

# UNEP

## CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE MEMBER STATES

UNDER SECRETARY-GENERAL  
GÜZIDE GÜLIZAR DOĞAN

## **LETTER FROM SECRETARY GENERAL**

**Dear delegates,**

**I would like to give a warm welcome to all of you that come to participate CityMUN 2020. I hope to give you an amazing experience that you can look back on with joy.**

**Over the course of 3 days in total, you are going to be saving our world. I hope that you take this opportunity to widen your horizon to in a respectful manner, challenge and be challenged and form new friendships. Our team worked so much for you, both academically and organizational. During these 3 days, we hope that you'll be pleased.**

**We can't wait to see you all in CityMUN 2020. Please don't hesitate to ask me anything via email.**

**[mervekarakulak6@gmail.com](mailto:mervekarakulak6@gmail.com)**

**Yours Sincerely,  
Merve Karakulak**

## **Letter From Under Secretary General,**

**Most Esteemed Participants,**

**My name is Güzide Gülizar Doğan. Currently, I am a student at Hacı Bayram Veli University, in the department of International Relations. First of all, I would like to state that it is a great honor for me to serve as the Under-Secretary-General in Citymun 2020. I hope that you will enjoy your time at our conference, in our committee and hope you to collect beautiful memories throughout the conference.**

**In the United Nations Environment Programme committee, participants are going to discuss Climate Crisis and the partnership of the Member states. As you all know climate change and raising awareness for taking actions are very hot topics in our decade. Because we all started to see real and can not be ignored the effects of the climate crisis. I hope you to find the needed pieces of information in the study guide and you to have fruitful debates. I trust each and every one of you to come up with effective solutions to tackle the issues at hand.**

**If you have any questions about study guide or our committee, please do not hesitate to contact me via [guzidedogan1@gmail.com](mailto:guzidedogan1@gmail.com)**

**Kindest Regards,**

**Güzide Gülizar Doğan**

## **I. Introduction to the United Nations Environment Programme**

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), was established by Maurice Strong, its first director, as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which is the Stockholm Conference in June 1972. The UN Environment Assembly, with an international membership, includes 193 Member States. Headquarters were established in Nairobi and Kenya with a staff of 300, including 100 professionals in a variety of fields, and with a five-year fund of more than US\$100 million.**

**UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. UN Environment Programme works into seven different named areas: climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, and the environment under review. They have remarkable achievements such as International Environmental Education Programme, actions and raising awareness for Climate Change, electric vehicles, The Regional Seas Programme and many others. Nowadays for the UN Environment Programme, one of the most important areas to work on is the Sustainable Development Goals which is a really important topic of the international area and it is playing a critical role for a bright future of the world.**

## **II. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

Climate crisis is a term used for describing climate change, global warming and their effects on our world. There are many alternatives for this term such as climate catastrophe, climate breakdown, global heating... It doesn't matter what we call it, they are all pointing out the same thing. The Earth's average temperature is about 15°C but has been much higher and lower in the past. There are natural fluctuations in the climate but scientists say temperatures are now rising faster than at many other times. An overwhelming scientific consensus maintains that climate change is due primarily to the human use of fossil fuels, which releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the air. The gases trap heat within the atmosphere, which can have a range of effects on ecosystems, including rising sea levels, severe weather events, and droughts that render landscapes more susceptible to wildfires. As we all witnessed and still witnessing, Climate Change action is being more and more important and crucial because we all started to see the real effects of climate change through our lives.

## **III. Causes of the Climate Crisis**

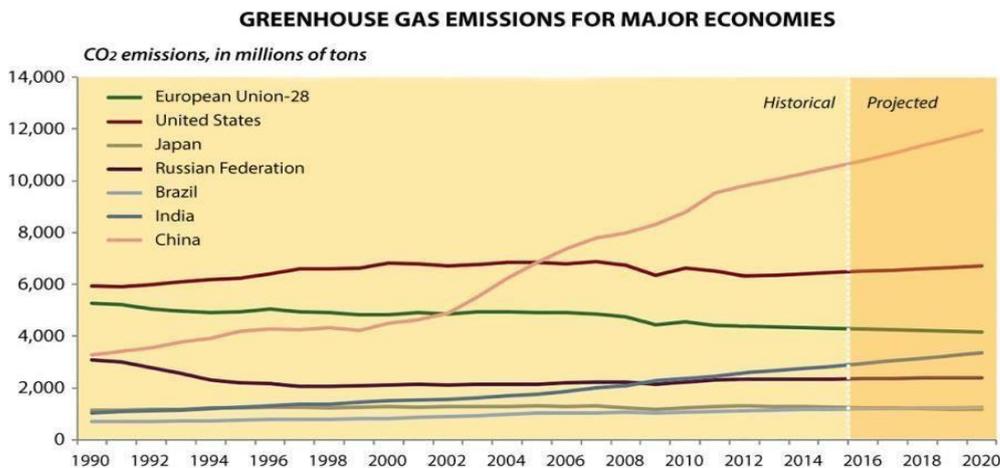
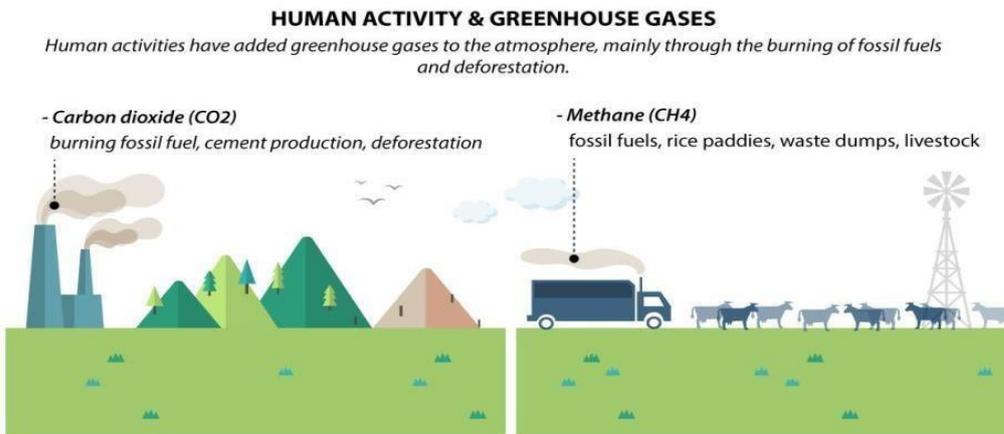
### **A. Greenhouse Effect**

The greenhouse effect is a process that occurs when gases in Earth's atmosphere trap the Sun's heat. The thin layer of gases that cloak, protect the planet and keeping it warm. Gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect include Water Vapor, Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Methane, Nitrous oxide, Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). But human activities are making major changes in the natural greenhouse. 97 percent of climate scientists agree that humans have changed Earth's atmosphere in dramatic ways over the past two centuries, resulting in global warming.

## B. Human Activities

### 1. Burning Fossil Fuels

We are using fossil fuels like coal, oil, gas to warm up our houses, to create electricity, for our cars and many other things. But because of our usage of fossil fuels, we release CO<sub>2</sub> pollution into the atmosphere. It is one of the crucial causes of the greenhouse effect.



SOURCES: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, LiveScience.com

R. TORO / © LiveScience.com

## **a. Coal Industry**

**The coal industry has many impacts on the environment in many different ways. Water and air pollution are some of the biggest impacts of using coal. When we are talking about the atmosphere, the usage of coal is the largest contributor to the human-made increase of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. Coal includes many dangerous gases such as:**

- i. Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), which contributes to acid rain and respiratory illnesses**
- ii. Nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), which contribute to smog and respiratory illnesses**
- iii. Particulates, which contribute to smog, haze, and respiratory illnesses and lung disease**
- iiii. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which is the primary greenhouse gas produced from burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas)**
- iiiii. Mercury and other heavy metals, which have been linked to both neurological and developmental damage in humans and other animals**
- iiiii. Fly ash and bottom ash, which are residues created when power plants burn coal**

## **2. Deforestation & Tree-Clearing**

**Plants and trees play an important role in regulating the air because they absorb carbon dioxide from the air and release oxygen back into it. Forests and shrubberies act as carbon sinks and are a valuable means of keeping global warming to 1.5°C. But humanity is destroying these important creatures for urban and infrastructure development, farming, creating industrial products to sell. Up to one-fifth of global greenhouse gas pollution comes from deforestation and forest degradation.**

### **3. Plastic Waste**

**Plastics have become essential components of products and packaging because its cheap, lightweight and easy to produce. But even it has many advantages, it also has major bad impacts on human health and the environment.**

**“Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet (May 2019)” is a search that examines the impacts of plastic on the environment. The article states that “In 2019, the production and incineration of plastic will add more than 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere—equal to the emissions from 189 five-hundred-megawatt coal power plants. At present rates, these greenhouse gas emissions from the**

**plastic lifecycle threaten the ability of the global community to meet carbon emissions targets.” The effect of plastic on the environment and bad impacts on climate crisis making scientists concern about not reaching Sustainable Development Goals about fighting climate change and crisis. Because if the industry continues to produce and rising production of plastic, by 2030, these global emissions could reach 1.34 gigatons per year—equivalent to more than 295 five-hundredmegawatt coal plants. By 2050, plastic production and incineration could emit 2.8 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, releasing as many emissions as 615 five-hundred-megawatt coal plants.**

### **IV. Effects of Climate Crisis**

### **A. Impacts on Wildlife**

Global warming is likely to be the greatest cause of species extinction this century. The IPCC says a 1.5°C average rise may put 20-30% of species at risk of extinction. If the planet warms by more than 2°C, most ecosystems will struggle. Many of the world's threatened species live in areas that will be severely affected by climate change. And climate change is happening too quickly for many species to adapt. Such as we see in Australia bushfires, an estimated 1 billion animals -some of them found nowhere else on Earth- have been lost.

### **B. Impacts on Antarctica**

The Antarctic ice sheet is the largest single mass of ice on earth, accounting for around 90% of all freshwater on the earth's surface and spanning almost 14 million sq km. This ice plays a vitally important role in influencing the world's climate, reflecting back the sun's energy and helping to regulate global temperatures. Parts of the West Antarctic Peninsula are among the fastest-warming places on earth. Even small-scale melting is likely to have significant effects on global sea-level rise.

### **C. Impacts on Oceans**

Oceans are vital 'carbon sinks', meaning that they absorb huge amounts of carbon dioxide, preventing it from reaching the upper atmosphere. Increased water temperatures and higher carbon dioxide concentrations



than normal, which make oceans more acidic, are already having an impact on oceans. Oceans are already experiencing large-scale changes at a warming of 1°C, with critical thresholds expected to be reached at 1.5°C and above.

#### **D. Rising Sea Levels**

Global sea level has risen by about 8 inches since reliable record-keeping began in 1880. It is projected to rise another 1 to 4 feet by 2100. This is the result of added water from melting land ice and the expansion of seawater as it warms. In the next several decades, storm surges and high tides could combine with sea-level rise and land subsidence to further increase flooding in many regions. Sea level rise will continue past 2100 because the oceans take a very long time to respond to warmer conditions at the Earth's surface. Ocean waters will, therefore, continue to warm and sea level will continue to rise for many centuries at rates equal to or higher than those of the current century.

#### **E. Impacts on Forests and Lands**

Prolonged periods of warmer temperatures typically cause soil and underbrush to be drier for longer periods, increasing the risk of wildfires.

Hot, dry conditions increase the likelihood that wildfires will be more intense and burn for longer once they start. In Australia, the annual number of hot days (above 35°C) and very hot days (above 40°C) has increased significantly in many areas of the country since 1950. The country has always had bushfires but in 2019, the extent and ferocity of these fires increased dramatically. For the first time catastrophic bushfire conditions were declared for Greater Sydney. New South Wales and Queensland declared a state of emergency but fires were also burning in South Australia and Western Australia.

## **F. Impacts on Human Health**

**Humans are exposed to climate change through changing weather patterns (temperature, precipitation, sea-level rise and more frequent extreme events) and indirectly through changes in water, air and food quality and changes in ecosystems, agriculture, industry and settlements and the economy. Air pollution, wildfires, and heatwaves caused by global warming have significantly affected human health not only in a psychical way, it**

**also affects the mental health of humanity. In 2018, the American Psychological Association issued a report about the impact of climate change on mental health. It said that "gradual, long-term changes in climate can also surface a number of different emotions, including fear, anger, feelings of powerlessness, or exhaustion."**

**The impacts of climate change, of course, do not end with these effects. It has many different impacts on the economic, social, political lives of societies and the states.**

## V. Sustainable Development Goals



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Through the pledge to Leave No One Behind, countries have committed to fast-track progress for those furthest behind first. That is why the SDGs are designed to bring the world to several life-changing ‘zeros’, including zero poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls. For our topic, we will be examining especially Sustainable Development Goal 13 Climate Action, Goal 14 Life Below Water and Goal 15 Life on Land.

### A. Sustainable Development Goal 13 “Climate Action”

Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is

**disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising,**

**weather events are becoming more extreme and greenhouse gas emissions are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature is likely to surpass 3 degrees centigrade this century.**

**The poorest and most vulnerable people are being affected the most.**

**Affordable, scalable solutions are now available to enable countries to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies. The pace of change is quickening as more people are turning to renewable energy and a range of other measures that will reduce emissions and increase adaptation efforts. Climate change, however, is a global challenge that does not respect national borders. It is an issue that requires solutions that need to be coordinated at the international level to help developing countries move toward a lowcarbon economy.**

**---To strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, countries adopted the Paris Agreement at the COP21 in Paris, which went into force in November of 2016. In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees centigrade. As of April 2018, 175 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement and 10 developing countries had submitted the first iteration of their national adaptation plans for responding to climate change.**

### **Targets of Goal 13 “Climate Action” are:**

- a. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries**

- b. **Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning**
- c. **Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.**

## **B. Sustainable Development Goals 14 “Life Below Water” and 15 “Life on Land”**

### **1. Goal 14 “Life Below Water”**

**The world’s oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the**

**air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future. However, at the current time, there is a continuous deterioration of coastal waters owing to pollution and ocean acidification is having an adversarial effect on the functioning of ecosystems and biodiversity. This is also negatively impacting small scale fisheries. Marine protected areas need to be effectively managed and well-resourced and regulations need to be put in place to reduce overfishing, marine pollution, and ocean acidification.**

### **Some of the targets of Goal 14 “Life Below Water”:**

- a. **By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by**

**strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.**

- b. By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.**

## **2. Goal 15 “Life on Land”**

**There are some encouraging global trends in protecting terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. Forest loss is slowing down, more key biodiversity areas are protected and more financial assistance is flowing towards biodiversity protection. Yet, the 2020 targets of Sustainable Development Goal 15 are unlikely to be met, land degradation continues, biodiversity loss is occurring at an alarming rate, and invasive species and the illicit poaching and trafficking of wildlife continue to thwart efforts to protect and restore vital ecosystems and species.**

### **Some of the targets of Goal 15 “Life on Land”:**

- a. By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.**

- b. **By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies, and accounts**
- c. **Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems**

## **VI. The Partnership of the Member States**

**In light of the Sustainable Development Goals, in 2016 under the Paris Agreement, each country must determine, plan, and regularly report on the contribution that it undertakes to mitigate global warming. No mechanism forces a country to set a specific emissions target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets.**

**On 1 June 2017, US President Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the agreement. In accordance with Article 28, as the agreement entered into force in the United States on 4 November 2016, the earliest possible effective withdrawal date for the United States is 4 November 2020. If it had chosen to withdraw by way of withdrawing from the UNFCCC, a notice could be given immediately (the UNFCCC entered into force for the US in 1994), and be effective one year later. On August 4, 2017, the Trump Administration delivered an official notice to the United Nations that the US intended to withdraw from the Paris Agreement as soon as it is legally eligible to do so. The formal notice of withdrawal could not be submitted until the agreement had been in force for 3 years for the US, in 2019.**

## **VII. Conclusion**

**In our world, we are aware of the alarms coming from nature, weather, oceans, glaciers that pointing out climate change is real and it's affecting our lives. Sustainable Development Goals are creating hope for**

states are going to take action, raise awareness and not going to be blind to reality. With the light of Sustainable Developments, states need to take steps with their best efforts and need to minimize their bad impacts on the environment. For achieving the goals states need to work together.

Partnership and complying with other states are playing a very critical role throughout the movement

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