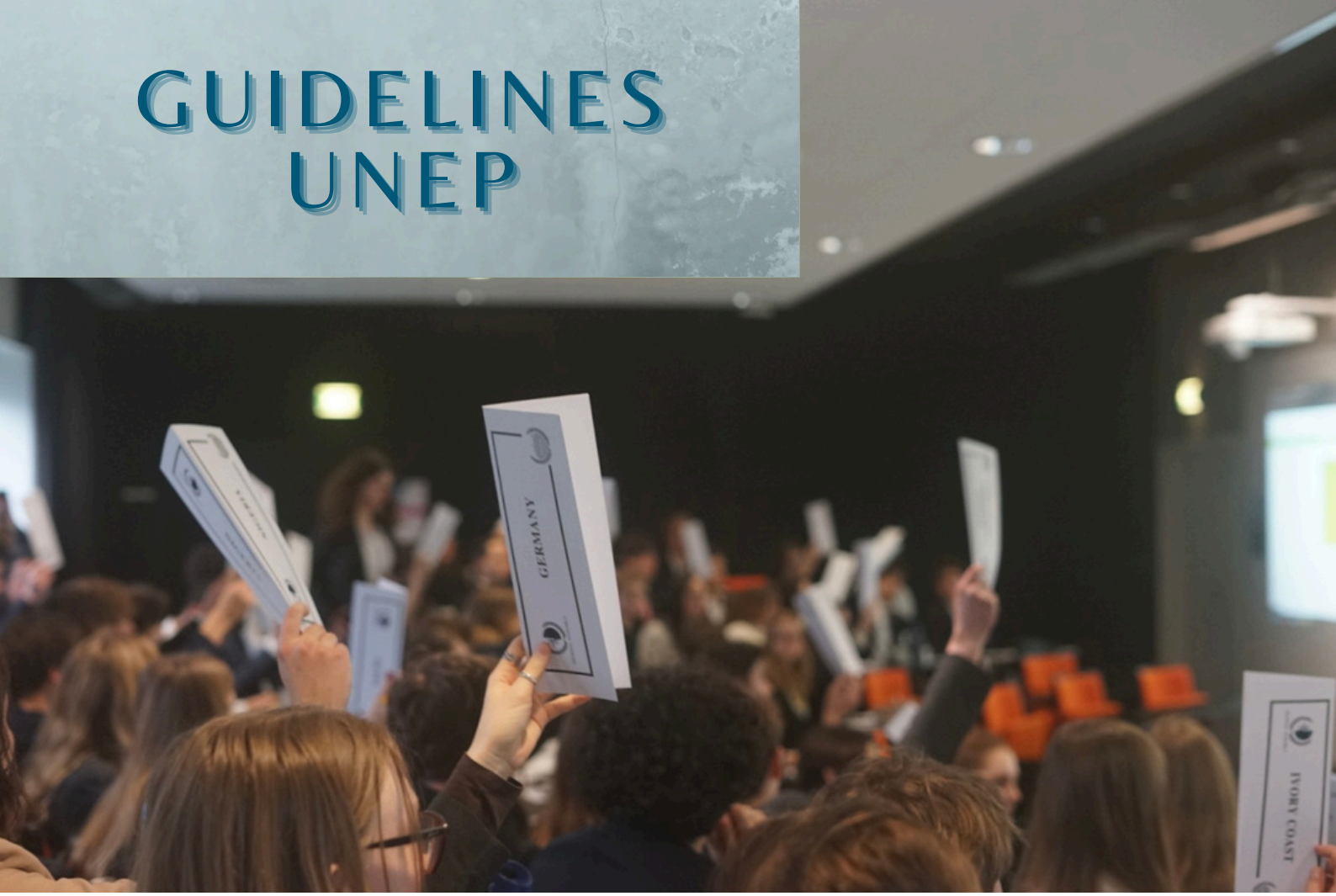
GUIDELINES UNEP



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Presentation of the Committee: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The UN Environment Programme was founded in 1972 by the United Nations just after the very first Earth summit. It especially aims at reaching the Sustainable Development goals, improving the air quality and protecting the oceans and marine life. To do so, the UNEP raises awareness of these issues and biodiversity, implements and reinforces the measures and institutions in charge of protecting the environment. In 2015, it implemented an “ambitious plan to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all”.

It is called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which were set 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The UNEP committee gathers in an international assembly based in Nairobi, Kenya, and has regional committees such as Paris and Geneva ones. UNEP is primarily funded by its partners. 95% of its income comes from voluntary contributions. Voluntary contributions consist of both flexible funds and earmarked funds.

The Environment Fund is the main source of flexible funds and is supplemented by earmarked funds. Earmarked funds (funds allocated to a specific project, theme, country, etc.) enable the programme to be expanded and replicated in more countries and with more partners.

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TOPIC 1: What form of global strategies must be implemented to help the increasing amount of vulnerable countries to adapt to global warming effects?

Introduction

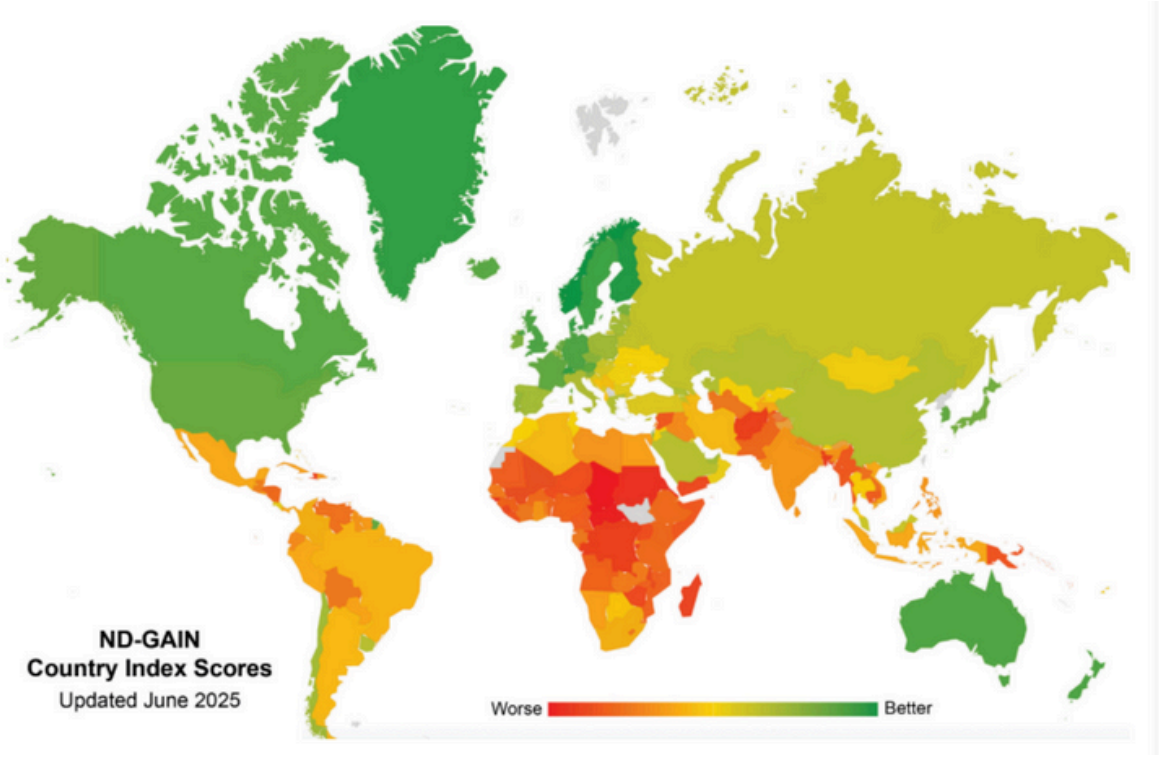
LGlobal warming refers to the long-term increase in the Earth's average surface temperature, mainly caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and industrial production. These activities increase greenhouse gas emissions, which trap heat in the atmosphere and disrupt the global climate system.

While climate change affects the entire planet, its consequences are not evenly distributed. Vulnerable countries, often developing or least developed countries, are the most exposed to climate-related disasters despite having contributed the least to global emissions. Vulnerability depends on several factors such as geographic location, economic development, political stability and access to technology.

Climate adaptation consists of adjusting policies, infrastructures and lifestyles to reduce the damage caused by climate change. Unlike mitigation, which focuses on reducing emissions, adaptation aims to protect populations, ecosystems and economies from unavoidable climate impacts. Helping vulnerable countries adapt is therefore a major global challenge requiring international cooperation.

Different vulnerabilities against global warming effects

Climate vulnerability is not only about exposure to extreme weather; it also depends on a country's capacity to respond and adapt. International organizations and research initiatives have developed indices and maps that help identify and compare climate vulnerability worldwide. These are useful tools for MUN delegates to analyze which countries urgently need adaptation support and why.



For example, the ND-GAIN Index measures the vulnerability to climate change impacts across six sectors: food, water, health, ecosystem services, human habitat and infrastructure and the readiness, which is a country's ability to leverage investments for adaptation.

These countries often appear at the top of vulnerability indices:

- Sub-Saharan Africa with Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, South Sudan, Guinea-Bissau with very high exposure to drought, floods, food insecurity and limited adaptation resources.
- South Asia with Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Myanmar with extreme flooding, sea-level rise, cyclones; dense populations at risk.
- Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with Kiribati, Tuvalu, Maldives with Sea-level rise threatens existence, infrastructure and freshwater supply.
- Caribbean & Central America with Haiti, Honduras, Belize with recurrent hurricanes and economic fragility.

Different vulnerabilities against global warming effects

Economic

Adapting to climate change requires significant financial investment, which many vulnerable countries struggle to afford. Climate adaptation includes building flood-resistant infrastructure, strengthening coastal defenses, developing drought-resistant agriculture, and implementing early-warning systems for natural disasters, for example. Such measures require long-term planning, stable funding and a propitious political environment.

Many vulnerable countries already face high public debt, limited fiscal capacity or dependence on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fishing. As a consequence, climate disasters have direct economic consequences. Floods, droughts and storms destroy infrastructure, reduce productivity and disrupt trade. For example, extreme weather events can damage roads, ports and energy systems, slowing economic activity and increasing reconstruction costs.

Social

Let's now move on to the social consequences of climate change, and especially for the most vulnerable populations. Poor communities are often the most exposed to climate hazards because they live in high-risk areas (floodplains, informal settlements, coastal zones) and lack access to social protection systems. We can focus on 3 major issues:

- Food insecurity: Climate change affects agricultural productivity, leading to rising food prices and malnutrition, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- Health risks: Heatwaves, water scarcity and the spread of climate-sensitive diseases (such as malaria or dengue) increase pressure on already fragile healthcare systems.
- Climate-induced displacement: According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), millions of people are displaced each year due to climate-related disasters. These populations often lack legal protection and access to basic services.

There are thus increasing social inequalities, both within countries and between developed and developing nations.

Development

Now, we can tackle the development part of the section. Thanks to what we've seen just above, it appears clear that climate change directly threatens development gains achieved over recent decades. Vulnerable countries often prioritize basic development needs such as education, healthcare, housing and access to clean water rather than climate-related ones.

The limited resources lead to a choice in the priorities addressed by these countries. Extreme climate events can for instance destroy schools and hospitals, reduce access to clean water and undermine education by forcing children out of school after disasters.

This undermines progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evoked above, particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

An uncertain international cooperation

International cooperation and climate justice are central to global efforts to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change. Because climate impacts do not respect national borders and historical emissions are not evenly distributed among states, global strategies must address both funding mechanisms and fair responsibility sharing.

In 2009, according to Climate Action, developed countries committed to mobilize USD 100 billion per year by 2020 to support climate action in developing countries. This commitment was reaffirmed under the Paris Agreement (Article 9) and extended through 2025.

However, finance remains split between mitigation (reducing emissions) and adaptation (preparing for climate impacts), but adaptation historically receives less than mitigation funding - often only 20 to 30% of total climate finance. Furthermore, adaptation funding remains critically underfinanced. The Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26) urged countries to double adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025 in order to support vulnerable communities. Yet according to recent reports, global adaptation finance flows for developing countries were around USD 26 billion in 2024, far below the USD 40 billion target set for 2025 and orders of magnitude below the hundreds of billions needed long-term.

A climate justice to acknowledge?

Historically, wealthier, industrialised countries (typically members of the OECD and Annex II under the UNFCCC) are responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions and have benefited economically from industrialization.

As a consequence, many vulnerable countries argue that developed nations have a moral responsibility to support adaptation efforts through financial aid and technology transfer. This principle is often referred to as “common but differentiated responsibilities”.

The debate over responsibility, funding and fairness remains one of the most sensitive issues in international climate diplomacy. Indeed, those ‘early makers’ are expected, according to UN Agreements, to provide climate finance for developing countries to adapt. Yet, despite these rules, current financing remains too slow and with too much constraints, such as paying interests; increases debt burdens for poor nations or are even purely and solely inefficient to address ‘loss and damage’ from irreversible climate effects.

Key players

Several actors are involved in climate adaptation strategies:

- United Nations bodies (UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP)
- National governments, both developed and developing
- International financial institutions (World Bank, IMF)
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in humanitarian aid and environmental protection
- Local communities, which play a key role in implementing adaptation strategies
- Private sector, especially in green technologies and infrastructure

Key issues

Delegates may reflect on the following issues when preparing their position:

- How vulnerable is my country to climate change?
- Has my country contributed significantly to global emissions?
- What adaptation strategies does my country support or need?
- Should climate adaptation funding be mandatory or voluntary?
- How can international cooperation be improved to ensure fairness and efficiency?

Useful bibliography

To prepare for this topic, delegates are encouraged to consult the following resources:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): https://unfccc.int
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): https://www.ipcc.ch
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): https://www.unep.org
- World Bank – Climate Change Adaptation: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): https://www.undp.org/climate-change
- Our World in Data – Climate Change: https://ourworldindata.org/climate-change

TOPIC 2: Public policies and necessary actions to improve the quality of food and nutrition as much as food precarity.

Introduction

lFood systems are absolutely essential for every single human being. No food, no life. But the fact of having food is as important as its quality, because poor quality food can be health damaging. Today, the world faces a paradox: while enough food is produced globally, millions of people still suffer from food precarity, and diets are increasingly unhealthy and environmentally damaging.

Food precarity refers to a lack of stable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, often linked to poverty, environmental degradation, climate change and unequal food systems. At the same time, food quality and nutrition are strongly affected by how food is produced, distributed and consumed.

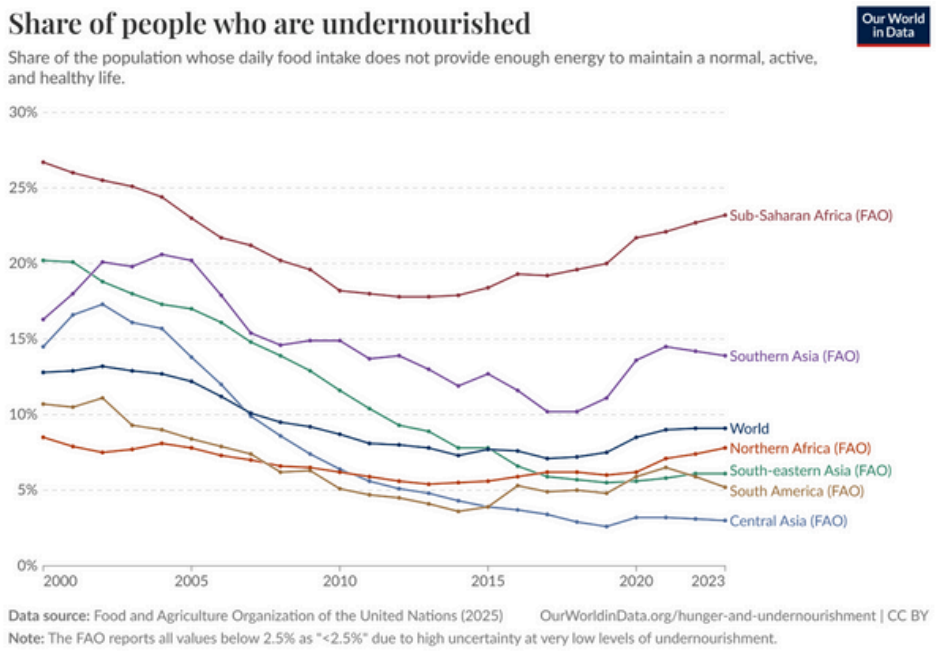
Improving food quality and reducing food precarity therefore requires environmentally sustainable public policies that address the entire food system, from production to consumption.

Food precarity and environmental pressures on food systems

Food precarity is closely linked to environmental stress. Climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity and biodiversity loss all reduce the capacity of food systems to provide stable and nutritious food.

According to the FAO and UNEP, climate-related shocks are a major driver of rising food insecurity, particularly in regions highly dependent on agriculture such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

A map produced by Our World in Data shows the share of the population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity by region, clearly overlapping with regions most affected by climate vulnerability.



https://ourworldindata.org/hunger-and-undernourishment

Environmental degradation directly increases food precarity by reducing food availability, increasing prices and destabilizing food supply chains.

Nutrition Quality and Unsustainable Diets

Modern food systems increasingly promote ultra-processed, calorie-dense but nutrient-poor foods, which are often cheaper and more accessible than healthy options. This has led to a global nutrition transition, affecting both developed and developing countries. According to UNEP, poor diets are a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases and food systems are responsible for around one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, diets high in processed foods and animal products often have a higher environmental footprint. This creates a dual challenge: Improving nutrition quality and reducing the environmental impact of diets.

Public policies can promote sustainable and healthy diets through:

- Food labeling and consumer information,
- Public procurement standards (schools, hospitals),
- Support for plant-based and diversified diets.

Economic Inequalities and Access to Healthy Food

The big issue is not only the availability of food but also, and mostly, its accessibility. Access to healthy and sustainable diets remains largely determined by income and location. The FAO estimates that over 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, even when food is available on markets.

Low-income households often face: higher relative food costs, limited access to fresh food (food deserts) and greater exposure to low-quality food products.

From an UNEP perspective, this highlights the need for inclusive and equitable food policies, such as:

- Subsidies for sustainable food production,
- Social protection programs linked to nutrition,
- Support for local and small-scale farmers,
- Reduction of food waste along the supply chain.

UNEP also stresses that around one-third of all food produced globally is lost or wasted, representing both an environmental and social failure.

Public Policies for Sustainable Food Systems

UNEP promotes a systems-based approach to food policy, meaning that governments must act across multiple sectors simultaneously: environment, agriculture, health, trade and social protection.

Key policy actions include: transitioning to sustainable agriculture (agroecology, reduced chemical inputs); protecting soils, water resources and biodiversity; integrating nutrition goals into environmental and agricultural policies and strengthening urban food policies and local food systems.

International cooperation is also essential, as food systems are deeply globalized. UNEP supports countries through:

- Scientific assessments,
- Policy guidance,
- Coordination with FAO, WHO and UNDP.

Key Players

- UNEP: environmental sustainability of food systems
- FAO: food security and agriculture
- WHO: nutrition and health impacts
- National governments: public policy implementation
- Local authorities: urban food systems
- NGOs and civil society
- Farmers and food producers

Key Issues

- How does environmental degradation affect food precarity in my country?
- Are current food systems sustainable in the long term?
- How can public policies improve nutrition without increasing environmental pressure?
- Should governments regulate food production and consumption more strongly?
- How can food waste reduction contribute to food security?

Useful bibliography

To prepare for this topic, delegates are encouraged to consult the following resources:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): https://unfccc.int
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): https://www.ipcc.ch
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): https://www.unep.org
- World Bank – Climate Change Adaptation: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): https://www.undp.org/climate-change
- Our World in Data – Climate Change: https://ourworldindata.org/climate-change

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