

Forum: SPC2

Issue: Climate change: threats to international peace and security

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Introduction

An unprecedented global problem, climate change poses serious risks to world peace and security. This research examines the complex effects of environmental changes, including how they worsen problems in areas already experiencing instability and conflict and how they might increase resource shortages and mass displacement. The exploration continues to explore methods to address international peace and security threats due to Climate change.

Venturing further, the focus sharpens on the stories of communities upheaved by climatic events, exemplified by the aftermath of incidents like Tropical Cyclone Idai. The discussion expands to confine the challenges faced by populations in vulnerable regions, revealing the dynamics of categorizing climate-induced refugees and the factors contributing to global migration patterns. Simultaneously, the issue broadens to highlight the crucial role of inclusivity, giving light on the transformative impact of gender equality within peacebuilding initiatives.

Transitioning seamlessly, the exploration extends to the realms of international cooperation and gender considerations as crucial facets in confronting climate change challenges. By scrutinizing the collaborative dynamics within global forums and dissecting the impact of rising sea levels, we uncover the balance required for adaptation, protection, and strategic retreat.

In addition, historical impacts of industrialization, probing into international negotiations, ethical responsibilities, and innovative financing tools. Breakthroughs in addressing fossil fuel impacts and the disproportionate vulnerabilities faced by nations with minimal contributions to greenhouse gas emissions set the stage for advocating historical compensation. This approach aligns with principles of environmental justice, forging a global commitment to rectify imbalances perpetuated by historical emissions. This underscores the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and security considerations, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts that contribute to both geopolitical stability and environmental resilience on a global scale.

Definition of Key Terms

Climate change

“Climate change is the significant variation of average weather conditions becoming, for example, warmer, wetter, or drier—over several decades or longer. It is the longer-term trend that differentiates

climate change from natural weather variability.” (World Bank)

Global warming

Global warming is the long-term increase in the earth’s surface temperature. This is an important aspect of climate change is mainly caused by human activities.

Greenhouse gasses

Gases contribute to the greenhouse effect by trapping heat in the atmosphere. For example, water vapour, Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and fluorinated gases.

Sea level rise

The increase in average sea levels globally is due to the increase in melting of glaciers, ice caps and thermal expansion of the sea due to global warming.

Extreme weather conditions

Unusual weather events such as droughts, hurricanes, floods and heat waves.

Resource scarcity

The scarcity of basic resources such as water, food, and arable land, resulted in greater rivalry and possibly violence.

Climate-induced migration and displacement

The movement of people across borders or within countries due to environmental changes, including rising sea levels, drought, and other climate-related factors.

International cooperation

Collaboration efforts between nations in solving global challenges through strategies.

Environmental diplomacy

The use of diplomatic measures to negotiate and execute international climate change and environmental accords and regulations.

Security risks

The potential threats to national and international security posed by climate-induced factors, including social unrest, displacement, and resource conflicts.

Background Information

Addressing Climate-induced Migration and Displacement

Climate change is accelerating the displacement of people who are already compelled to leave, adding complexity to their lives. The impact is widespread across entire populations, with a disproportionate burden falling on those in the world's most unstable and conflict-prone regions, often characterized by vulnerability. Specifically, climate refugees, internally displaced individuals (IDPs), and stateless people face heightened vulnerability. A significant number reside in climatic "hotspots" where

resources for adapting to harsh conditions are notably scarce. Consequently, there is a notable rise in migration and displacement driven by climate-induced factors.

In March 2019, Mozambique experienced the devastating impact of Tropical Cyclone Idai. The cyclone displaced 146,000 individuals internally, with 1.85 million people requiring urgent assistance. The aftermath included damage to 100,000 homes, the destruction of 1 million acres of crops, and the collapse of \$1 billion worth of infrastructure (Podesta et al). While Cyclone Idai stands as Mozambique's worst storm on record, it serves as an important reminder of the increasingly common occurrence of such extreme weather events globally. The nation faced the immediate task of relocating displaced citizens to 155 temporary sites (Podesta et al), depicting the urgency of addressing climate-induced migration challenges at both national and international levels.

In South Asia, a confluence of climate-related factors, including rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and frequent extreme weather events, strengthens existing migration patterns. The World Bank predicts a significant economic impact, with a potential loss of 1.8 per cent of the collective South Asian GDP by 2050. Moreover, the living conditions of 800 million people in the region could drastically diminish, potentially triggering mass migration on an unprecedented scale (Podesta). Meanwhile, in the Pacific Islands, the rising sea level poses an existential threat, leading to the submergence of islands and necessitating migration. Despite the extreme vulnerability of these island nations, international response and support remain limited, highlighting the challenges faced by climate-induced migrants in receiving adequate attention and assistance on the global stage.

The challenge of recognizing climate-induced refugees lies in the reluctance of climate organizations to categorize them as such, despite many displaced individuals fleeing both climate-related disasters and conflict. While international refugee law lacks a specific category for "climate refugees," the 1951 Refugee Convention does not extend protection to those migrating solely due to environmental factors (Mohamed). In 2022, approximately 8.7 million people across 88 countries faced internal displacement due to disasters, with weather-related issues such as floods and storms driving migration in countries like Pakistan, the Philippines, China, India, and Nigeria. Notably, narratives depicting a "flood of refugees" heading to the Global North are deemed inaccurate, as many affected individuals prefer staying close to their properties. As climate-induced migration becomes a global humanitarian challenge, the UN advocates for investment in preparedness to prevent further displacement.

Promoting international cooperation and gender equality to combat climate change threats

International cooperation, notably through forums like the G20, emerges as a crucial element in addressing the economic consequences associated with population decline and displacement due to climate impacts. A proposed solution involves managed dispersal, where strategic coordination becomes paramount to mitigate potential challenges such as strain on infrastructure and disruption of social bonds (UNEP blog post). Concurrently, the impact of rising sea levels on coastal areas prompts

a closer examination of adaptation strategies, emphasizing the intricate balance between protection, accommodation, and retreat. The potential economic and socio-cultural ramifications of these strategies call the need for forward-thinking and collaborative solutions. Overall, the convergence of climate-induced displacement and sea-level rise underscores the necessity for global cooperation, innovative adaptation measures, and proactive strategies to effectively navigate this.

In order to provide a more inclusive, diversified, and comprehensive approach to solving global concerns, promoting gender equality is essential to strengthening international collaboration and conflict resolution. Sustainable and equitable solutions are more likely when women are actively involved in diplomatic and peacebuilding initiatives. The United Nations' Women, Peace, and Security agenda serves as one example, highlighting the significance of women's involvement in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction. Resolutions like UN Security Council Resolution 1325 highlight the part played by women in peace processes and call for their meaningful participation at all stages of decision-making (UNEP blog post). International initiatives can contribute to more comprehensive and long-lasting solutions by recognising the distinct experiences and views of women in conflict zones, ultimately fostering greater stability and cooperation on a global scale.

An interesting example is how women pushed for their inclusion in the peace process during the talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Following consultation with women's organisations, a gender-specific chapter was added to the resultant peace accord, which was signed in 2016 (UNEP blog post). This chapter addressed gender-based violence, made sure that women were included in decision-making, and acknowledged how the war specifically affected women (UNEP blog post). In addition to recognising the value of women's voices, the inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace deal helped to create a more inclusive and thorough approach to peacebuilding in Colombia. This illustration shows how putting gender equality first can improve the efficacy of international efforts laying a more durable basis for collaboration and reconciliation in the fields of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Uzbekistan exemplifies how integrating gender-responsive criteria into climate finance initiatives can yield positive outcomes for both environmental sustainability and women's empowerment. The pilot green mortgage scheme in Uzbekistan specifically targeted rural households in five regions, aiming to provide affordable access to low-carbon energy technologies (Lesikhina). The gender-responsive nature of the scheme led to a significant impact, with 67 per cent of the mortgages being taken out by women-headed households. This demonstrates that when climate finance initiatives actively consider and address the unique needs and roles of women, they not only contribute to environmental goals but also enhance social and economic resilience. By increasing women's access to such initiatives, there is a dual benefit of promoting gender equality and fostering a more sustainable and inclusive approach to climate action. This success story underscores the potential for win-win scenarios when gender considerations are integrated into climate finance strategies. The intersection of gender equality and

international cooperation becomes a catalyst for amplifying the impact of climate action, leading to the cultivation of more resilient communities and nations. By seamlessly integrating gender-responsive criteria into climate initiatives, tangible strides can be achieved in environmental sustainability and women's empowerment.

Essentially, placing a high emphasis on gender equality and cultivating international collaboration extends beyond the immediate response to the impacts of climate change; it represents a strategic endeavor to construct a world that is more secure and peaceful. By acknowledging the interdependence of climate change, gender dynamics, and global security, we can collaboratively strive towards comprehensive solutions that guarantee stability, equality, and peace for both current and forthcoming generations.

Addressing Historical Industrialization Impacts

In a historic breakthrough at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, countries reached an agreement to establish a fund addressing the devastating impacts of climate change on poorer nations. While details on contributors and operational mechanisms are yet to be finalized, a committee of 24 members, comprising 10 representatives from developed nations and the remainder from developing countries, will convene in March to make recommendations. The fund represents a significant step forward in aiding nations affected by climate change-induced disasters, offering compensation for "loss and damage." (Aggarwal). Despite this positive development, the summit's focus on fossil fuel impacts and the lack of ambitious emissions reduction agreements, especially from major emitters, have left some disappointed. Developed countries also faced criticism for failing to fulfil the \$100 billion per year pledge by 2020 for climate action in developing countries.

Despite contributing the least to climate change, African countries, for example, face disproportionate vulnerability. Innovative financing tools, including windfall taxes on fossil fuel companies and debt-for-loss-and-damage swaps, are being explored to mobilize funds. UNEP plays a crucial role in producing science and knowledge on climate change impacts and supports ecosystem-based adaptation projects worldwide (Ramirez). The fund's effectiveness hinges on addressing gaps in existing climate finance institutions and tackling the root cause of climate change by reducing emissions, emphasizing the urgent need for increased resources for mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

In the context of historical compensation for the impacts of industrialization, it is imperative to acknowledge the historical contribution of industrialized nations to the accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. Many developing countries, despite having minimal contributions to these emissions, bear a disproportionate burden of the resulting environmental and social consequences. Recognizing this, the international community must explore mechanisms for historical compensation, emphasizing the ethical responsibility of industrialized nations to financially support

climate-vulnerable nations. Such compensation should go beyond immediate relief efforts, addressing the long-term consequences and aiding affected nations in building resilience against the ongoing impacts of historical emissions. This approach aligns with principles of environmental justice and fosters a global commitment to rectifying the historical imbalances that have perpetuated climate vulnerabilities among nations.

Another example is, Tuvalu, with its unique vulnerability to climate change due to its low-lying islands, faces not only economic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic but also the existential threat of rising sea levels. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggests that addressing Tuvalu's economic setbacks requires a comprehensive approach, including domestic policies to foster private-sector activity, raise revenues, and enhance fiscal sustainability (Cardeiro et al). The IMF recommends fiscal reforms to attract climate finance, strengthen the banking industry's global connectivity, deepen trade integration, and invest in human capital. A more diversified and resilient economy could reduce migration pressures (Cardeiro et al). However, the long-term survival of Tuvalu hinges on global efforts to prevent destructive global warming scenarios, emphasizing the shared responsibility of the international community to urgently mitigate global emissions.

In the pursuit of addressing historical industrialization impacts and mitigating climate change, the role of international trade mechanisms becomes crucial. Trade policies can be leveraged to incentivize sustainable practices and penalize environmentally harmful activities. Implementing eco-friendly trade agreements and incentivizing low-carbon technologies through preferential trade terms can encourage nations to transition toward greener economies. Additionally, the establishment of licenses for pollution can act as a regulatory tool, ensuring that countries adhere to environmentally responsible practices. This could involve setting limits on greenhouse gas emissions and requiring nations to obtain permits for a specified emission level. By integrating environmental considerations into trade agreements and adopting pollution licensing systems, the international community can foster a more sustainable and responsible approach to industrial activities.

Furthermore, the intersections between climate change, historical industrialization impacts, and international security and peace cannot be ignored. Having a disproportionate impact on vulnerable countries due to climate change would lead to security risks for vulnerable countries. By addressing historical compensation, implementing sustainable trade practices, and creating international cooperation, countries can contribute to both environmental and geopolitical stability. Collaborative efforts in mitigating climate change not only fulfil ethical responsibilities but also contribute to a more secure and peaceful global environment, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental, economic, and security considerations in the pursuit of a sustainable future.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United States of America

The US has given importance in participating in cooperation in resolving climate change. Its engagement with the Paris Agreement holds both symbolic and substantial significance. The choice of the U.S. to re-enter the agreement during the Biden administration indicates a refreshed dedication to worldwide climate initiatives.

China

Being the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions globally, China's involvement in international climate accords is of utmost importance. The nation's pledge to reach peak emissions by 2030 and attain carbon neutrality by 2060 represents a notable change.

European Union (EU)

The European Union, made up of 27 member countries, has consistently been in the forefront of climate diplomacy. Its joint commitment to ambitious targets for reducing emissions, as seen in initiatives like the Green Deal and the aim to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

India

India's participation in international climate agreements involves navigating issues related to adaptation, mitigation, and the need for financial support to address climate-related challenges.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC serves as the overarching framework for international climate negotiations. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acts as the comprehensive framework for global climate discussions. The yearly gatherings known as the Conference of the Parties (COP), organized under the auspices of the UNFCCC, unite nations to deliberate and negotiate matters related to climate change.

Timeline of Events

Date (start - end)	Name	Description
February, 12 th -23 rd , 1979	The First World Climate Conference	This was the world's first international gathering about climate change. Although, this was for specialized for scientists from around the world, it marked a significant milestone in global efforts to address climate issues and understand the impacts of climate change.
March, 28 th , 1995	The first Conference of the Parties (COP 1)	The conference laid the groundwork for subsequent COP meetings, which have since become crucial forums for negotiating and implementing

		international agreements aimed at mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts.
December, 11 th , 1997	Kyoto Protocol adopted	The agreement mandates 37 developed nations, including the United States, to decrease their emissions of greenhouse gases. Developed countries bear a greater responsibility for the existing pollution levels, according to the treaty's rationale, hence placing a heavier burden on them. The protocol is set to become effective in the year 2005.
December, 7 th -18 th , 2009	Copenhagen Summit	Participating countries made emission pledges and it was the first time to hear from most of the developing countries about resolving climate change. However, there wasn't any explicit binding treaty signed with the binding commitments.
November-December, 29 th -10 th , 2010	Cancun agreements	Governments meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun. All governments put aside their issues and managed to approve a set of decisions anchoring national mitigation pledges and taking initial steps to strengthen finance, transparency, and other elements of the multilateral climate framework.
December, 12 th , 2015	Paris Agreement	The primary objective of the Paris Agreement is to enhance the international effort in addressing the challenge of climate change. This involves ensuring that the global temperature increase during this century remains significantly below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, with additional endeavors directed towards restricting the temperature rise to an even more ambitious target of 1.5 degrees Celsius.
August, 20 th , 2018	Fridays for future strikes	These were collective protests taking place by youth under the age of 25 demanding for all

		politicians and governments to take action against climate change and consumerist behaviour.
December 13th 2023	COP 28	The COP 28 Presidency launched the UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action. This declaration involves commitments from 153 national governments, including the European Union (EU), to take specific actions. All countries agreed in cutting down fossil fuel use.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 9 May 1992
- Kyoto Protocol, 11 December 1997 (A/RES/55/2)
- Paris Agreement, 12 December 2015 (A/RES/70/1)
- UN Security Council Resolution 2349, 31 March 2017
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, 18 March 2015 (A/RES/69/283)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015 (A/RES/70/1)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The Paris agreement was signed during COP 21 in Paris to battle with climate change. One of the largest cooperative movements with 196 countries signing the agreement. The main objective was to limit the temperature rise by 2 degree celsius and optimistically 1.5 degrees Celsius. Each country submitted their own individual goal to limit climate change.

However, the Paris Agreement faces substantive challenges. Critics highlight an "ambition gap" between the current commitments outlined in the NDCs and the necessary measures to avert severe climate impacts. Furthermore, the agreement lacks robust enforcement mechanisms, relying on voluntary compliance, raising concerns about its effectiveness. Issues related to the mobilization and distribution of pledged financial support, particularly to developing nations, also pose ongoing challenges. Despite these critiques, the agreement's adaptive framework and the prospect of nations progressively enhancing their commitments offer optimism for its continued relevance and effectiveness in addressing the complex global challenge of climate change.

The Kyoto Protocol aimed to be an extension of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), creating applicable goals for industrialised countries and reducing greenhouse emissions. Notably, the accord demonstrated a commitment to the notion of "common

but differentiated responsibilities," recognising historical differences in emissions contributions between industrialised and poor countries. One of the primary processes of the Kyoto Protocol was the creation of emission reduction targets for participating industrialised nations from 2008 to 2012. Furthermore, the protocol established novel market-based mechanisms like as carbon trading and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to allow cost-effective emissions reductions internationally. Although the Kyoto Protocol was an early and critical step in global climate governance, it had greater constraints, such as the lack of legally enforceable pledges for poorer countries and the withdrawal of significant governments. Despite its shortcomings, the Kyoto Protocol established a framework for international collaboration on climate action, leading to the success of the Kyoto Protocol.

Possible Solutions

Addressing climate-induced migration and displacement

- Recognition of climate-induced refugees
- Raise awareness about the impacts of climate change and the potential for displacement through education campaigns.
- Investing in enhanced technology to protect homes
- Leverage technology for communication, early warning systems, and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Support economic diversification in climate-affected regions to reduce dependence on vulnerable sectors.
- integrate climate-induced migration considerations into national and regional policies related to development, land use, and disaster risk reduction.

Promoting international cooperation and gender equality to combat climate change threats:

- Integrate gender-responsive criteria into international cooperation and conflict resolution efforts.
- Emphasize the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to ensure women's active participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Implement and reinforce UN Security Council Resolution 1325, emphasizing the meaningful involvement of women at all decision-making levels in peace processes.
- Recognize and address the unique experiences and perspectives of women in conflict zones.
- Advocate for increased access to such initiatives to promote gender equality and inclusive climate action.
- Encourage and support women pursuing careers in environmental sciences, climate

research, and related fields.

- Promote eco-friendly cooking practices, emphasizing the use of locally sourced, seasonal ingredients

Addressing Historical Industrialization Impacts:

- Lobby for increased emphasis on addressing fossil fuel impacts in international climate negotiations.
- Urge major emitters to commit to ambitious emissions reduction agreements to mitigate future climate change consequences.
- Support the exploration of innovative financing tools, such as windfall taxes on fossil fuel companies and debt-for-loss-and-damage swaps, to mobilize funds.
- Advocate for fair and transparent mechanisms in utilizing these tools for maximum impact.
- Strengthen support for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in producing science and knowledge on climate change impacts.
- Promote ecosystem-based adaptation projects globally to enhance climate resilience.
- Advocate for mechanisms addressing historical compensation, acknowledging the ethical responsibility of industrialized nations.
- Emphasize financial support from industrialized nations to climate-vulnerable nations beyond immediate relief, focusing on building long-term resilience.
- Champion the principles of environmental justice in international discussions, highlighting the need for fair and equitable solutions.
- Encourage a global commitment to rectifying historical imbalances perpetuating climate vulnerabilities among nations.

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