



# NOVICE 43

## HUNTINGTON BEACH HIGH SCHOOL



UNEP  
Climate Change Migrants

Kylie Barnhart  
Jackson Brummett  
Juliette Guenneugues

# Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program, we would like to welcome you to our Novice 43 conference!

Our annual Novice conference upholds the principles and intended purpose of the United Nations. Delegates can expect to partake in a professional, well-run debate that simulates the very issues that those at the United Nations discuss every day. Both novel and traditional ideas will be shared, challenged, and improved.

It is our hope that all delegates will receive the opportunity to enhance their research, public speaking, and communication skills as they explore the intricacies of global concerns through various perspectives, some of which may be very different from their own. We hope their experiences here give them new insight and values that they can apply outside of the realm of Model UN for the betterment of the world community.

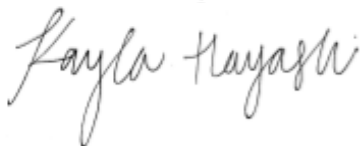
Although we will be entertaining a new style of a virtual conference, we hope all delegates will experience a fruitful and enhancing debate. Please do not hesitate to approach our Secretariat or Staff Members with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the day. We wish the best to all our participants and hope that they may share a fulfilling experience with us! Enjoy the conference.

Sincerely,



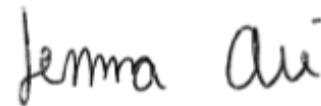
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**Summer Balentine**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Kayla Hayashi**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Jenna Ali**  
*Secretary-General*



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**Hailey Holcomb**  
*Secretary-General*

## Meet the Dias

### Kylie Barnhart

Hi everyone! I'm Kylie Barnhart, a Junior at HBHS in my third year as a part of the MUN program! This topic is most definitely one of my favorite topics to debate because of how you can really go in any direction you want with your solutions. In my free time, I enjoy playing soccer, both club and high school, which I have done for 12 years now, running track, and spending time with my friends. I also love shopping for absolutely anything, traveling to cool new places, and dreaming about one day going to UCSB. I am super excited to see what you guys come up with at this conference & feel free to email us with any questions, happy researching!

### Jackson Brummett

Hi, delegates! I am Jackson Brummett and I will be one of your chairs for this upcoming novice conference. I am a junior here at HBHS and I am in my third year of MUN. I feel like this topic can be a very very exciting topic to debate over and I am very excited. I am on the varsity baseball team here at Huntington. Along with baseball, I like to surf and go to the beach in my free time. I also like to spend time with friends as well outside of school. I hope to be given the chance to play collegiate baseball when I am out of high school. I can't wait for this conference and if you have any questions feel free to email us. Good luck!

### Juliette Guenneugues

Hi, delegates! I'm Juliette Guenneugues and I am a junior at HBHS in my third year of MUN. I am in the school's APA (Academy of the Performing Arts) program in Acting and before the coronavirus, I did aerial silks. I like reading, traveling, and making things through crochet, woodworking, and other things. I'm excited to be chairing this conference for you guys and can't wait to see all of your amazing solutions and debate, especially on such an interesting and varied topic. Good luck to all of you and see you all in committee!

**All Papers are due on April 18th, 2021 by 11:59 pm to**  
**[unep.novice@gmail.com](mailto:unep.novice@gmail.com)**

# CLIMATE CHANGE MIGRANTS

## BACKGROUND

Climate change migrants, otherwise known as IDPs or internationally displaced peoples, have become victims of having to relocate and start a new life, in a new country, as a result of the effects of growing climate change throughout the last decade. When climate-vulnerable areas are struck with a natural disaster crisis, they may face the choice to pick up the pieces of their lives and rebuild the community around them or find a quick way to relocate and start a new life in an unfamiliar place. If these individuals decide to continue living in the disaster area, they may face issues dealing with: finding adequate resources to survive and provide for their family, rebuilding structures to live, preventing future disasters from taking place, etc.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the majority of these individuals choose to relocate to another area, one which is less vulnerable to climate change than their area of origin. Countries reported having the majority of these migrants originating from the Bahamas, Mozambique, Puerto Rico, Myanmar, Japan, the Philippines, and various other small developing island nations such as Malta.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the neighboring countries of any climate-vulnerable nation face an influx of millions of individuals rapidly fleeing into their countries. Many of the countries taking in fleeing individuals are countries such as Australia, the US, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, some of which are already underdeveloped and may be unable to support the strain of refugees. These nations will need to begin having to take responsibility for these individuals, overpopulating refugee camps and finding space to hold these migrants. However, once they reach the camp, it may only get harder from there, as the systems providing these migrants food and structures to reside in are flawed and most of the time leave 17.5% of migrants malnourished and without shelter for months to come.<sup>3</sup> In the case that these individuals are able to get shelter, much of the time they succumb to infectious diseases that come from overcrowding (with the majority of people having to sleep with 6 or more others) or due to exposure to unfamiliar animals or insects.<sup>4</sup> As of 2018, the World Bank estimated that within the regions of Sub-saharan Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, these areas alone will generate almost 150 million climate migrants in the next 30 years.<sup>5</sup>

As we have begun to see the harmful effects climate change has had on our society, we must look at the root of the issue and how it has grown to be one of the largest, international problems in our society today. The United Nations defines climate change as a “change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere”.<sup>6</sup> The drastic change in climate continues to rise through the overuse of greenhouse gases, which are created through the burning of fuels, the same fuels which billions of individuals use in their everyday lives, such as in cars, trains, boats, and to power fuel-based electrical machines with gases such as methane, water vapor, nitrous oxide, and most commonly, carbon dioxide.<sup>7</sup> As these fuels are being burned into the air, they are able to travel further up into the atmosphere, acting as a trap that keeps sunlight in, leading to an overall increase of about 0.15F degrees per year for over the last century. At the rate at which climate change is growing, researchers estimate that in just 50 short years, around 3 billion or around 42% of the world’s population will find their homes too hot to live in.<sup>8</sup> This includes densely populated places, such

as those in Africa, leading millions of individuals to be left without a suitable environment to reside in, further worsening the issue of climate migrants.

Climate change generally signifies an increase in heat that comes as a result of global warming, though it also impacts different areas through natural hazards. In Africa, droughts and floods have eroded the soil and reduced crop yields and livestock. The increase in temperature and acidity in the ocean has led to a decrease of fish overall and a change in their migration patterns, especially in certain areas in Asia which rely on fish as their main food source. The rising sea levels have led certain coasts and islands to become submerged and become particularly vulnerable to storms. The warmer, dryer air has facilitated heat waves and the spread of wildfires. Finally, extreme weather, such as hurricanes, has destroyed and severely damaged many areas as well as contaminated water and food sources. These poor conditions can also facilitate the spread of certain diseases. For example, meningitis is linked to droughts and malaria (which is carried by mosquitoes) spreads more easily with frequent floodings. Climate change, because of the loss of land, water, and food, has also been known to cause resource conflicts. All of these reasons put together in addition to the fact that many are underdeveloped without the resources to solve many of these problems lead masses to migrate to safer areas.<sup>9</sup> Along with this, the increase of climate change has led to the rapid rise of sea levels throughout the world, with a projection of around 1-8ft in the next 80 years, which would effectively flood and erase hundreds of islands, along with eroding and erasing many large cities completely. This is all due to the melting of glaciers, which hold around  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the world's freshwater reserves. It would be enough water to cover cities in the countries of Bangladesh, Italy, Nigeria and the Netherlands, all by the year 2050. This, combined with the inhabitants of around 57 small developing island nations, would amount to over 17.5 million climate migrants without places to reside in, overpopulating neighboring areas less affected by climate change.<sup>10</sup>

Luckily, some companies and countries have already taken action on this climate change, with countries such as the UK, Norway, France and New Zealand, all of which are part of the Paris Agreement, in conjunction with dozens of other countries, being dedicated to having net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.<sup>11</sup> However, the Paris Agreement, and other climate organizations are unable to hold countries accountable for their greenhouse gasses, leaving the majority of these countries to be far off track from achieving this goal. Non-governmentally affiliated organizations and corporations are also working independently from these nations, with their own sets of emissions, leaving countries with the decision to implement laws and regulations on these companies, putting the production resources and products at risk, due to the inadequate substitution options of fossil fuels. Countries such as the US, China, and India are extremely reliant on these fuels throughout all parts of the country, producing around 54% of the greenhouse gases globally, making these same countries questioning which fossil fuel replacement would be a good investment economically.<sup>12</sup> Not only this, but countries not a part of the Paris Agreement, specifically third world countries, are unable to fund climate change studies or the construction of alternative energy facilities to work towards the 2050 goal, leaving them far behind the net zero goal. This leaves the biggest issue being not just the viability of fossil fuel elimination, but the world cooperation and collaboration in fighting these issues as a whole.



As shown throughout the issues pertaining to space for refugees, international cooperation, limited time to take action and the destruction of global resources, it is evident that climate change is an issue that the UN must take seriously.

## UNITED NATIONS ACTION

The United Nations has been at the forefront of the battle against the issue of climate migrants and the problems that are caused due to their displacement. This has caused a great number of problems for other countries throughout the world and the United Nations has been working side by side with the nations affected by these migrants to try to find the best possible solutions to help prevent it in the first place. The issue of migrant refugees can be associated with the issue of climate change. The UN has put into place sustainable development goals which have the basic idea of improving our environment one step at a time. A/HRC/RES/35/20, which was brought in front of the general assembly, addressed the need to work with a scientific panel to ensure as much knowledge as possible was considered in evaluating the effects of climate change. It also expressed the need to inform the native people of the areas most affected about the dangers they would come to face.<sup>13</sup> The resolution also emphasized the idea that the social and economic changes it can cause should also be included when considering climate change. The needs of climate migrants must be stressed as these populations should have their human rights protected when entering a country after being forced from their own due to climate change. They advised the international community to adopt certain laws and policies surrounding climate migrants for this purpose. The UN provides legal advice to the international community on the protection of these climate migrants as well. The Global Protection Cluster is an organization that branched from the UN with the job of helping climate migrants directly after being displaced. They deploy emergency teams to the areas that are highly affected and specifically help in registering and documenting the migrants, placing them in the correct shelters until they can be relocated.<sup>14</sup> The Great Migration Compact was drafted in 2016 and was drafted with the purpose of creating a safe and humanitarian environment for all migrants entering a new country due to climate change. The compact was set on a basis of 23 objectives they hoped to accomplish. These objectives range in the topics of how states could be safe in responding and handling migrants entering countries. The creation of this compact was a major step in the right direction for the UN as they presented a set of guidelines for states to follow when addressing this topic. The compact also addressed the topic of the relocation and return of the migrants. In some cases returning is not possible, which is why the UN addresses having a pathway and relocation system for the migrations who can no longer return to their home due to the effects of climate change.<sup>15</sup> A/RES/63/184 was a resolution drafted that addressed the issues in the protection of migrants when entering a country seeking refuge. This resolution ensured their protection when entering a country and protected their rights until they could be returned or relocated once the issues in their home country have been solved. All in all the United Nations is at the forefront of the battle for climate change migrants and making sure they are treated fairly and are able to start their life over again in peace.

## CASE STUDY: Pacific Islands

The Pacific Islands have been slowly disappearing as the water levels continually rise and would be one of the areas hit the hardest from the impacts of climate change. So far, 5 islands have already disappeared and several villages have been destroyed on other islands with continually receding shorelines as even today, ocean levels continue to rise. Tuvalu, the Maldives, Vanuatu, and the Marshall Islands are all island states predicted to become entirely submerged by 2100, while others have also been estimated to lose significant amounts of land<sup>16</sup>. In addition, these islands are also in danger of hurricanes and floods, which can not only physically destroy villages but also salinate vital freshwater sources and erode the soil. This destroys water and food resources necessary to them. The rising sea levels and effects of climate change have been the primary motivator for 20% of migrants there, affecting primarily those near the coast with lower altitudes and it is estimated that millions more will be displaced due to climate change in the future. Ioane Teitiota is a man whose home was the Pacific Island of Kiribati, which is thought to be the first country that will sink entirely into the ocean and it is estimated to become entirely uninhabitable in 10 to 15 years, with conditions already being dangerous due to the rising sea levels, erosions of the land, the lack of safe drinking water, overcrowding and territory disputes. He and his family applied for refugee status in New Zealand after their visa expired, but the nation refused to grant it. The UN decided to uphold New Zealand's decision since there was still time to return to the island until it became completely uninhabitable, but it also stated that such migrants could not be sent back to their home countries under international law if it would constitute a risk to their lives. This marked UN support for the acceptance of climate migrants despite them not being fully recognized as true refugees by certain countries. This is especially important seeing as a large portion of the populations at risk in those islands and many (for example 97% in Tuvalu, 81% in Kiribati) have been impacted by natural hazards, yet the amount that is financially able to migrate to safer territories is drastically lower (53% in Tuvalu). People will most likely be trapped in life-threatening situations without the means to escape unless outside help is available to them<sup>18</sup>.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What must be combatted first, the migrant issue or the fossil fuel issue?
2. To what extent does your country believe that fossil fuels must be eradicated/replaced?
3. Does your country take in migrants, or is it a producer of climate migrants?
4. What does your country believe is the best substitute for fossil fuel usage?
5. Has your country recognized climate migrants specifically in the past?
6. What efforts can be taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change?
7. How close is your country to reaching the net zero 2050 goal?
8. Is your country part of the Paris Agreement?
9. Has your country's leader acknowledged climate change?
10. How has climate change specifically impacted your country?

## ENDNOTES

1. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/climate-change-and-disasters.html>
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3. <https://www.wvi.org/article/rayhana-harsh-reality-life-refugee-camp-1>
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13. [file:///media/fuse/drivefs-e575ba3e5a8cf13a4f5264714c71c8af/root/A\\_HRC\\_RES\\_35\\_20-EN.pdf](file:///media/fuse/drivefs-e575ba3e5a8cf13a4f5264714c71c8af/root/A_HRC_RES_35_20-EN.pdf)
14. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/climate-change-and-disasters.html>
15. <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/10-key-takeaways-gcm-environmental-migration>
16. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2021-02/human-tragedy-climate-crisis>
17. <https://time.com/5768347/climate-refugees-un-ioane-teitiota/>
18. <https://ehs.unu.edu/blog/articles/pacific-islanders-faced-with-climate-induced-migration.html>