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AGENDA: IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 11 TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear delegates,

It is our utmost pleasure to welcome you to the maiden Online Edition of the TechFest World Model UN. We are excited to interact with all of you, and spend 2 days of fruitful and intense debate in committee. We hope that this simulation of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) turns out to be valuable learning experience.

The topic at hand of the HLPF is of utmost importance for the international community. We are excited to hear a diverse and unique set of inputs on these pressing issues and hope that you will sincerely collaborate and participate to reach a strong resolution, known as a ministerial declaration in the HLPF.

This background guide is a means to gather a brief (or well, background) introduction to the agenda. We strongly recommend you to **go beyond the contents of this guide to deeply research your state's policies and standings**. An additional resource to help you be prepared will be the extensive set of "further readings" which we have included at the end of this guide.

Moreover, each delegate will have to **submit to us a Voluntary National Review** drafted on the basis of the particular guidelines provided by the secretariat. The **final date** to submit the VNR would be 5th November 23:59.

Note: Your VNR will constitute for 20% marking.

We can't wait to see what you bring on the table! May the force be with you.

Best regards,

Shivam Jain Kakadia, President

Aban Mandal, Vice President, **Suraj Gupta**, Rapporteur

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

On June 19, 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio led to the outcome of a ground-breaking political document, titled “The Future We Want”. Member states had agreed to produce a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which would be successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To review and monitor the progress of the SDGs, the document also mandated the role of the HLPF to be the central UN platform for sustainable development. Its role is to *review and follow-up* the SDGs.

The HLPF reports to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as well as the General Assembly (GA). The HLPF meets under the auspices of the ECOSOC annually whereas it convenes once every 4 years under the GA. The meetings under the separate bodies are also accompanied by different set of discussions. The GA meetings focus on the implementation of the SDGs as a whole whereas the ECOSOC meetings follow concentrated themes with a particular set of SDGs. This year, the HLPF convened under the ECOSOC, with the theme being “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*”. For this simulation, dated November 2020, the committee agenda will be “*Implementation of SDG 11 to mitigate the impact of climate change*”.

OVERVIEW OF THE AGENDA

Implementation of SDG 11 to mitigate the impact of climate change

In the 21st century, climate change presents itself as one of the most relevant, widespread and dangerous tribulation the human race has faced. The proportion of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere has exponentially augmented. The concentration of carbon dioxide sits at 412 parts per million (ppm), a 47% increase since the start of the Industrial Age (NASA 2020). This augment comes with a varied and devastating set of consequences, such as rising sea levels, wildfires, heat waves,

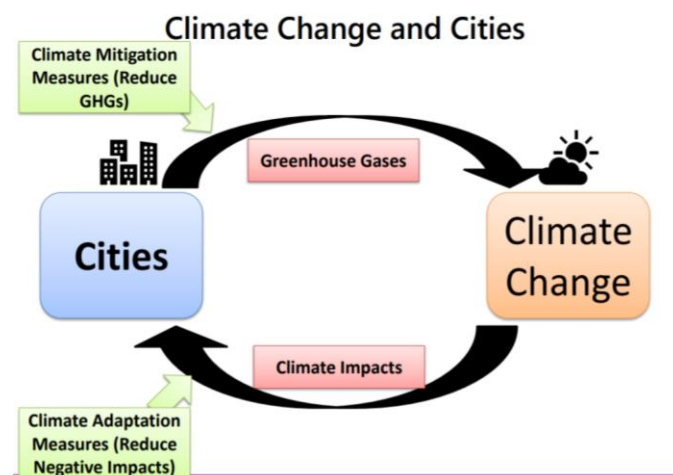
declining water supply, etc. Food security, loss in livelihoods, economic collapse and climate refugees are some other repercussions sourcing from our atmospheric imbalance.

Amongst a mix of emitting sources, urban areas contribute a massive 70% of global carbon emissions while only occupying a mere 3% of Earth's land. Rapid urbanization, especially in developing nations, can contribute to the formation of cities which are unsustainable and non-resilient. Additionally, rapid urbanisation could cause deeply rooted problems in **climate justice**, where communities living in unplanned settlements such as slums face greater threats to natural disasters.

With cities playing such a pivotal role in the fight against climate change, their potential for development and growth fortifies them as agents of positive change.

Mitigating these impacts of climate change through “sustainable cities” is a two-pronged approach:

1. Cutting down GHG emissions through processes like containing horizontal sprawl, phasing out non-renewable sources, improved waste management systems, etc.
2. Adapting to the existing and oncoming effects of climate change as mentioned above. To make cities climate-resilient and minimise economic and humanitarian damage caused by climate-related disasters.



Source: Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

This approach is evidently highlighted within the targets of SDG 11. These targets should be the foundation of debate and discussion during committee sessions.

Relevant targets are as follows:

- 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.
- 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children and persons with disabilities and older persons.
- 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
- 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global GDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.
- 11.b: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels ¹.

¹ Anon, *Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities*, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>.

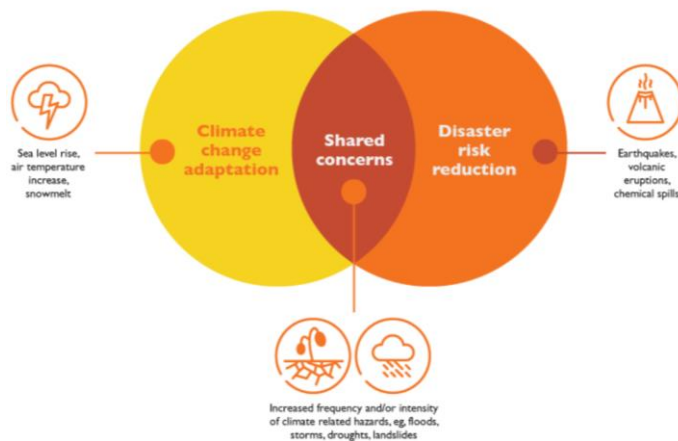
KEY ISSUES

Disaster Risk

Disasters like floods, droughts, cyclones and storm surges can greatly increase vulnerability of communities. They can heavily exacerbate poverty and poor public health conditions. The answer to minimise this risk and damage by the international community lies in **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**. Although DRR covers non-climate disasters like earthquakes, it also includes climate-related disasters like hurricanes, floods, storm surges and drought. With climate change magnifying disaster risk, DRR becomes an integral part of any adaptation program. Some examples of DRR include:

- a) **Understanding and identifying risks:** Disaster Risk Management (process of implementing DRR) should be conducted on the basis of all specific local aspects of risk.
- b) **Preparedness:** Warning systems, set evacuation routes and emergency supplies.
- c) **Impact reduction:** Constructing flood and coastal defences, planting trees to stabilize slopes and act as windbreaks, and call for stringent land use policies. This will also include to “Build Back Better” post a disaster. The recovery and reconstruction phase is a key opportunity for governments to incorporate DRR into development measures.

Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction



Source: World Vision

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. It was endorsed by the GA post the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR). Its goal is to avoid new and decrease existing disaster risk by the implementation of integrated “economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional”² methods that avoid and decrease hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, build preparedness for response and recovery, and therefore strengthen resilience.

An important aspect of the Sendai Framework lies in one of its guiding principles, where it calls for the empowerment of local authorities and communities through the provision of resources, incentives and decision-making abilities.

Transport and Mobility

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s 5th Assessment (2014), without aggressive and consistent policies, the transport sector’s

² Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, SDGs – THE UNITED NATIONS, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/sendai-framework>.

emissions could increase faster than emissions from any other energy end-use sectors, predicted to reach around 12Gt CO₂eq/yr by 2050. Transport demand per capita in developing countries is predicted to increase at high rates, credit to rising incomes and development of critical infrastructure.

Simply put, with better roads and higher incomes, purchasing a car becomes an extremely attractive option.

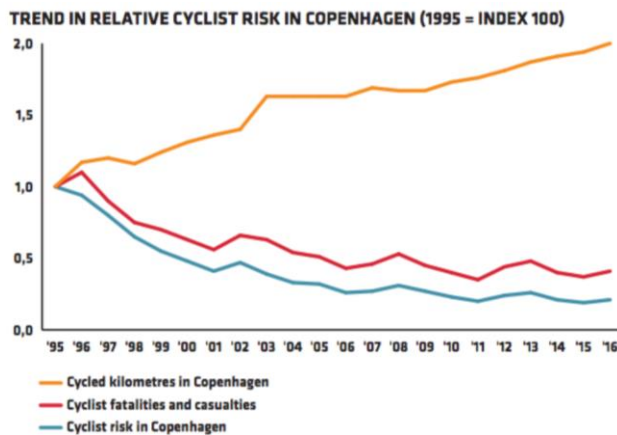
This is a perfect example to bring about the importance of a well-planned city. If a city is designed to be well-connected and convenient, it decreases the incentive to buy or use a car. Copenhagen, Denmark's capital does exactly this. The infrastructure of the city specifically supports cyclists and the results are sizable.

Copenhagen has 675,000 bicycles and only 120,000 cars. By 2025, the city plans to go carbon-neutral³, i.e. when net zero carbon emissions are released in the atmosphere by either balancing them out or removing them all together (former case in this example).

Copenhagen for cyclists

1. Signal lights for bikers
2. Multiple lanes for different speeds
3. Separate paths from cars
4. Special areas for bikers designed to take breaks
5. Direct routes between city hotspots

³ Sean Fleming, *What makes Copenhagen the world's most bike-friendly city?*, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/10/what-makes-copenhagen-the-worlds-most-bike-friendly-city/>.



Source: World Economic Forum

People use cycles in Copenhagen not because it's better for the environment; they use cycles because they are cost-effective, safe and convenient. These are the key features for any means of public and personal transport to be implemented in cities, along with accessibility for vulnerable people.

Urban sprawl

If all the above problems would be slices of a small pizza, urban sprawl would be the large pizza.

Sprawl tends to be haphazard development which takes place outward from urban centres. It differs from urban “growth” in the sense that it possesses an excessive and poorly planned nature. Amongst a multitude of interpretations, a suitable one would be as follows:

“Unplanned, uncontrolled, and uncoordinated single-use development that does not provide for an attractive and functional mix of uses and/or is not functionally related to surrounding land uses.”⁴

⁴ S.Habibi, *Causes, results and methods of controlling urban sprawl*, SCIENCE DIRECT, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), <https://tinyurl.com/y4uuoa8u>

Some characterized attributes of urban sprawl can be:

- The persistent decline in urban densities and the increasing consumption of land resources by urban dwellers;
- On-going suburbanization and the decreasing share of the population living and working in metropolitan centres;

Urban and sub-urban sprawl can have extreme impacts on surrounding areas. With a larger city and geographically spread out city, the provision of a well working public transport system becomes much more expensive and unlikely. This makes utilising modes of transport such as cars (for even small journeys) much more convenient. There is high confidence by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (5th Assessment Report) that avoided journeys and modal shifts due to behaviour and infrastructural changes can offer great GHG mitigation potential. Sprawl makes these changes all the more difficult. Additional cars can cause significant problems with traffic as well.

Informally constructed houses also increase disaster risk. Where it may be likely that these houses would not have reliable sources of water and electricity, being on the outward end of a sprawl only magnifies those chances.

The loss of important ecosystem services, such as forests or wetlands can be a probable outcome too.

RELATED ORGANISATIONS

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability is an international network of more than 1750 regional/local governments committed to sustainable urban development and transformations. ICLEI is active in 100+ countries, and helps cities respond to complex challenges such as ecosystem degradation, climate change and urbanization. They focus on five central pathways to drive systemic change.

1. Low emissions
2. Nature-based development
3. Resilience
4. Circularity

ICLEI acts as a platform to bring about global knowledge, and apply it as solutions in local contexts.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

UNDP is a global development network that seeks to connect countries to knowledge, experience and resources, including by providing expert advice, training, and support to developing countries. The Programme supports countries' efforts to achieve the SDGs by helping states with building and sharing solutions in three main areas, including sustainable development.

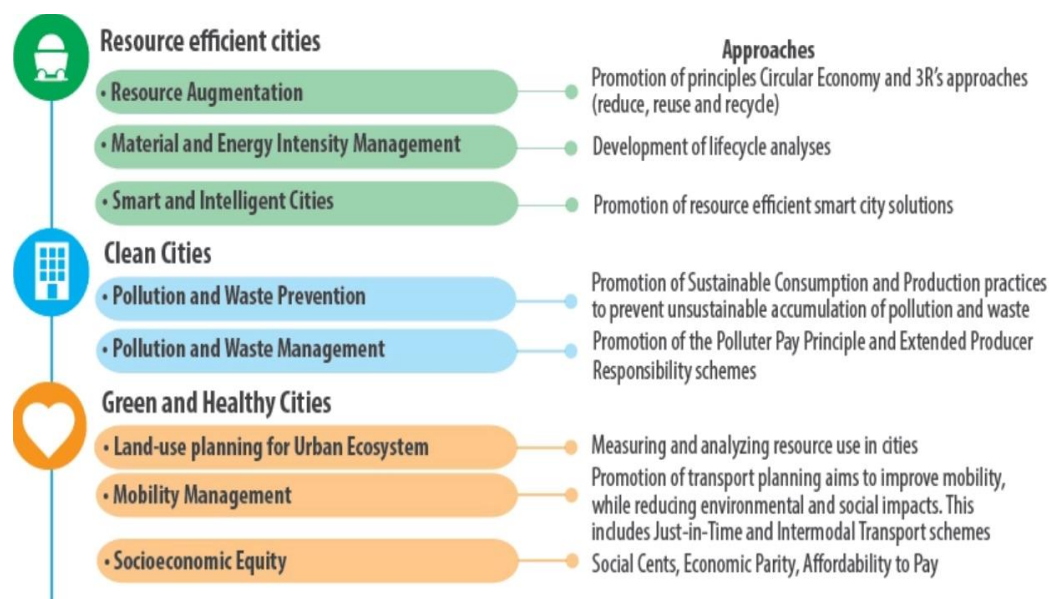
Related signature solutions of the UNDP include:

- Environment: nature-based solutions for development
- Clean, affordable energy

- Crisis prevention and increased resilience

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The UNEP is the foremost international authority that sets the global environmental agenda, brings about implementation of the environmental aspects to sustainable development and advocates for the environment. The UNEP's focus areas with respect to our agenda include:



Source: United Nations Environment Programme

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The UNFCCC is a multilateral environmental agreement, with the goal to reduce atmospheric emissions of GHGs to prevent horrible climate imbalances and catastrophes. Every year, the parties to the convention meet in a conference known as the Conference of the Parties (COP).

At COP 21 (2015) in Paris, the parties to the UNFCCC produced a landmark document to combat climate change. Unlike its predecessors which included only “industrialised” countries (Kyoto Protocol), the agreement brought together all nations to achieve its intention. Here are some key elements of the Paris Agreement:

1. Article 2: The goal of limiting global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius, while pushing to limit increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
2. Article 4: **Binding commitments** by parties to prepare, communicate and maintain a nationally determined contribution (NDC) and to pursue **domestic measures** to pursue said NDCs.
3. Article 7: An important goal of the Agreement is to enhance and fortify national adaptation efforts- strengthening adaptive capacity, resilience and reduction of vulnerability to climate change via support and international cooperation.

Urban Sustainability Framework (USF)

In 2018, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility launched the USF, which served as a **guide** (not binding) to cities which were looking to be sustainable. The framework is founded on six vital aspects around urban sustainability:

- Governance and integrated planning

- Fiscal sustainability
- Economic competitiveness
- Environment and resource efficiency
- Low carbon and resilience
- Social Inclusion

CONCLUSION

Tackling all the problems within this agenda not only presents an opportunity to solve SDG 11, but extends so to all the other goals that have intersectional targets. A very basic yet representative example would be that **to achieve appropriate adaptation towards climate change (SDG 11), one must reduce poverty (SDG 1)**. As you may have already noticed, key issues highlighted in the guide are highly intersectional. Sustainable development revolves around three areas: **economic, social, and environmental**.

Aside from that, we'll sign off by once **again** reminding you to explore your research outside the contents of this guide. We're excited to see all of you!

FURTHER READINGS

- Chikako Takase, *Implementing SDG 11 – key elements, challenges and opportunities*, SDGs – THE UNITED NATIONS, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unosd/documents/4057Module%204%20SDG%2011_Chicako%20Takase.pdf
- Anon, *2018 Review of SDGs implementation: SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, SDGs – THE UNITED NATIONS (HLPF REVIEW), (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/197282018_background_notes_SDG_11_v3.pdf
- Anon, *Summary of the Paris Agreement*, UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2016/mtg/Session_1_Bigger_picture_of_COP21.pdf
- Camille Toggenburger, *The City of Copenhagen's Bicycle Strategy*, URBAN SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), <https://use.metropolis.org/case-studies/cycling-in-copenhagen>
- OECD, *Common Ground Between the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction*, OECD (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Common_Ground_Between_the_Paris_Agr

eemen/yuPdDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&kptab=getbook

- Gurneet Kaur, *Urban Sprawl, an issue of growing concern*, 44th ISOCARP CONGRESS 2008 (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/1360.pdf
- Lluïsa Marsal, *Implementing Sustainable Development Goal 11 by connecting sustainability policies and urban-planning practices through ICTs*, UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE, (Oct 12, 2020, 2030 hrs), https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/U4SSC_Brochure_Implementing_sustainable_development_goal_11.pdf