

Xiaoshi

Model United Nations

Conference 2023

English Committee

United Nations

International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

Background Guide

【*Second Update*】



Content

1. Welcome Letter
2. Committee Introduction
3. Background Overview
 - 3.1. The horn of Africa and its importance
 - 3.2. Introduction to the alarming crisis of children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks in the region
4. Current Situation
 - 4.1. Climate change trends
 - 4.2. Environmental vulnerabilities
 - 4.3. Impact on children
 - 4.4. Measures that have been taken
5. More possible issues for discussion
6. Delegate seats
7. Rules of the conference & Preparatory work

Welcome letter

Dear delegates,

Welcome to Xiaoshi Model United Nations 2023 English committee. The academic team would like to express our sincere thanks for your coming. The topic of our conference is The Crisis of Children's Exposure to Climate and Environmental Shocks in the Horn of Africa under the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) committee.

The drought problem in the Horn of Africa is becoming increasingly severe. This has seriously affected the production and life of local people and the situation of children is even worse. At a young age, they have already faced threats caused by climate and environmental crises such as water scarcity, food shortages, and rising sea levels. As a member of UNICEF, the delegates are supposed to deal with the current problem and try to solve the issue caused by drought.

Although it might be the first time for you to attend the MUN conference, especially in the English committee, do not be worried if well-prepared. We highly welcome all the delegates and hope you can enjoy our conference.

Good Luck!

XSMUNC2023 Academic Team

Committee Introduction

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF for short, is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children.

Created on December 11, 1946, in New York, it now contains more than 190 countries. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF supports child sanitation and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality education and skills training, mother-child HIV/AIDS prevention, and protection of children and adolescents from violence and exploitation.

UNICEF's current priorities include five areas: girls' education, vaccination, child protection, AIDS prevention and early education. Other priorities include helping children, children and families, and sports development.

The Executive Board is the governing body of UNICEF, providing intergovernmental support and oversight to the organization, in accordance with the overall policy guidance of the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Executive Board reviews UNICEF activities and approves its policies, country programmes and budgets. It comprises 36 members, representing the five regional groups of Member States at the United Nations.

The Horn of Africa and its importance

The Horn of Africa, located in the northeastern part of the African continent, is a geographical region that includes multiple countries such as Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Yemen, etc. This region has attracted much attention due to its geographical importance and unique geographical characteristics.

The Horn of Africa is located between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, and is an important channel connecting Asia and Africa. It is also a strategic hub connecting Europe, Asia, and the Indian Ocean.

In addition, the Horn of Africa region also has abundant natural resources and unique ecological environment. Its coastal areas have abundant fishery resources, while the land contains important resources such as oil, natural gas, and minerals.

However, the Horn of Africa region also faces a series of challenges. For a long time, the political stability of the region has been threatened, and internal conflicts and wars have repeatedly erupted, affecting the development and security of the region. In addition, issues such as drought, poverty, and disease also plague many countries in the region.

Drought has been one of the serious problems faced by the Horn of Africa region for a long time. Due to its geographical location near the equator, hot climate, and uneven distribution of precipitation, the region has been in a state of drought for most of the time.

This issue not only affects the lives of local residents, but also poses enormous challenges to the economy, society, and environment, such as agricultural production. Drought has caused damage to agricultural production. Long term drought has led to a shortage of water sources in farmland, making it difficult for crops to grow, and reducing agricultural yields, posing a great threat to local food security and farmers' livelihoods.

The scarcity of water resources has troubled people's lives, weakened their quality of life, and restricted the development of the local economy. This has also led to the worsening poverty problem in the local area, and some people who have lost their sources of income may have to leave their hometowns. This also leads to people's displacement and increases social instability.

Due to the long-term drought problem not being solved, the local ecological environment continues to deteriorate, causing problems such as grassland desertification and land degradation, forming a long-term vicious cycle.

In order to solve the drought problem, countries in the Horn of Africa region and the international community have taken a series of measures, but still need the support and cooperation of the international community to work together to address the drought problem and ensure the livelihood and development of the region's residents. The resolution of drought issues is not only related to the sustainable development of regions, but also closely related to global environmental protection and sustainable development goals.



Note: Data is about the situation of Humanitarian Situation of Ethiopia in 2022

Introduction to the alarming crisis of children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks in the region

Children in the Horn of Africa region are facing serious environmental and climate crises, which have had a huge impact on their lives, health, and future.

Firstly, there is insufficient precipitation and drought. Many countries in the Horn of Africa have been plagued by insufficient precipitation and drought. The increase in frequency and intensity of drought caused by climate change has affected the supply of water resources and agricultural production. Many children live in water deficient environments, with difficulties in drinking water, crop failures, malnutrition, and hunger issues becoming increasingly serious.

Due to long-term damage to the ecological environment. The Horn of Africa region is also vulnerable to floods and storms, especially countries near the coastline. Floods and storms may cause houses to collapse, infrastructure damage, and forced displacement of people. The safety risks and health issues faced by children have increased, and education and social services have also been affected.

The increase in floods and storms has led to an increase in sea level. Some countries in the Horn of Africa region are located near the coastline, and sea level rise has a direct impact on these areas. Coastal erosion and seawater backflow have exacerbated the vulnerability of communities, leading to people losing their homes and children facing the dilemma of homelessness.

Floods, storms, and rising sea levels can lead to the spread of local diseases for a period of time. Due to water source pollution, inadequate sanitation facilities, and rising temperatures, waterborne diseases such as cholera and malaria may spread. So climate change has affected the local health situation, leading to a rapid increase in the risk of disease transmission. Due to the underdeveloped immune system of children, they are particularly susceptible to the effects of these diseases, and their health may be continuously threatened.

The aforementioned environmental and climate crises actually directly affect children's education and future. The disaster has led to the destruction of schools, the loss of students, and the risk of children dropping out of school. In addition, families are under economic pressure, which may force children to engage in labor activities, affecting their learning and growth.

Faced with these environmental and climate impacts, children in the Horn of Africa region face enormous challenges. The international community needs to strengthen

cooperation, take measures to address climate change and environmental crises, protect children's rights, provide emergency assistance, improve infrastructure and social services, to ensure that these vulnerable groups can have a better life and future.

Climate change trends

According to climate models, the Horn of Africa region may face many climate change trends in the coming decades. The most significant ones include temperature rise, changes in precipitation patterns, and sea level rise. As the global average temperature rises, the temperature in the Horn of Africa region will continue to rise, which may lead to more frequent and severe heat waves and drought events. At the same time, the distribution of precipitation may change. Some areas may become drier, while others may face more floods and rainstorm. Rising sea levels may exacerbate storm surges and coastal erosion issues in coastal areas, posing a threat to human settlements and ecosystems.

Heating Trends and Extreme Heat Waves

According to climate models, temperatures in the Horn of Africa region will continue to rise in the future. The annual average temperature may increase by approximately 1.5 ° C to 2.5 ° C, or even higher. This will lead to more frequent and severe heat wave events, affecting people's health, agriculture, and energy production. High temperature conditions may also lead to water scarcity, affecting irrigation and water supply.

Instability of precipitation distribution

In the future, the precipitation distribution in the Horn of Africa region may become more unstable. Some regions may experience more frequent and intense droughts, leading to reduced crop yields, food safety issues, and damage to rural livelihoods. At the same time, other regions may face more floods and rainstorm events, posing a threat to infrastructure and urban planning. The treatment after flood and rainstorm is more important. Only careful treatment can try to reduce the spread of diseases after flood and rainstorm, such as intestinal infectious disease cholera.

Sea level rise and coastal risks

Due to global warming, sea level rise is an increasingly serious problem. The coastal areas of the Horn of Africa region will be particularly threatened, with storm surges and coastal erosion likely to intensify. This is influenced by numerous factors, such as global greenhouse gas emissions. The large amount of greenhouse gases released by industrial activities and the use of fossil fuels in various countries will inevitably accelerate the severity of the greenhouse effect. The 2021 report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change clearly points out that this phenomenon is escalating, and "the window of action we can take is shrinking. If world leaders do not unite in the 'Decade Action' to reduce emissions and prepare for a deteriorating climate, the situation in the Horn of Africa will only worsen." And the melting of glaciers caused by excessive greenhouse gas emissions, It will directly affect the rise of sea level. And this will affect coastal cities and populations, forcing many people to relocate, exacerbating population mobility and social pressure, leading to more people

being displaced.

Vulnerability of ecosystems

Climate change will have serious impacts on the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Horn of Africa region. Warming and unstable precipitation may lead to the degradation of grasslands, forests, and wetlands, affecting the habitats of wildlife. Some species may be threatened or even extinct, disrupting ecological balance and services.

Environmental vulnerabilities

The Horn of Africa is a geographical region in northeastern Africa. Despite the abundant natural resources and diverse ecosystems in this region, the environmental vulnerability of the Horn of Africa is increasing due to a series of environmental issues.

Land degradation and desertification

Many regions in the Horn of Africa are facing the threat of land degradation and desertification, which may lead to land impoverishment, farmland abandonment, and water depletion. Human activities such as large-scale illegal logging and overgrazing, coupled with unstable precipitation caused by climate change, have accelerated the deterioration of these environmental issues.

Water scarcity

Due to the arid and semi-arid climate in most parts of the Horn of Africa, water scarcity is a serious problem. The lack of reliable freshwater resources limits the supply of agricultural, drinking, and domestic water, affecting the sustainable development of the region.

Biodiversity loss

The biodiversity of the Horn of Africa region is under threat. Overfishing, illegal logging, and habitat destruction have led to the reduction and endangerment of many species. Especially when the marine ecosystem is threatened by excessive fishing, it may lead to a breakdown of ecological balance.

Population growth and environmental pressure

The rapid population growth in the Horn of Africa region has exacerbated the scarcity of land and water resources. Overpopulation has made urbanization, farmland expansion, and natural resource extraction inevitable, further exacerbating environmental vulnerability.

Political instability and conflict

The Horn of Africa region has been plagued by political instability and conflict for many years, which not only exacerbate environmental problems but also weaken its ability to respond to environmental challenges. Conflicts may lead to ecosystem destruction, resource plunder, and refugee crises, further damaging the stability of the environment.

Impact on children

Children in the Horn of Africa face challenges associated with climate change and a degrading natural environment. Some children, however, are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others – depending largely on the availability, quality equity and sustainability of key and essential services for children, such as water and sanitation, health care, nutrition and education among others.

Disease vector exposure

Every 75 seconds, a child under five dies of malaria. Mainly children, aged between six months and five years, are at the highest risk for malaria. These children lost maternal immunity and did not yet develop specific immunity to the infection. Under the age of five, children bear the highest burden of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), especially in the Horn of Africa. Pooled prevalence and risk factors of malaria among children aged 6-59 months in 13 sub-Saharan African countries: A multilevel analysis using recent malaria indicator surveys.

The extent of lethal and debilitating diseases, including malaria and dengue, is highly susceptible to changes in the climate. With increasing temperatures and shifting agroecological zones, the geographic prevalence of many of these diseases is changing and spreading into higher altitudes. This makes population groups who may have not yet adopted practices to protect themselves and their children from malaria particularly vulnerable.

Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene

A child who lacks access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services is more vulnerable to climate and environmental hazards, shocks and stresses. Safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), including potable water supplies, effective drainage systems and working latrines can mean all the difference in the ability to cope with the impacts of climate change.

In Africa, reduced school attendance can sometimes be associated with water fetching duties, a burden which is mainly placed on women and girls. In Ethiopia, approximately 20 percent of girls miss school to assist with water fetching, in comparison to just 5 percent of boys. As climate change places increased strain on water resources, a young girl's the WASH responsibilities will only become more difficult to achieve.

According to the CCRI (Children's Climate Risk Index) and its data, nearly all

countries in the Horn of Africa are of “very high” severity in WASH component score.

Inadequate health and nutrition

Children require robust, resilient and inclusive health systems to thrive and survive. Areas of the world with weak health infrastructure, that already struggle to provide adequate healthcare services, will experience even greater strains on resources with climate change. Children with poor health status are significantly more vulnerable to environmental change and stresses. For example, children with pre-existing health problems such as immunodeficiency disorders like HIV, are more vulnerable to infections and vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue, which are experiencing longer transmission seasons and a larger geographic range.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 88 percent of children under the age of 15 live with HIV. In worst-case emission scenarios, climate models estimate that up to 48.2 million people could be at increased risk of seasonal malaria transmission and 62.1 million at an increased risk of endemic malaria transmission throughout Central, Eastern and Southern Africa by 2030. The situation in the Horn of Africa is even worse.

Children with existing respiratory problems such as asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis, among others, are more likely to suffer as air pollution worsens with rapid urbanization and industrialization.

Inadequate education and learning

A child who lacks access to adequate education is more vulnerable to climate and environmental shocks and stresses. Children with lower levels of educational attainment are more vulnerable to environmental shocks and stresses – in fact, educational attainment levels are often a proxy for a wider range of vulnerabilities including where children live, and resources to manage risks, among others.

The least educated children are also more likely to be displaced. Unfortunately, an overwhelming number of countries still have little or no disaster preparedness education in schools, making children especially vulnerable. According to the CCRI (Children’s Climate Risk Index) and its data, nearly all countries in the Horn of Africa are of “very high” or “high” severity.

Measures that have been taken

Due to the severe drought problems often faced by the Horn of Africa, it threatens the livelihoods and social stability of the local people. In order to address this issue, international organizations have taken various assistance and measures.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

FAO has carried out many projects in the Horn of Africa region aimed at improving the resilience of local farmers to drought. These projects include improving irrigation facilities, promoting drought resistant crops, and providing training and technical support. However, these existing measures still have only a slight impact on the Horn of Africa.

Rome - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warned that due to severe and long-term drought conditions, the risk of famine in the Horn of Africa is increasing and urgent life-saving and livelihood assistance is needed to avoid humanitarian disasters. As the crisis peak approaches rapidly, FAO has launched a revised rapid response and mitigation plan specifically targeting four drought centers in the region: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The time frame of the new plan has been extended from June 2022 to December 2022, with the aim of preventing the deterioration of food security in the region, saving the livelihoods of nearly 5 million rural populations in the four countries, and thus saving their lives. The Food and Agriculture Organization has called for a total of 219 million US dollars in funding. So far, United Nations agencies have raised approximately \$47 million, leaving a gap of \$172 million.

Although the funds received so far will provide life-saving livelihood assistance through cash and livelihood packages, including animal health and infrastructure restoration for approximately 700000 people, if the program receives full funding, it can also receive livelihood assistance for millions of people.

Rein Paulsen, Director of the FAO Office for Emergency Situations and Resilience, said, "Agricultural livelihoods are severely underfunded in humanitarian response, even in drought situations where agriculture bears 80% of the impact. Business as usual is no longer a choice. It is time to invest appropriately in more efficient and forward-looking aid. This must be linked to long-term development assistance.

World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP helps people affected by drought by providing emergency assistance such as food and shelter. They also support nutrition programs to ensure that the nutritional needs of children and vulnerable groups are met. In January 2022, the World Food Programme released a six month drought response plan for the Horn of Africa. The

plan outlines the key humanitarian needs and corresponding relief needs of the Food Programme to address the already severe drought. The humanitarian situation subsequently deteriorated significantly, so the 'Drought Relief Plan' was updated to reflect the increase in relief needs for more people in need and additional relief programs.

The revised plan covers the drought response work of the World Food Programme from May to the end of the year, and increases drought related needs in Djibouti for severely affected countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. But according to a report by the WFP in June 2022, the number of people in need of assistance in Somalia (one of the countries in the Horn of Africa) alone is as high as 3.5 million. Therefore, the WFP calls for more sustained resources. Approaching \$300 million in the next six months to avoid the worst-case consequences of drought, and to continue investing in long-term livelihoods, food systems, and recovery projects to enable Somalis to better cope with the climate crisis.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

This organization provides humanitarian assistance, including food, drinking water, medical facilities, and medical assistance, to help affected groups overcome drought crises.

On March 16, 2022, the Somali Red Cross Committee began implementing drought emergency operations, focusing on areas affected by the conflict and difficult to reach.

Juerg said, "Although entry into certain areas is still pending, our team is already assessing needs, registering beneficiaries, and distributing cash assistance in priority areas in southern, central, Mogadishu, and northern Somalia. Nutrition screening has been strengthened, and several boreholes are being drilled for 'quick repairs' in each priority area, benefiting more than 68000 beneficiaries." added Eglin, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross delegation to Somalia: We are aware of the limitations and risks associated with conflicts, and we will thoroughly evaluate them while striving to meet the needs of those caught up in conflicts in a timely and effective manner

Due to the continued displacement caused by drought and the potential to exacerbate existing conflicts and vulnerabilities, the Red Cross Committee will continue to strengthen its protection measures, including working with the Somali Red Crescent Society, which has branches throughout the country, to reunite separated Somali families.

IFRC is gradually strengthening its response in several stages, starting from where they have access to communities affected by the conflict. Through additional budget assistance, they plan to expand assistance to those in critical situations and in need of additional emergency assistance.

More possible issues for discussion

Humanitarian Response and Aid Distribution

Addressing the challenges in providing timely and adequate humanitarian aid to affected children and communities, focusing on coordination, accessibility, and equitable distribution.

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

Exploring ways to enhance infrastructure to withstand environmental shocks, with a particular emphasis on education, healthcare, and shelter facilities for children.

Cross-Border Cooperation

Discussing the importance of regional collaboration among Horn of Africa countries to address shared environmental challenges, with a focus on trans-boundary resource management.

Child-Centered Policies

Examining the formulation and implementation of policies that prioritize the well-being and protection of children in the face of climate-related crises.

Education Continuity Amidst Disaster

Deliberating strategies for incorporating climate and environmental education into curricula, fostering awareness and empowerment among children.

Community-Based Adaptation

Exploring community-driven approaches to climate adaptation, highlighting the role of indigenous knowledge and local practices in protecting children.

Gender and Vulnerability

Analyzing the differential impact of climate and environmental shocks on boys and girls, with a focus on addressing gender-specific vulnerabilities.

Health and Nutrition

Discussing strategies to ensure children's access to clean water, nutritious food, and healthcare services amidst environmental challenges.

Technology and Early Warning Systems

Exploring innovative technological solutions that can aid in early warning systems, disaster preparedness, and climate monitoring to safeguard children.

Global Partnerships

Highlighting the role of international cooperation, partnerships, and funding mechanisms in addressing the crisis, with a focus on involving governments, NGOs,

private sector, and civil society.

Advocacy and Policy Influence

Collaborating on international advocacy campaigns to influence policy decisions that prioritize children's protection and well-being in the face of environmental shocks.

Funding Mechanisms and Financial Support

Exploring international funding mechanisms to support climate and environmental initiatives that prioritize children's needs.

Delegate Seats

President: H.E. Mr. Rodrigo A. Carazo, Permanent Representative (Costa Rica)

Africa:

The government of Algeria, The government of Chad,
The government of Côte d'Ivoire, The government of Ethiopia,
The government of Rwanda, The government of Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific:

The government of Bangladesh, The government of China,
The government of Kazakhstan, The government of Lebanon,
The government of Korea, The government of UAE,
The government of Yemen

Eastern Europe:

The government of Estonia, The government of Poland,
The government of Russian Federation, The government of Slovakia

Latin America and Caribbean:

The government of Argentina, The government of Costa Rica,
The government of Cuba, The government of Grenada,
The government of Paraguay

Western Europe and Others:

The government of Australia, The government of Belgium,
The government of Denmark, The government of France,
The government of Germany, The government of Italy,
The government of Monaco, The government of Netherlands,
The government of Norway, The government of Sweden,
The government of United Kingdom, The government of United States,

MPC:

Associated Press, Ethiopian News Agency,
Information Telegraphic Agency of Russia (TASS), Reuters,
Xinhua News Agency.

Rules of the conference

Based on *Academic Standard Handbook of Peking University National Model United Nations Conference for High School Students 2023*.

Preparatory work

Since most delegates have newly joined the MUN, here are some suggestions and reminders. Delegates should **do the academic test before October** after reading this background guide. Search for some related information and considering the possible agenda and solutions before the conference is also a good choice. The academic team highly welcomes all the questions from delegates, and we recommend you finish your academic test as soon as possible.

If you do not know any about the rules of the MUN, you can read *Academic Standard Handbook of Peking University National Model United Nations Conference for High School Students 2023*. And we also provide academic training about the rules at the end of September.

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