

Dear Delegates,

A warm welcome to the **2019 VISHWA VIDYAPEETH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE IN BANGALORE.**

We are cheerful to introduce you to our committee, the DISEC. The chair for this year's MUN is: AIYAN KHAN and the co-chair for the DISEC committee is: A.B. AAKSHAYAA

I hope everyone brings passion and enthusiasm to the debate, as I feel that this committee is pertinent to current world events.

**The agenda for the DISEC committee is:**

*Deliberating on the issue of refugees and IDP's Worldwide with reference to forced displacement due to climate change.*

## **ABOUT THE COMMITTEE DISEC:**

The United Nations General Assembly First **Committee** (also known as the Disarmament and International Security **Committee** or **DISEC**) is one of six main **committees** at the General Assembly of the United Nations. It deals with disarmament and international security matters..The work of the Committee usually begins in late September and ends by the end of October or early November. The work of the body is split into three stages: (1) general debate, (2) thematic discussions and (3) action on drafts.

During the first stage, the general debate, the Committee discusses its agenda items for around eight days. This period of debate is then followed by two weeks of thematic discussions on each of the seven clusters. During this stage, the body hears testimony from high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament. It also holds hearings in the form of interactive panel discussions with various representatives from disarmament entities. In the final stage, the body votes on any resolutions or decisions that it has drawn up during its session.

## COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The United Nations (UN) Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was created as the first of the Main Committees in the General Assembly when the charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. Thus, DISEC is often referred to as the First Committee. DISEC was formed to respond to the need for an international forum to discuss issues of peace and security among members of the international community. According to the UN Charter, the purpose of DISEC in the General Assembly is to establish “general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments” and also to give “recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council.” Although DISEC cannot directly advise the decision-making process of the Security Council, the fourth chapter of the UN Charter explains that DISEC can suggest specific topics for Security Council consideration. Aside from its role in the General Assembly, DISEC is also an institution of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), formally named in January 1998 after the Secretary-General’s second special session on disarmament in 1982. The UNODA is concerned with disarmament at all levels—nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and conventional weapons—and assists DISEC through its work conducted in the General Assembly for substantive norm-setting support in order to further its disarmament initiatives.

The majority of DISEC’s funding is derived from the United Nation’s organ, the General Assembly. The General Assembly’s Administrative and Budgetary Committee allocates funds for political affairs, international justice and law, cooperation for development, humanitarian affairs, support services, and capital expenses that all contribute to the General Assembly’s work in the international community. It is estimated that the [2016-17 budget](#) is nearly \$5.4 billion. DISEC will be able to play a part in promoting the [2030 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG’s) within the United Nations Structure and the international community, especially in goal number 16, to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

DISEC works in close collaboration with UN organizations, such as the [United Nations Disarmament Commission](#) (UNODA), and the [Conference on Disarmament](#). DISEC also works with various international and non-governmental organizations that contribute significant groundwork and insight to DISEC’s work.

To be successful in your DISEC committee, delegates should keep the popular international political division in the back of their minds. Outside of the Security Council, DISEC is a committee that typically sees polarization between traditional rivals, like the United States and Russia, due to controversial security matters brought to the floor. Because of this, blocs should make sense, in policy and politics.

DISEC is usually one of the largest committees conferences showcase in their General Assemblies. Their controversial, hot-button topics attract a colossus of delegates itching to solve issues with new technology, databases, and intelligence. As a DISEC delegate, you need to master the art of dissecting a lot of ideas all at once. Before gracing DISEC's floor with your presence, verse yourself in the latest military technology developing at [Lockheed Martin](#), the phenomenon of [Fourth Generation Warfare](#) and why it is hard for states to solve, failures at border security, and the flaws and loopholes in previous strategies tried before.

DISEC showcases very delicate issues that plague the world today, and delegates should treat them as such. While social media advocacy campaigns and funny acronyms always bring a light note to such serious topics, make sure to always circle back to representing a concerned country that wants to see the world secured from conflict.

## ABOUT THE AGENDA

A staggering 26 million people worldwide currently struggle for survival while being displaced within their own countries, mostly due to armed conflicts. But the number of persons fleeing from natural disasters is on the rise – and the international community has to take measures to handle the increase.

This was stated at a panel discussion Wednesday about the evolution of the protection of rights of internally displaced persons.

“The issue will become hotter. But we have the proper framework to deal with it now,” Ambassador Christian Strohal of Austria, said at the event.

Unlike the case of refugees, fleeing across borders, there is no international treaty that applies directly to internally displaced persons. But in 1992, the U.N. Secretary-General at the time, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, appointed the first representative for internally displaced persons, in order to address the problem.

During the 20 years that have gone by since then, much has been achieved to bring together international regulations of the rights of internally displaced persons, Strohal said. He especially praised the importance of the document “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement”, from 1998. The guidelines are legally non-binding to states, but nonetheless useful, according to Strohal.

“We should use the guiding principles as weapons,” he said.

Elisabeth Ferris, co-Director of the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, agreed with Strohal.

“We should all be proud of how much has been accomplished,” she said, going on to emphasize that even if a normative framework on how to handle the issue is now in place, it cannot help the fact that the number of internally displaced persons is on the rise.

This is much due to climate change, causing an increase of the number of natural disasters across the globe, forcing people to flee from their homes both in poor and rich countries. Internally displaced persons used to be fleeing from conflict in unstable states, but now the stable Western world is also experiencing the problem, according to Ferris. For example, hundreds of thousands of Americans were displaced after the hurricane Katrina. “It is not a North-South issue anymore,” Ferris said.

Although the majority of internally displaced persons are still fleeing from war in the non-Western world. Syria, Colombia, Myanmar, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Democratic Republic of Congo are some of the states with the largest populations of internally displaced persons today.

Chaloka Beyani, the current Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of internally displaced persons, appointed in 2010, was also present at the discussion. He stated that the impact of the global guidelines, together with a growing number of states implementing national laws regulating the rights of internally displaced persons, has been tremendous.

But the rise of climate refugees and new conflicts, such as in Syria, is overshadowing the progress being made. “It is a huge challenge we have to deal with,” Beyani concluded.

As early as 1990 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that the greatest single impact of climate change might be on human migration—with millions of people displaced by shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and agricultural disruption.<sup>3</sup> Since then, successive reports have argued that environmental degradation, and in particular climate change, is poised to become a major driver of population displacement—a crisis in the making. In the mid-1990s, it was widely reported that up to 25 million people had been forced from their homes and off their land by a range of serious environmental pressures including pollution, land degradation, droughts and natural disasters. At the time it was declared that these “environmental refugees”, as they were called (see Box 1), exceeded all documented refugees from war and political persecution put together.<sup>4</sup> The 2001 World Disasters Report of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies repeated the estimate of 25 million current “environmental refugees”. And in October 2005 the UN University’s

Institute for Environment and Human Security warned that the international community should prepare for 50 million environmental refugees by 2010.<sup>5</sup> A few analysts, of whom Norman Myers of Oxford University is perhaps the best known, have tried to estimate the numbers of people who will be forced to move over the long term as a direct result of climate change. “When global warming takes hold” Professor Myers argues, “there could be as many as 200 million people overtaken by disruptions of monsoon systems and other rainfall regimes, by droughts of unprecedented severity and duration, and by sea-level rise and coastal flooding”.

The scientific basis for climate change is increasingly well established. An enormous amount of time and energy have gone into determining the meteorological impacts of climate change in terms of raised sea levels, altered precipitation patterns and more frequent and fierce storms. Much less time, energy and resources, however, have been spent on empirical analysis of the impacts of climate change on human populations. Partly, this is because the relationship is so unpredictable: the science of climate change is complex enough – let alone its impact on societies of differing resources and varied capacity to adapt to external shocks. Partly, it is because individual migrants’ decisions to leave their homes vary so widely: deciding causality between economic “pull” and environmental “push” is often highly subjective. And finally, disaggregating the role of climate change from other environmental, economic and social factors requires an ambitious analytical step into the dark. For example, Hurricane Katrina, which lashed the Gulf Coast of the United States in August 2005 and temporarily displaced over a million people,<sup>12</sup> is often presented (quite rightly) as a preview of the kind of more intense and frequent extreme weather events we can expect from climate change. But the hurricane was more than just a meteorological event: the damage it caused was a product of poor disaster planning, consistent underinvestment in the city’s protective levees as well the systematic destruction of the wetlands in the Mississippi delta that might have lessened the force of the storm. Labelling it a “climate change event” over-simplifies both its causes and its effects. Nevertheless, estimates of future numbers of climate change migrants are repeated almost glibly, either for shock value or for want of a better figure.<sup>13</sup> This paper sets out to challenge the predictions: by trying to pick apart the terminology, the time frame and the degree of uncertainty implicit in them. Section 2 looks at the ways that climate change might lead to increased migration. Section 3 then analyses some predictions for numbers of future climate migrants, examines some of the uncertainties with these predictions and lays out three different tentative scenarios on future numbers of migrants. Which (if any) of these comes to pass depends on future population growth, distribution and resilience to environmental pressures as well as the ability of the international community to curb greenhouse gas emissions and help the poorest countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. Section 4 assesses the development implications of forced migration within countries and across borders. Finally, Section 5 investigates a variety of

international and domestic policy responses to the prospect of large-scale population movements caused by climate change.

Climate change will cause population movements by making certain parts of the world much less viable places to live; by causing food and water supplies to become more unreliable and increasing the frequency and severity of floods and storms. Recent reports from the IPCC and elsewhere set out the parameters for what we can expect:

By 2099 the world is expected to be on average between 1.8°C and 4°C hotter than it is now.<sup>21</sup> Large areas are expected to become drier—the proportion of land in constant drought expected to increase from 2 per cent to 10 per cent by 2050.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the proportion of land suffering extreme drought is predicted to increase from 1 per cent at present to 30 per cent by the end of the 21st century.<sup>23</sup> Rainfall patterns will change as the hydrological cycle becomes more intense. In some places this means that rain will be more likely to fall in deluges (washing away top-soil and causing flooding).

Migration, even forced migration, is not usually just a product of an environmental “push” from a climate process like sea level rise. Except in cases of climate events, where people flee for their lives, it does require some kind of “pull”: be it environmental, social or economic. There has to be the hope of a better life elsewhere, however much of a gamble it might be. Past environmental migratory movements, such as in the US Dust Bowl years in the 1930s (see Box 3), suggest that being able to migrate away from severe climatic conditions, in this case prolonged drought, requires would-be migrants to have some “social and financial capital” such as existing support networks in the destination area and the funds to be able to move.<sup>46</sup> It also should be mentioned, and this is absent from much of the campaigning literature, that climate change will make some places better able to sustain larger populations. This is particularly reflected in predictions for less-severe total temperature rises, i.e. 2 to 3°C over the 21st century rather than rise of 4 to 5 degrees or more. This is for three main reasons. First, higher temperatures will likely extend growing seasons and reduce frost risk in mid to high-latitude areas such as Europe, Australia and New Zealand and make new crops viable (already vineyards are spreading north in 20 Britain).<sup>47</sup> Second, the “fertilization effect” of more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is predicted to increase crop yields and the density of vegetation in some areas.<sup>48</sup> And third, altered rainfall patterns mean that rain might increase in areas previously suffering water stress. A 2005 study, for example, predicts that a warmer north Atlantic and hotter Sahara will trigger more rain for the Sahel.<sup>49</sup> It is not inconceivable then that there might be migration in order to take advantage of the effects of climate change.

Predictions “Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future.”



Archaeological evidence suggests that human settlement patterns have responded repeatedly to changes in the climate.<sup>53,54</sup> There is evidence that the emergence of the first large, urban societies was driven by a combination of climatic and environmental desiccation. The complex societies of Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example, emerged as people migrated away from desiccating rangelands and into riverine areas. The resulting need to organize densely packed populations in order to manage scarce resources in restricted areas has been identified as one of the main driving forces behind the development of the first civilizations.<sup>55</sup> Much later, during the 4th century CE, growing aridity and frigid temperatures from a prolonged cold snap caused the Hun and German hordes to surge across the Volga and Rhine into milder Gaul and eventually led to the sack of Rome by the Visigoths. Likewise, the 8th century Muslim expansion into the Mediterranean and southern Europe was, to some extent, driven by drought in the Middle East.

Migration, especially when it is a response to slower-acting climate processes (rather than a sudden climatic event like a hurricane), typically requires access to money, family networks and contacts in the destination country. Even in the most extreme, unanticipated natural disasters – migrants, if they have any choice, tend to travel along pre-existing paths – to places where they have family, support networks, historical ties and so on. Most people displaced by environmental causes will find new homes within the boundaries of their own countries. Evacuees from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, for example, did not stream across the border to Mexico but typically found temporary refuge with family members elsewhere in the country.

The impact of climate change as a driver of future forced migration depends on several factors: • the quantity of future greenhouse gas emissions; • the rate of future population growth and distribution; • the meteorological evolution of climate change; • the effectiveness of local and national adaptation strategies. The IPCC has devised a series of scenarios, called the Emission Scenarios of the IPCC Special Report on Emission Scenarios (or SRES for short), which set out a range of different future emissions scenarios varied according to demographic, technological and economic developments. There are six basic “storylines”; each of which aggregates different rates of population and economic growth as well as the future “energy mix”. For reference, these storylines are described in Annex 1. They range from the most-greenhouse gas intensive (A1F1 – where energy is mostly derived from fossil fuels and economic growth is rapid) to the less-intensive B1 storyline (where the world economy moves towards less-resource intensity and cleaner technology). All the scenarios assume no additional climate change initiatives such as the emissions targets under the Kyoto Protocol. Three of the SRES scenarios are used here as starting points to imagine three highly speculative scenarios for future climate-induced migration.

**THE GOOD:** The first (B1) is the best case scenario. Its impact is relatively low but so also is its likelihood. The B1 storyline describes a world whose population peaks mid-century around 9 billion and declines thereafter towards 7 billion. There is a rapid change in economic structures towards a service and information economy with a reduction in material intensity and the introduction of clean and resource efficient technologies. “The emphasis is on global solutions to economic, social and environmental sustainability, including improved equity, but without additional climate initiatives”.

**THE BAD:** Our second scenario uses the “A1B” storyline as its starting point. A1B envisages a world of very rapid economic growth, with a global population that peaks mid-century and declines thereafter, as well as the swift up-take of new and more efficient technologies. The scenario predicts economic convergence among regions, increased social and cultural interactions and a substantial reduction in regional differences in per capita income. In this scenario the world’s energy is sourced from a balance between fossil intensive and non-fossil energy sources.<sup>86</sup> We can imagine that international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are delayed, patchy and not particularly effective. Some effort and funds are invested into adaptation, but not enough. The estimate for temperature rise over the 21st century for the A1B storyline is 2.4°C (with a likely range from 1.7°C to 4.4°C).

Atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> by the end of the century are 850 ppm (three times pre-industrial levels).<sup>87</sup> With higher temperatures the practical implications of climate change are much greater. Under 29 this scenario sea level rise would be between 21 cm and 48 cm and precipitation in sub-tropical areas would fall by up to 20 per cent.<sup>88</sup> According to the Stern report, a 3°C temperature rise would mean 1 to 4 billion people would suffer water shortages and between 150 to 550 additional million people would be at risk of hunger. Conversely other areas would gain unwelcome water with coastal flooding affecting between 11 and 170 million additional people each year.<sup>89</sup> Marginal lands would become increasingly uninhabitable, with dramatic increases in internal rural to urban migration and also emigration to richer countries, particularly of young, skilled people. Meanwhile, millions of people would be temporarily displaced by individual extreme weather events.

**THE UGLY:** The third scenario uses the A1F1 storyline as its starting point. A1F1 is similar to A1B in that it forecasts rapid economic growth and a global population that peaks mid-century and falls thereafter. However, unlike A1B, energy in the A1F1 world continues to be overwhelmingly sourced from fossil-fuel supplies – and is a “business as usual scenario” without any Kyoto emission reductions or serious attempts at adaptation.<sup>90</sup> On this trend, atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2099 will be 1,550 ppm: five times pre-industrial levels and four times current levels. Such CO<sub>2</sub> levels would result in a temperature rise over the century of 4.0°C (with a likely range from 2.4°C to 6.4°C) and sea level rise from 29 cm to 59 cm.<sup>91</sup> According to the Stern report a temperature rise of 4.0°C would result in



a 30 to 50 per cent decrease in water availability in Southern Africa and Mediterranean. Agricultural yields would decline by 15 to 35 per cent in Africa and entire regions, such as parts of Australia, would fall out of production.<sup>92</sup> With high climate sensitivity, the number of people flooded per year could be as many as 160 million by the 2050s and 420 million by the 2100s.<sup>93</sup> Under this scenario, predictions of 200 million people displaced by climate change might easily be exceeded. Large areas of southern China, South Asia, and the Sahelian region of sub-Saharan Africa could become uninhabitable on a permanent basis. Climate forced migration would be unmistakable with tens of millions of people at a time displaced by extreme weather events, such as floods, storms and glacial lake outburst floods, and many millions more displaced by climate processes like desertification, salinization of agricultural land and sea level rise. <sup>30</sup> The above scenarios all assume a roughly linear evolution of climate change. But the picture would change again in the case of abrupt climate change such as the collapse of the Gulf Stream or melting of the Greenland or Antarctic ice sheets. The IPCC estimates that the elimination of the Greenland ice sheet would lead to a contribution to a sea level rise of about 7 m.<sup>94</sup> The Stern report estimated that the melting or collapse of the ice sheets would raise sea levels and eventually threaten 4 million km<sup>2</sup> of land which is currently home to 5 per cent (around 310 million people) of the world's population.

## CONCLUSION:

Environmental, economic and political degradation are connected – though the categories are permeable. One analyst argues, “One classification may cause the other or, more likely, each drives the other in a vicious cycle of reinforcing degradations”.<sup>142</sup> Migration to the United States is an example, “though nominally economic migrants, many of the estimated 1 million people who flood illegally into the United States annually from Mexico are in part driven by declining ecological conditions in a country where 60 per cent of the land is classified as severely degraded”.

Anthropogenic climate change exacerbates existing environmental, economic and social vulnerabilities. It follows that adaptation to climate change has to be broader than tackling the marginal increased impact of anthropogenic climate change. Focusing on the impacts of climate change without factoring in the local context is leading to some bizarre policy distortions. For example, in the Philippines, policymakers have begun to acknowledge the flood threats posed by a projected annual sea level rise from climate change of 1 to 3 millimetres per year. But at the same time they are oblivious to, or ignore, the main reason for increasing flood risk: excessive ground water extraction which is lowering land surface by several centimetres to more than a decimetre per year.

On current climate change scenarios, a certain amount of forced climate migration is “locked in”. But how much depends on the international community’s mitigation and adaptation plans now. It is clear that the international community has to face up to the prospect of large-scale displacement caused by climate change. There is a need for international recognition of the problem, a better understanding of its dimensions and a willingness to tackle it. This should take several forms:

1. The international community needs to acknowledge formally the predicament of forced climate migrants. While it is not clear that an expanded definition of a refugee under international law that included environmental degradation as a “valid” driver of displacement would lead to net benefits for all (traditional and environmental) refugees, some kind of international recognition is required to cement the issue on the international agenda.
2. . Development and adaptation policies in potential source countries of forced climate migrants need to focus on reducing people’s vulnerability to climate change, moving people away from marginal areas and supporting livelihoods that are more resilient. In particular more efficient use of existing resources <sup>42</sup> would offset some of the predicted impacts of climate change. In Pakistan, for example, irrigated

agriculture uses 85 per cent of the country's fresh water supply but leakage and evaporation means that it is only 50 to 65 per cent efficient.

3. A great deal more research is needed to understand the causes and consequences of climate migration and to monitor numbers. Practitioners, meanwhile, should develop better communication and working relationships between the different human rights, population, environmental and migration organizations that share a mandate to respond to population displacement.
4. . Finally, the international community needs to help generate incentives to keep skilled labour in developing countries but also to allow developing countries to capitalize on the benefits that fluid labour markets can bring. The international regulation of labour migration, adaptation to climate change and capacity building in vulnerable countries are inherently intertwined. Migration will be used by some households in vulnerable countries as a means of adapting to climate change. Clearly there has to be a balance of policies that promotes the incentives for workers to stay in their home countries whilst not closing the door of international labour mobility.

#### OFFICIAL WEBSITES THAT CAN BE VIEWED:

1. <https://in.reuters.com>
2. [WWW.UN.ORG](http://WWW.UN.ORG)
3. HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH
4. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
5. TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
6. IMF,WORLD FOR ECONOMIC RELATED WORLD RELATED WORLD ISSUES
7. ICJ-FOR LEGAL ISSUES
8. OTHER UN BODIES SUCH AS WTO, WHO ETC.
9. UN CHARTER: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-iv/index.html>

10. BEST DELEGATE, DISEC GUIDE: <https://bestdelegate.com/how-to-model-un-research-ga-first-committee-dise/>
11. CONFLICT DATA PROGRAMS: <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/search.php>

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*We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you at the conference*

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Shloak Gupta , Co-President

Khushi Pai , Co-President

Karan Suresh , Secretary General



