Third Committee has the responsibility to follow up on the progress made in the field of age-friendly sustainable development and, through its resolutions, give the international system the necessary mandates for future action.³⁵

²² World Health Organization. *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action*. 2022.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ World Health Organization. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030*. 2021.

²⁶ United Nations, Department of Social and Economic Affairs. *Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2017.

²⁷ World Health Organization. *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action*. 2022.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Human Rights Watch. *Rights of older people*. 2022.

³¹ World Health Organization. *Global Report on Ageism*. 2021.

³² Ibid.

³³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Growing Need for Long-Term Care: Assumptions and Realities*. 2016.

³⁴ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

³⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/RES/76/138)*. 2021.

International and Regional Framework

According to Article 1 of the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."³⁶ In 1966, the General Assembly adopted the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), a fundamental treaty that committed States parties to ensure the enjoyment of a number of rights, including the right to health, education, and an adequate standard of living.³⁷ Although the principles of the ICESCR are universally applicable, it makes no specific reference to the unique challenges faced by older people.³⁸

The 1991 *United Nations Principles for Older Persons* is generally accepted as the first major United Nations (UN) framework to specifically reference the principles and protections required for older people.³⁹ The *United Nations Principles for Older Persons* were a response to the lack of international legal frameworks designed to address specific protection gaps for older people to exercise their human rights.⁴⁰ In order to close this gap, amongst others, these principles include the right to access care and the ability to live in dignity.⁴¹ Following the adoption of these principles, some major international frameworks were complemented with specific references to the economic, social and cultural rights of older persons.⁴² For example, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted a "General Comment" amending the ICESCR accordingly in 1995.⁴³

Before the adoption of the SDGs, the *United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (MIPAA) (2002) and its political declaration, adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, was the key international document guiding the world on how to approach the challenge of creating a society for all ages.⁴⁴ The MIPAA was the first occasion when governments agreed to connect ageing issues to other frameworks for social and economic growth and human rights.⁴⁵ It focuses on development and older persons, promotion of health and well-being, and the creation of enabling and supportive environments, whilst also calling for governments to involve senior citizens in the process of developing policies.⁴⁶ While the MIPAA has the support of 159 Member States, it is not legally binding and its implementation is voluntary.⁴⁷

Today, the SDGs ensure that older persons are considered as part of the UN's overarching sustainable development agenda.⁴⁸ Almost all SDGs have specific targets oriented towards the needs of older people.⁴⁹ For example, SDG 2 (zero hunger) focuses on reducing severe food insecurity, also distinguishing older people.⁵⁰ This is necessary, as older people may face increased vulnerability to food insecurity, and aid programmes remain limited for this population group.⁵¹ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) aims at reducing the proportion of the global population who reported personal discrimination or harassment on the basis of grounds of discrimination that are prohibited under international human rights

³⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Bill of Human Rights (A/RES/217 (III))*. 1948.

³⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *OHCHR and older persons*. 2022.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Principles for Older Persons (A/RES/46/91)*. 1991.

⁴² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *General Comment No. 6: The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons*. 1995.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Madrid Plan of Action and its Implementation*. 2022.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ AGE Platform Europe. *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA*. 2022.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ World Health Organization. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030*. 2021.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ World Health Organization. *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action*. 2022. p. 7.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 7.

law, including age.⁵² Often due to intersectional issues such as gender, ethnicity, or level of education, older people do not have equal access to services and support in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities.⁵³

On a regional level, several legal frameworks addressing the rights of older people exist.⁵⁴ For example, the European Union acknowledges and respects older people's rights to live independently and with dignity as well as their right to engage in social and cultural activities through Article 25 of the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* (2000).⁵⁵ The African Union recognizes the rights of older persons through the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons* (2016).⁵⁶

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Third Committee addresses the issue of ageing as it is within the scope of its mandate on human rights, humanitarian concerns, and social issues.⁵⁷ It is responsible for monitoring progress in the field of age-friendly sustainable development and providing the international system with a broad policy direction and necessary mandates for future action.⁵⁸ It does so by adopting a yearly resolution following up on the implementation of the MIPAA since 2005.⁵⁹ Amongst others, the General Assembly, in its most recent resolution on the topic, recognized the issue of ageism and emphasizes the need to take effective measures against it.⁶⁰ Through its resolution 76/138 (2021) "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing," the General Assembly also urged Member States to develop, implement, and evaluate policies and programmes that promote healthy and active ageing and the highest attainable standard of health and well-being for older people, as well as to integrate health care for older people into existing health systems as part of primary care.⁶¹

As there were numerous calls for increased efforts to promote older people's full enjoyment of all human rights, the 2011 General Assembly resolution 65/182 "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing" established an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on ageing to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons, as well as to classify the gaps in awareness, understanding, and education.⁶² The General Assembly mandated the OEWG with addressing gaps in the existing international framework and developing proposals for a legally binding instrument to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older people.⁶³ In 2020, the General Assembly initiated the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030.⁶⁴ The decade focuses on four action areas, including building age-friendly environments, fighting ageism, and enabling integrated and long-term care.⁶⁵ The decade is given structure by the *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action* (2020).⁶⁶ An online platform, the UN Decade for Healthy Ageing Knowledge Exchange Platform, is designed to connect stakeholders and promote the four action areas: leadership and capacity building, voice and engagement, connecting stakeholders, and strengthening research and data.⁶⁷ Its implementation is led by WHO, in collaboration with other

⁵² Ibid. p. 8.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 8.

⁵⁴ European Union. *Charter of Fundamental Rights*. 2000.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons*. 2016.

⁵⁷ AGE Platform Europe. *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA*. 2022.

⁵⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

⁵⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/RES/76/138)*. 2021.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/RES/65/182)*. 2011.

⁶³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *OHCHR and older persons*. 2022.

⁶⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) (A/RES/75/131)*. 2020.

⁶⁵ World Health Organization. *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action*. 2020.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

international partners, with their work coordinated through the Inter-Agency Group on Ageing.⁶⁸ The General Assembly also suggests the involvement of actors beyond the UN system, namely the involvement of international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia and the media.⁶⁹

The issue of healthy ageing is also addressed by regional actors such as the European and the African Union.⁷⁰ The European Commission provides financial support to civil society groups like the AGE Platform Europe that advocate for the right to fair treatment and combat age discrimination.⁷¹ The African Commission on Human and People's Rights has a working group focusing on rights of older persons and people with disabilities specifically.⁷²

The Rise in Ageism

WHO defines ageism as stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination towards people on the basis of their age.⁷³ Like many discriminatory practices, ageism can be institutional, interpersonal, or self-directed.⁷⁴ Ageism is correlated with an increase in abuse towards older persons which brings further harm towards society.⁷⁵ The UN estimate that every one in six people above the age of 60 experiences a form of abuse in a community setting annually.⁷⁶ Elder abuse is seen within interpersonal ageism, but also in the legal, health, and human rights sectors of society, thus entrenching the harm it does to a society as a whole.⁷⁷ UN Secretary General, António Guterres, has spoken out condemning ageism in all forms and called upon Member States to address its resultant human rights violations.⁷⁸

According to the *Global Report on Ageism (2021)*, the rise in ageism is problematic for society as a whole because it emphasizes the negative image of older persons, resulting in a decrease in their daily functions and abilities to enjoy life.⁷⁹ The Human Rights Council stated that, "ageism is based on the assumption that older persons are somehow lacking as a result of their age."⁸⁰ WHO has created the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism, an educational and awareness campaign designed to optimize policy responses to ageism and generate evidence to better understand its prevalence.⁸¹ It has identified obstacles towards combatting ageism, such as the limited data on the severity of abuse towards elderly people.⁸² This further decreases awareness and understanding for the impairment of living a sustainable life.⁸³ Because of the shortage of data collection, there are more obstacles in creating effective solutions and a lack of implementation in understanding elder abuse.⁸⁴

⁶⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) (A/RES/75/131)*. 2020.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ AGE Platform Europe. *The voice of older persons at EU level*. 2022.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. *Working Group on Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities*. 2022.

⁷³ World Health Organization. *Global Report on Ageism*. 2021.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *2022: Combatting Elder Abuse*. 2022.

⁷⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/127)*. 2009.

⁷⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Older Persons*. 2016.

⁷⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/127)*. 2009.

⁸⁰ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Claudia Mahler (A/HRC/48/53)*. 2021.

⁸¹ World Health Organization. *Global Report on Ageism*. 2021. p. 11.

⁸² World Health Organization. *Tackling Abuse of Older People: Five Priorities for the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*. 2022.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

The Need for Older Persons to Have Long-Term Care Solutions

People above the age of 60 are far more likely to have ongoing health needs that must receive attention, daily assistance, medical treatments, and more doctors' appointments than younger people.⁸⁵ According to WHO, long-term care is pivotal for older persons to maintain their functional ability, enjoy basic human rights, and to live with dignity.⁸⁶ As generations get older, there is an average decrease in their physical and mental capabilities, thus preventing older persons from taking care of themselves or participating independently in daily society.⁸⁷ The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) expresses that long-term care covers a vast range of services from in-home help with aid in daily functions, day care centres, and providing aid and support within an institutional setting.⁸⁸

Older persons are vulnerable towards neglect and isolation, as those living in care-taking homes or long-term care programs can face isolation, along with minimal access and sometimes limited familial support.⁸⁹ Therefore, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has a central focus on long-term care as a pressing human rights issue worldwide.⁹⁰ In fact, Human Rights Council resolution 42/12 "Human Rights of Older Persons" (2021) states that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered various long-term care facilities to lack necessary equipment for staff and residents, thus leading to insufficient medical attention and the decline of older persons' well-being.⁹¹ Furthermore, the UN Secretary-General proclaimed that the accessibility to quality long-term health care and intergenerational support is essential to create an inclusive and age-friendly society.⁹²

There are many challenges in the development of long-term care solutions, including insufficient global funding and fundamentally incorrect assumptions on the provision of government support.⁹³ UNDESA's *Growing Need for Long-Term Care Assumptions and Realities* (2016) report explains that the level to which Member States support the long-term care solutions are insufficient.⁹⁴ Moreover, 48% of older persons are not covered by a type of formal provision of services.⁹⁵

Conclusion

As the number of people in the world who are older than 60 is expected to more than double by 2050, there is a need for the international system to address the topic of healthy ageing and age-friendly sustainable development.⁹⁶ The General Assembly Third Committee provides the international community with its broad mandate for action in this area and regularly reviews progress towards its goals.⁹⁷ By establishing the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030, the General Assembly has given the international

⁸⁵ United Nations, Sustainable Development Group. *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons*. 2020.

⁸⁶ World Health Organization. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030*. 2021.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Growing Need for Long-Term Care: Assumptions and Realities*. 2016.

⁸⁹ United Nations, Sustainable Development Group. *Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons*. 2020.

⁹⁰ United Nations, Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Policy Brief No. 9: Long-Term Care for Older People*. 2017.

⁹¹ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Claudia Mahler (A/HRC/48/53)*. 2021.

⁹² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Older Persons*. 2022.

⁹³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Growing Need for Long-Term Care: Assumptions and Realities*. 2016.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ World Health Organization. *Decade of Healthy Ageing: Plan of Action*. 2022.

⁹⁷ Global Action on Aging. *General Assembly Sessions*. n.d.

community the mandate to address topics such as ageism towards older people and better access to health resources.⁹⁸

Further Research

Moving forward with their research, delegates should consider the following questions: How can the international community help contain the rise in ageism? How can it monitor elder abuse and age discrimination? How can Member States help address the lack of healthcare resources available to older persons? How can the inequalities amongst older persons decrease by 2030? How can the international community help monitor the lack of long-term care solutions for older people on a daily basis? How can Member States help increase awareness of the severity of inequalities that older people face?

Annotated Bibliography

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This policy brief explains the concept of age-friendly sustainable development by connecting older persons and the 2030 Agenda. Delegates should read this policy brief to understand the interlinkages between the challenges faced by older people and the UN system's overarching development agenda. The document also describes several key challenges around the topic and policy implications for the 2030 Agenda, such as ageism, abuse, and poverty.

United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Principles for Older Persons (A/RES/46/91)*. 1991. Retrieved 9 August 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/46/91>

Delegates should revise and review this General Assembly resolution it presents a formative attempt to close the legal gap around older people's human rights. These principles are independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity. Delegates should be familiar with the principles described in this document as they demonstrate the General Assembly's understanding of human rights of older people.

United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) (A/RES/75/131)*. 2020. Retrieved 20 June 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/131>

Delegates should read this resolution, adopted by the General Assembly in 2020, as it is the foundation of the current efforts of the international system on healthy ageing and age-friendly sustainable development. It provides delegates with a sound overview of the General Assembly's scope of involvement in the topic and its priorities and expectations with regard to healthy ageing. This resolution initiated the Decade of Healthy Ageing, which is a work program with policy options and strategies that governments can use to promote a healthier, more sustainable life for elderly people.

World Health Organization. *Global Report on Ageism*. 2021. Retrieved 18 June 2022 from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/340208/9789240016866-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

This World Health Organization report on ageism serves as a fundamental document to raise awareness and spread knowledge of how ageism affects older people and society as a whole. The report defines the different types of ageism, those being institutional, interpersonal, and self-directed ageism to fully understand the severity and lack of awareness of the topic. Delegates should review the different forms of ageism to find

⁹⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

more solutions, as well as the foundation of how ageism arises, the impact it has on the health of elderly people, and determinants of ageism.

World Health Organization. *Tackling Abuse of Older People: Five Priorities for the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*. 2022. Retrieved 18 June 2022 from:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240052550>

It is highly recommended to read the World Health Organization's report to help gain a better understanding of the fundamental priorities of the UN Decade on Healthy Ageing. This document outlines the foundational research and priorities towards creating solutions for the decrease in ageism, age discrimination, and abuse towards elderly people. These priorities consist of generating solutions towards ageism, limited data on the abuse towards elderly people, lack of data on costs of abuse of older people, lack of effective solutions, gaps in understanding the risks, lack of implementation towards scientific research, and the lack of funding.

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United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2017. Retrieved 9 August 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/news/2017/07/ageing-older-persons-and-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/>

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2. Safeguarding Human Rights of Persons Displaced by Climate Change

Introduction

As the effects of climate change, including increases in temperature, desertification, loss of biodiversity, rising sea levels, ocean warming, and glacial loss become more apparent, the habitability of certain parts of the world will be diminished.⁹⁹ Additionally, extreme weather events, including heavy rainfall, flooding, cyclones, and droughts have been observed as becoming more dangerous as the global climate has changed.¹⁰⁰ As a result, projections have estimated that by 2050 up to 216 million people could be displaced by climate change.¹⁰¹ As populations experience food and water shortages, disruptions to their livelihood, or are affected by disasters and extreme weather events, they are increasingly likely to be forced to move from their original home.¹⁰² Although there is no universal term for persons displaced specifically due to climate change, organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have recognized that climate change produces both internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees.¹⁰³ Generally, the term refugee refers to a person who has been displaced across international borders while an IDP is an individual displaced within a single country.¹⁰⁴

Displaced persons become increasingly vulnerable and may be more prone to human rights violations due to various intersecting characteristics, such as lack of socioeconomic opportunities, native/indigenous status, nationality, age, and the challenges of their specific geographic location.¹⁰⁵ Already vulnerable populations face the most risk, have the least ability to adapt to climate change, and when displaced are likely to not have access to necessary accommodations in order to realize their human rights.¹⁰⁶ Displaced people often lack access to basic services, including access to clean water and sanitation, public health, and necessities such as healthcare, food, and suitable shelter.¹⁰⁷ They can also become stateless or lack sufficient legal protection.¹⁰⁸ Member States who are more vulnerable to climate change are already struggling with displacement, hosting 40% of refugees and 70% of IDPs.¹⁰⁹ Small Island Developing States in particular are at risk of disappearing entirely as sea levels rise, which could displace whole populations and cause mass statelessness.¹¹⁰

International and Regional Framework

Article 13 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) states that every person has a right to move freely within and between countries without fear of persecution.¹¹¹ Building on the UDHR, the 1951 *Refugee Convention* and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* specified the rights of refugees, highlighting the concept of non-refoulement, which guarantees that a person must not

⁹⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*. 2022. p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*. 2022.

¹⁰¹ World Bank. *Acting on Internal Climate Migration*. 2021.

¹⁰² Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*. 2022. pp. 91-93.

¹⁰³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *About Internally Displaced Persons*. 2022; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate Change, Disasters & Displacement*. 2017. pp. 8-11.

¹⁰⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *IDP Definition*. 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The Impact of Climate Change on the Rights of People in Vulnerable Situations*. 2022; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/35/20)*. 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Internal Displacement in a Changing Climate*. 2021. pp. 79-80.

¹⁰⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The Impact of Climate Change on the Rights of People in Vulnerable Situations*. 2022; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*. 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees et al. *Climate Change, Displacement, and Human Rights*. 2022. p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate Change and Statelessness: An Overview*. 2009.

¹¹¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

be forced to return to their home if a threat to their lives persists.¹¹² The rights outlined in these documents extend to those who have been forcibly displaced by climate change to freely move without fear of being forced to return where it is no longer safe to live.¹¹³ The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998) connects these frameworks to ensure that those who have been internally displaced are not at risk of losing their basic human rights and seeks to ensure their access to assistance after displacement.¹¹⁴ Similarly, *The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (2016) builds on human rights frameworks and discusses the impact climate change has on displacement, including the rights and welfare of people fleeing from the detrimental effects of climate change and natural disasters.¹¹⁵ This declaration also highlights the United Nations' (UN) commitment to providing refugees and migrants access to proper necessities like shelter, food, water, sanitation, and healthcare.¹¹⁶

Efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, and potentially help those who are displaced, draw their norms from the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, at which *Agenda 21* and the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) were adopted.¹¹⁷ *Agenda 21* is a non-binding plan involving the voluntary cooperation of governments, the private sector, and the UN system to mitigate humanity's impact on the environment.¹¹⁸ The UNFCCC outlined the main goal of mitigating climate change, including by setting a limit on the greenhouse gasses that States parties emit.¹¹⁹ The framework was further operationalized by the *Kyoto Protocol* (1997), which called on States parties with higher levels of emissions to take on more responsibility to reduce emissions and further outlined measures to help countries adapt to climate change.¹²⁰ More recently, the *Paris Agreement* (2015) is a binding treaty that calls upon Member States to work together to create and establish policies on assessing how climate change impacts vulnerable ecosystems, people, and places.¹²¹ The *Paris Agreement* calls for international cooperation on technology, financing, and capacity building for mitigating the effects of climate change.¹²² Along with the *Paris Agreement*, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) addresses a wide range of global issues in the form of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including goals and targets related to climate change and its effects on the environment and people.¹²³ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) calls for the safe migration of people, while SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 4 (quality education) address the need to access food and education, especially for those in vulnerable situations.¹²⁴ SDG 13 (climate action) specifically addresses climate change and the actions needed to mitigate human impact on the climate.¹²⁵

¹¹² United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons. *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. 1951; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. 1967.

¹¹³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees et al. *Climate Change, Displacement, and Human Rights*. 2022.

¹¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *About Internally Displaced Persons*. 2022.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. 2016.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. 1992.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *Agenda 21*. 1992.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. 1992.

¹²⁰ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. 1997.

¹²¹ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Paris Agreement*. 2015.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹²⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*. 2022; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. 2022.

¹²⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*. 2022.

Although there is not a specific goal addressing persons displaced due to climate change, many of the goals seek to positively impact displaced people regardless of the cause.¹²⁶ Alongside the climate and development frameworks, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* (Sendai Framework) (2015) works to address disasters by building resilience and preparedness and is meant to augment the 2030 Agenda.¹²⁷ It notes that transboundary cooperation is required to sufficiently support displaced populations following disasters, and encourages Member States to regularly conduct disaster preparedness exercises to ensure rapid responses to displacement.¹²⁸

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Third Committee is the primary forum for the discussion of humanitarian affairs and human rights, regularly discussing matters relating to displacement, refugees, and the humanitarian impacts of climate change.¹²⁹ In 2018, the General Assembly adopted the *Global Compact on Refugees*, which focuses on helping refugees and the countries and communities they reside in.¹³⁰ The framework stresses the importance of meeting the needs of those who are displaced, creating contingency plans when necessary, and addresses responsibility sharing for providing aid for refugees.¹³¹ In addition to its major frameworks, the General Assembly regularly adopts resolutions calling for cooperation in addressing long-term threats to human rights, most recently the 2021 resolution 76/159, “Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights.”¹³² In the same session, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 76/172 “Protection of Migrants” (2021) and 76/205 on the “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind,” (2021) resolutions that reiterate the human rights of migrants and call for improved approaches on helping them, including those displaced due to disaster or climate change.¹³³

Outside of the General Assembly, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has produced reports such as *Human Rights, Climate Change, and Migration* (2022), which called upon Member States to ensure the safety and human rights of displaced persons due to climate change, reduce climate change risks, and reduce the risk of forced migration due to climate issues.¹³⁴ OHCHR also produces policy recommendations for Member States to protect those who are affected by climate displacement, such as encouraging humanitarian initiatives with sustainability energy and agriculture programs.¹³⁵

UNHCR is the UN’s primary body for supporting refugees, IDPs, and asylum seekers, and regularly provides operational support in situations of displacement.¹³⁶ It also drafts reports and overarching frameworks for the international community in responding to displacement, including the *Strategic Framework for Climate Action* (2022), a plan of action on addressing climate change as a whole, which includes climate displacement.¹³⁷ The *Strategic Framework for Climate Action* has three focus areas: UNHCR’s own environmental sustainability and footprint, their active operations, and law and policy.¹³⁸ UNHCR’s *Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025* (2022) focuses specifically on their active operations and work in climate-vulnerable countries and aims to

¹²⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Do you know all 17 SDGs? 2022*.

¹²⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 21.

¹²⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues (Third Committee)*. 2022.

¹³⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Global Compact on Refugees*. 2018.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² United Nations, General Assembly. *Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/RES/76/159)*. 2021.

¹³³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Protection of Migrants (A/RES/76/172)*. 2021.

¹³⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Human Rights, Climate Change and Migration*. 2022.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Who We Help*. 2022.

¹³⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Strategic Framework for Climate Action*. 2022.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

work with refugees and IDPs to create programs that will improve livelihoods, build sustainable energy programs, and work on prevention measures.¹³⁹

Under the UN Secretariat, the Platform on Disaster Displacement provide resources for the displaced and protection in a variety of formats, including legal protections.¹⁴⁰ It has both the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and UNHCR as standing invitees to serve on its steering group, which helps regional efforts in displacement.¹⁴¹ The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction provides support for global efforts in disaster risk reduction and in implementation of the Sendai Framework.¹⁴²

Outside of the UN system, non-governmental organizations play a role in helping persons displaced due to climate change.¹⁴³ One example is the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), a data center that works on analyzing and reporting on displacement, providing data that humanitarian groups and Member States can use to assist displaced people.¹⁴⁴ Other actors include regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), who in 2021 partnered with IOM, UNFCCC, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank to establish the African Climate Mobility Initiative.¹⁴⁵ The main goal of the initiative is to create solutions to help those displaced by climate change in the continent of Africa.¹⁴⁶ The AU has also created the *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy Action Plan (2022-2032)* (2022), an action plan wherein African states can build humanitarian initiatives such as green energy (solar, wind, green hydrogen etc.) and carbon mitigation.¹⁴⁷ This plan addresses the relationship between climate change, displacement, and conflict.¹⁴⁸

Climate Displacement of Vulnerable Populations

Climate change is a risk multiplier and exacerbates the vulnerabilities already faced by certain populations.¹⁴⁹ It is estimated that almost 1 billion children live in extremely high climate-risk countries.¹⁵⁰ When children are displaced it can have extreme negative impacts on their physical and mental health and can affect their long-term economic outlook.¹⁵¹ Displaced children are vulnerable to physical harm, exploitation, and a decrease in access to health resources and education.¹⁵² Access to education can be severely diminished due to the distance to schools, especially for those residing outside of urban areas, in previously uninhabited territory, or in camps for displaced people.¹⁵³ Some families struggle to enroll children in school because of administrative issues or lack of finances to pay school fees and, in some cases, children are prevented from attending school because of stigma or language problems.¹⁵⁴ Even when they are able to attend, schools in refugee-hosting regions may not have enough teachers to handle the inflow of refugee and internally displaced children, resulting in overcrowded classes.¹⁵⁵

¹³⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025*. 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Platform on Disaster Displacement. *What we do*. 2022.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Our Work*. 2022.

¹⁴³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *About Us*. 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ International Organization on Migration. *High Level Virtual Launch: The Africa Climate Mobility Initiative Shaping the Future of Mobility in Africa*. 2022.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ African Union. *African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032)*. 2022. pp. 14-15.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 14-15.

¹⁴⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The Impact of Climate Change on the Rights of People in Vulnerable Situations*. 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*. 2022. pp. 101, 105.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 105-106.

¹⁵² Ibid. pp. 105-106.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 99.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 99.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 99.

Due to their reliance on and intimate interaction with the environment and its resources, indigenous people are also heavily affected by climate displacement.¹⁵⁶ Existing challenges faced by indigenous people, such as economic and political exclusion, resource depletion, abuses of human rights, and discrimination, are often exacerbated by displacement.¹⁵⁷ For instance, due to increasing temperatures, dune expansion, and greater wind speeds there has been a negative impact on traditional livestock farming practices of indigenous peoples in Africa's Kalahari Desert, resulting in them being forced to live around state boreholes to have access to water.¹⁵⁸ Instead of maintaining their culture and lifestyle, they become dependent on their national governments for assistance to survive.¹⁵⁹ Some indigenous populations have sought to assist in adaptation to climate change, leveraging traditional knowledge systems.¹⁶⁰ Others have benefited from adaptation frameworks that have enabled the use of climate-smart agriculture such as cover cropping, nutrient management, agroforestry, and irrigation.¹⁶¹

Adapting to Climate Change to Minimize Displacement

Climate adaptation happens when initiatives taken by both individuals and Member States are directed towards increasing the adaptability of economies and communities to the effects of climate change that have already occurred or may already be in progress.¹⁶² Climate change has already had a detrimental effect on agriculture, with some crops becoming more difficult to grow in regions where the climate had previously been ideal.¹⁶³ The development of climate resilient crops and sustainable agriculture has begun to allow communities to have enough food where changes in local climate may otherwise have induced displacement.¹⁶⁴ Farmers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are one example of those who have changed their crop selection to respond to increased occurrence of droughts, such as switching from apples to peaches, the latter of which grows better in warmer climates.¹⁶⁵ When communities are displaced, access to agricultural inputs and education can allow displaced people to adapt to climate change, even when in an unfamiliar locale.¹⁶⁶

Where communities may be temporarily displaced due to disaster, the creation of semi-permanent or temporary housing and utilities can help ensure continued access to services.¹⁶⁷ In such situations, prior investments in human capital and local organizations can also prepare populations to respond quickly and appropriately, minimizing negative effects.¹⁶⁸ In some countries, community-based organizations have been created to assist displaced people alongside other governmental or non-governmental actors.¹⁶⁹ These organizations are made up of the local population, often with training and support from the national government, enabling utilization of local resources, and more localized decision-making.¹⁷⁰ For worst case scenarios, local displacement and evacuation plans can be drafted and distributed so that entire communities know what to do to avoid dangerous situations.¹⁷¹

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The effects of climate change on indigenous peoples*. 2007.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Indigenous Peoples Must be Central to Tackling the Climate Crisis*. 2021.

¹⁶¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The effects of climate change on indigenous peoples*. 2007.

¹⁶² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Climate Adaptation*. n.d.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Climate change displacement and local solutions in coastal communities in Sindh, Pakistan*. 2021. pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Climate Adaptation*. n.d.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Climate change displacement and local solutions in coastal communities in Sindh, Pakistan*. 2021. pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

Conclusion

Displaced persons are among the most vulnerable and at risk population groups.¹⁷² As climate change threatens to increase the incidence of displacement, the threat to human rights grows, in spite of current human rights accords, commitments, norms, and international standards.¹⁷³ Displaced people already regularly have limited access to programs and services and their ability to adapt to climate change is limited.¹⁷⁴ In order to minimize climate change displacement, and guarantee all people have the ability to adapt to the climate crisis, the international community will continue to discuss and coordinate how best to respond to these new realities.¹⁷⁵

Further Research

In researching the topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How can we ensure Member States have the capacity to adapt to climate change and assist stateless or displaced people? What UN bodies and programs can collaborate with one another to provide a holistic and comprehensive approach to safeguarding the rights of displaced people through humanitarian assistance or climate resilient communities and agriculture? How can we ensure that groups who are most vulnerable to climate-related displacement (such as children and indigenous people) have their rights upheld? How can we further limit displacement or provide more resources to lessen the risk of displacement?

Annotated Bibliography

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*. 2022. Retrieved 21 June 2022 from: https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/IDMC_GRID_2022_LR.pdf

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center is a non-governmental organization that specializes in collecting data on displaced persons all over the world. This report provides an updated number of persons displaced since 2012 and focuses on children and youth that are displaced due to violence, conflict, and disasters. This is an important document as it details where exactly people have been displaced and how children may have been affected due to this. Delegates should use this document to understand how displaced people have been affected globally.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The impact of climate change on the rights of people in vulnerable situations*. 2022. Retrieved 15 June 2022 from:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impact-climate-change-rights-people-vulnerable-situations>

The High Commissioner for Human Rights is the primary human rights representative within the United Nations. The High Commissioner reports to the Secretary-General to carry out its mandate to protect the rights of all individuals around the world. This website outlines OHCHR's work on climate change and how it affects people in vulnerable situations. Delegates can not only read the text but take advantage of the links to other resources.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees et al. *Climate Change, Displacement, and Human Rights*. 2022. Retrieved 21 June 2022 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/6242ea7c4.pdf>

As one of the leading organizations on refugees and displaced people, UNHCR created this document to examine the relationship between climate change and displaced people, including how their human rights are affected. The document also outlines how climate change exacerbates the situation of already vulnerable displaced populations. It also

¹⁷² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change*. 2015. p. 27.

¹⁷³ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 27.

articulates how persons displaced due to climate change can benefit from being further integrated into international frameworks.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The effects of climate change on indigenous peoples*. 2007. Retrieved 24 June 2022 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/climate-change.html>

This page provides useful overarching information on climate change, whilst also outlining a succinct summary of how it effects vulnerable populations, especially indigenous peoples. It provides specific examples of indigenous communities that have been impacted by climate displacement and how some have adapted to being displaced. Delegates can consider the difficulties outlined and how the international community might address them before examining the linked resources for additional information.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Human rights and climate change (A/HRC/RES/35/20)*. 2017. Retrieved 20 June 2022 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/35/20>

This Human Rights Council resolution on human rights and climate change focuses on the inclusion of persons displaced by climate change in international frameworks. The resolution is meant to remind the international community how persons displaced by climate change are vulnerable and are subject to human rights violations. This document is important as it includes this group of people in the context of larger human rights frameworks.

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