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# United Nations Development Programme Background Guide 2023

Written by Janet N. Ekezie and Kaylyn B. Atkins



# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2023 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This year's staff is: Director Janet N. Ekezie and Assistant Director Kaylyn B. Atkins. Janet is of Nigerian descent and works for the San Antonio Area Foundation. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Philosophy and will begin her candidacy for a Master of Public Administration this fall. Kaylyn holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and International Studies from Manhattan College and currently works in New York City at the Office of the Attorney General. She is also studying for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), with plans to apply to law school this fall.

The topics under discussion for UNDP are:

1. Building Resilience to Crises and Shocks
2. Promoting Legal Frameworks to Ensure the Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment

UNDP is a United Nations agency dedicated to promoting sustainable human development. UNDP's work is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and focuses on critical areas such as poverty reduction, democratic governance, gender equality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development. Furthermore, UNDP provides technical expertise, policy advice, and financial support to help countries address development challenges and build resilient societies. Ultimately, UNDP's efforts are underpinned by its commitment to leaving no one behind, promoting social and economic equity, and ensuring people-centered and environmentally sustainable development.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a [position paper](#). Guidelines are available in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

The [NMUN website](#) has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

1. The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretary-General Christopher Duggan at [usgchris.dc@nmun.org](mailto:usgchris.dc@nmun.org) or Secretary-General Ana Williamson at [secgen.dc@nmun.org](mailto:secgen.dc@nmun.org).

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,  
Janet N. Ekezie, Director  
Kaylyn B. Atkins, Assistant Director



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## Committee Overview

### **Introduction**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was founded in 1965 to embody Article 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which outlines the organization's responsibility to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development," as prerequisites to peace.<sup>1</sup> UNDP is the leading United Nations (UN) agency on sustainable development and assists Member States with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).<sup>2</sup>

### **Mandate, Functions, and Powers**

As the lead UN agency on international development, UNDP's core mandate is to "end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions."<sup>3</sup> As per its Mission Statement, UNDP is "committed to the principle that development is inseparable from the quest for peace and human security and that the UN must be a strong force for development as well as peace."<sup>4</sup> As articulated in its *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* (2021), UNDP now structures its work through a "3x6x3" framework, comprised of three directions of change, six signature solutions it can provide to partners, and three enablers to allow these solutions to be effective.<sup>5</sup> The areas of focus are structural transformation, leaving no one behind, and resilience.<sup>6</sup> Its signature solutions are poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.<sup>7</sup> These are predicated on three enablers, which are development financing, strategic innovation, and digitalization.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst the following list is not exhaustive, UNDP's mandate can be summarized as:

- **UNDP will generally:** support country-led efforts to achieve the SDGs and the Paris Agreement; work with governments to identify funding, investment, and partnership opportunities for programs focused on development; support Member States with developing their governance structures, institutional capacities, and legislative approaches; provide data and analysis to Member States; develop and foster partnerships between local, national, and international actors.<sup>9</sup>
- **UNDP will not generally:** unilaterally direct Member States, NGOs, other UN agencies and stakeholders to carry out an action; make recommendations to the broader UN system on development policy priorities;<sup>10</sup> provide monetary aid to individuals, companies or private groups;<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *About us*. 2022; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 55.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *The SDGs in Action*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2022.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Medecins Sans Frontieres. *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law: United Nations Development Program (UNDP)*.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2021*. 2021.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *About us: Frequently Asked Questions*. 2023.

## **Governance, Funding, and Structure**

UNDP reports annually to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>12</sup> Its leadership is comprised of an Administrator and an Executive Board.<sup>13</sup> The Administrator leads a team of five Regional Bureaus and provides support to other Bureaus, such as the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the Crisis Bureau, to carry out UNDP's programs.<sup>14</sup>

The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.<sup>15</sup> It oversees UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Office for Project Services. The Executive Board consists of 36 rotating Member States from five geographic groups: eight from the group of African states, seven from the group of Asian and Pacific states, four from the group of Eastern European states, five from the group of Latin America and the Caribbean states, and twelve from the group of Western European and other states.<sup>16</sup> Generally, Member States of the Executive Board are elected by ECOSOC each year for three-year terms.<sup>17</sup> Only the group of Western European and other states decides on its rotation internally.<sup>18</sup>

UNDP's work is carried out by its offices in different Member States, which are focused on helping governments develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities.<sup>19</sup> UNDP also administers and utilizes the UN Volunteers program and the UN Capital Development Fund.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, partnerships are crucial to the work of UNDP to finance its various activities and implement projects around the world.<sup>21</sup> UNDP also works with prominent individuals as Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates to raise awareness on important issues in global development.<sup>22</sup> To achieve its mandate, UNDP relies completely on voluntary contributions from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources.<sup>23</sup> In 2022, UNDP's budget was \$6.7 billion.<sup>24</sup> The top contributors in 2023 were Member States and multilateral organizations.<sup>25</sup>

## **Annotated Bibliography**

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*UNDP publishes an annual report each year to update on the progress of its work and how it is meeting its strategic plans. This report provides an overview of key achievements and challenges in 2021, structured through the "3 x 6 x 3" framework of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Delegates will find this source useful in providing specific*

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Leadership*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *2021 Organizational Chart*. 2022.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Reports on Sessions*. 2022.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *Members of the Executive Board*. 2022.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2022.

<sup>20</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2022-2023*. 2022.

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Our partners*. 2022.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates*. 2022.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Funding*. 2022.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Transparency Portal*, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



*examples of UNDP's work and what it highlights as key priorities in the short and medium term.*

United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. Retrieved 20 March 2023 from: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2021-09/UNDP-Strategic-Plan-2022-2025.pdf>

*This document presents the current strategic plan of UNDP, which covers the period from 2022-2025. This source is crucial in articulating how UNDP structures its work via its focus areas, signature solutions, and enablers. It is highly recommended that delegates utilize this source to understand the nature of UNDP's work on sustainable development, how it engages with partners, and what practical steps the organization will be taking to become more agile and forward-thinking.*

United Nations Development Programme. *The SDGs in Action*. 2022. Retrieved 20 March 2023 from: <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

*This online resource provides Delegates with a look at each of the SDGs, contextualizes the need to achieve the SDGs, a brief overview of targets, and links to the work that UNDP is undertaking in support of each of the SDGs. Understanding how the committee engages in the work needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda will be vital for Delegates to propose new actionable policy ideas. This resource will be an important first step in understanding the work of UNDP and its current priorities as it relates to the 2030 Agenda.*

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## 1. Building Resilience to Crises and Shocks

*“Amid so much crisis, we have reached a once-in-a-generation moment. We must make choices that will determine what follows for the rest of our lives and for those who come after us...an end to crisis is for our common good and should be our common goal.”<sup>26</sup>*

### **Introduction**

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), about 68.5 million people are displaced due to disasters and the effects of climate change.<sup>27</sup> UNDP defines crises and shocks as significant events or situations that disrupt social, economic, or environmental systems and pose a threat to sustainable development.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, UNDP recognizes the importance of breaking the cycle of fragility by constructing a strategy to build the foundations of stable societies.<sup>29</sup> UNDP’s 2030 Out of Fragility strategy is context-specific and multidimensional that aims to solve and achieve six signature solutions: poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state system and/or communities to manage, absorb, or mitigate those risks.<sup>31</sup>

According to the OECD, fragility contexts such as COVID-19, conflict, and climate change account for 24% of the world’s population, while 73% live in extreme poverty.<sup>32</sup> According to the OECD, there are six dimensions of risk: economic, environmental, human, political, security, and societal.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, there are 60 fragile contexts within the 2022 States of Fragility report, where some contexts are especially imperative as the environmental dimension for some developing countries indicates environmental-related displacement and food supply adequacy as severe, according to OECD data.<sup>34</sup> However, investment in the community and eco-led practices increases such countries’ coping capacity.<sup>35</sup> As indicated by UNDP, effective, inclusive, and accountable governance occurs when power is excised to manage a country’s economic, social, and environmental resources while promoting sustainable development and ensuring all members of society can participate in decision-making processes.<sup>36</sup> In addition, practical, inclusive, and accountable governance is crucial to sustainably developing and building resilience to crises and shocks.<sup>37</sup>

UNDP understands a response to building resilience to crisis and shocks are multifaceted and includes a range of activities at the global, regional, and local level.<sup>38</sup> This includes but is not limited to strengthening national and local capacities for crisis preparedness, response, and recovery and supporting an inclusive and participatory approach to crisis management.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, critical international frameworks and global actors help build resilience to crises and shocks, which in turn, solidify multidimensional efforts made by Member States, public and private organizations, and civil society.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP’s Crisis Offer*. 2022. p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Our Focus: Three Development Settings*. 2023.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Development Solutions to Crisis*. 2023.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Crisis: Breaking the Cycle of Fragility*. 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *States of Fragility 2022*. 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *States of Fragility: Ethiopia*. 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.; United Nations Environment Programme. *Case Study: Upscaling community resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction in Ethiopia*. 2022.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Our Focus: Three Development Settings*. 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2015; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Dubai as a smart, sustainable, and resilient role model city to establish a city resilience hub under the MCR 2030 Programme*. 2020.



## ***International and Regional Framework***

The resiliency agenda, which belongs to all actors working to promote resilience and reduce vulnerability to crisis and shocks, was first actualized in 1992 by the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC).<sup>41</sup> Signed by 197 Member States, UNFCCC provides a legal framework for international cooperation aimed at mitigating, adapting, and building resilience against the impacts of climate change.<sup>42</sup> In 2005, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) established the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).<sup>43</sup> As a commitment to the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (2005), AADMER is an agreement on disaster risk reduction (DRR) to enhance cooperation and coordination among Member States while promoting joint response mechanisms, capacity building, and sharing of best practices.<sup>44</sup>

To hold Member States accountable for capacity building for climate change, the *Paris Agreement* was adopted in 2015.<sup>45</sup> The *Paris Agreement* aims to reduce and pursue efforts to decrease global warming well below pre-industrial levels.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Member States must determine, plan, and regularly report on their nationally determined contribution (NDC) to mitigate climate change.<sup>47</sup> Concerning building resiliency for communities across the globe, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* provides a global framework for disaster risk reduction.<sup>48</sup> The *Sendai Framework* outlines seven targets and four priorities for action to prevent and reduce disaster risks.<sup>49</sup> Those four priorities are: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance; investing in disaster reduction for resilience; and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.<sup>50</sup>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) (2015) is a comprehensive framework covering three sustainable development dimensions: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.<sup>51</sup> SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13 (climate action) all include targets for building resilience to crises and shocks.<sup>52</sup> SDG 1, targets 2, 3, and 5, aim to reduce poverty while implementing social protection systems that build resilience for vulnerable populations against socio-economic and environmental shocks and disasters.<sup>53</sup> SDG 11, targets 5 and b, aim to make inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements while reducing the number of people affected by disasters, in line with the *Sendai Framework*.<sup>54</sup> Targets 1, 2, and b of SDG 13 aim to urgently combat climate change and build resilience to natural disasters while increasing climate and disaster risk governance.<sup>55</sup> To finance sustainable development, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015) provides a framework that aligns all financing flows and policies with economic,

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<sup>41</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC*. 2021; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Terminology*. n.d.

<sup>42</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC*. 2021.

<sup>43</sup> ASEAN DRR-CCA. *About AADMER*. 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC*. 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *the 17 Goals*. 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere*. 2015.

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable*. 2015.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*. 2015.

social, and environmental priorities.<sup>56</sup> The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* also includes a comprehensive set of policy actions for building resilience to crises and shocks.<sup>57</sup> With over 100 measures that draw upon all sources of finance, technology, innovation, trade, debt, and data, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* supports the achievement of development.<sup>58</sup> An achievement includes mobilizing financial resources where countries have made efforts to improve tax systems, attract private investment and increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) in line with the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.<sup>59</sup> The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* has also established mechanisms to monitor, review, and hold accountable implementation.<sup>60</sup> For instance, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up provides platforms for Member States to assess progress and identify challenges in implementing the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.<sup>61</sup>

Agenda 2063 (2015) is the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa over the next five decades.<sup>62</sup> Agenda 2063 builds on existing African declarations, programmes, and frameworks, such as the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP).<sup>63</sup> Published in 2014, CAP aims to reach a consensus on common challenges and priorities while recognizing rising trends such as population growth and the youth bulge, urbanization, climate change, and inequality.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, CAP engages Africa in the global debate on completing the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) and addressing emerging development issues.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Agenda 2063 includes a focus on building resilience to crises and shocks, mainly through the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the African Risk Capacity (ARC) initiative.<sup>66</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

Since 2009, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has provided a biennial report—titled the Global Assessment Report (GAR)—of the United Nations (UN) perspective on global efforts to reduce disaster risk and offers a comprehensive assessment of DRR, resilience-building efforts, and recommendations for action.<sup>67</sup> Three recommendations are presented by the 2022 report that encourages governments to think innovatively while encouraging collective impact.<sup>68</sup> Another UNDRR effort to reduce disaster risk is ARISE.<sup>69</sup> Started in 2015, ARISE is a network of over 400 private sector companies committed to risk-informed development, disaster risk reduction, and preparedness action.<sup>70</sup> Outcomes of ARISE include 15 projects by members on long-term Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), where activities range from collaboration with public sector leaders to the development of industry sector-specific guidance on DRR.<sup>71</sup> Managed by UNDRR, Prevention Web is a knowledge-sharing platform on DRR.<sup>72</sup> With over 200,000 visitors and about 71,000 forms of content, Prevention Web is a collaborative tool for those aiming to learn, share, and connect on issues regarding DRR.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development*. 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Official development assistance*.

<sup>60</sup> United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up*. 2023.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> African Union. *Agenda 2063-SDGs*. n.d.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> African Union. *Agenda 2063-SDGs*. n.d.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future*. 2022.

<sup>69</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *About ARISE*. 2023.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Key Performance Indicators 2022-2025*. 2022.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What can you do on PreventionWeb*. n.d.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

UNDP's *Strategic Plan for 2022-2025* (Strategic Plan) (2021) focuses on advancing sustainable development, reducing inequality, and promoting inclusive growth.<sup>74</sup> UNDP recognizes the need to support crisis-affected countries and communities and has included crisis response and prevention as a core focus of the Strategic Plan.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, UNDP's Crisis Offer, a tool published in September 2022 and designed to support countries in their resiliency agenda while promoting human development, is a comprehensive package of services and programs that include: crisis response, disaster reduction, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, recovery and reconstruction, and climate adaptation.<sup>76</sup> The Crisis Offer aims to promote a comprehensive response via four key areas: governance, resilience, recovery, and livelihood; in doing so, UNDP addresses both immediate and long-term development.<sup>77</sup> In addition, the Crisis Offer is also designed to respond to local needs while leveraging strategic partnerships amongst relevant stakeholders and taking a multisectoral approach to address all aspects of crisis and shocks.<sup>78</sup>

In 2018, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development produced a background note titled *Building resilience to multiple shocks affecting people and sustainable development*.<sup>79</sup> The background note recognized the importance of building resilience despite the nature and consequence of shocks, which can affect economic, environmental, and social systems.<sup>80</sup> The note provides policy recommendations by the Trade and Development Board while discussing critical features of resilience-building programs that Member States can implement.<sup>81</sup> To put people and nature first, the Race to Resilience campaign was launched in January 2021 at the Climate Adaptation Summit by the United Nations Climate Action High-Level Champions.<sup>82</sup> The Campaign aims to create a world where individuals thrive rather than survive despite climate shocks and stressors and do not make light of the climate risks faced by urban, rural, and coastal vulnerable communities.<sup>83</sup> Race to Resilience aims to increase resilience for the four billion people living in vulnerable communities while collaborating with global partner organizations and developing tools to support them in their work.<sup>84</sup>

In March 2022, part two of the fifth conference for the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) concluded with 14 resolutions.<sup>85</sup> Three resolutions prioritize ecosystem restoration, biodiversity protection, climate mitigation and adaptation, job creation, and poverty reduction.<sup>86</sup> Further action for the climate resilience agenda includes a pathway produced by the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action's Climate Resilience Network.<sup>87</sup> The pathway is titled "Climate Action Pathway: Climate Resilience" and recognizes the importance of building resilience against a 1.5-degree world.<sup>88</sup> To do this, the pathway suggests six steps: science-led awareness-raising; the execution of climate risk assessments using a systems approach at the national, local, and sector or organizational level; developing and implementing actions and interventions; mobilizing capacity building while scaling up climate action to monitor and track progress; and share knowledge, experiences, and solutions.<sup>89</sup> The pathway also points to climate and disaster risk governance as imperative for the sake of the world's most vulnerable populations.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme: Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Crisis Offer*. 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Building resilience to multiple shocks affecting people and sustainable development*. 2018. p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Race to Resilience*. 2022.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *UN Environment Assembly concludes with 14 resolutions to curb pollution, protect, and restore nature worldwide*. 2022.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Climate Action Pathway: Climate Resilience*. 2021.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

A result of the 22nd meeting of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee (AC22) was a technical paper focused on “Methodologies for Assessing Adaptation Needs and their Application,” which covers various approaches one can use when working on completing all stages of the adaptation process and provides case studies that explore participatory approaches.<sup>91</sup> Finally, to strengthen communication around the climate resiliency agenda, AC22 resulted in the approval of the Adaptation Communication guidance.<sup>92</sup> The guidance can be used to enhance the quality of their adaptation communication submissions to the UNFCCC.<sup>93</sup> Communication is also imperative as input can be provided to the first Global Stock take — a process that takes the pulse of the world's collective progress to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and build resilience to climate change.<sup>94</sup>

### **A Look at Effective Disaster Governance**

According to UNDRR, effective disaster governance builds resilience to crises and shocks by prioritizing DRR and allocating resources.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, effective disaster governance ensures implementation and accountability.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, effective disaster governance is inclusive, as it facilitates participation from all relevant stakeholders.<sup>97</sup> Ultimately, effective disaster governance is fundamental because it provides a framework for managing risks and responding to disasters in a way that minimizes their impact.<sup>98</sup> In 2020, the city of Dubai was recognized by UNDRR as a Role Model City, a distinction given to cities, municipalities, or local governments participating in the Making Cities Resilient Campaign.<sup>99</sup> In addition, those governing bodies must have demonstrated global leadership, good practices, and innovative approaches to DRR and resilience.<sup>100</sup> Once these standards are met, a respective city, municipality, or local government is classified as a Role Model City.<sup>101</sup>

With respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dubai’s government took preventative measures and worked to recuperate from the pandemic’s effects through technological innovation and timely development.<sup>102</sup> According to the COVID-19 City Experience Resilience and Impact Report—published by Smart Dubai, the government agency responsible for leading the digital transformation of Dubai—the United Arab Emirates is working to achieve objectives according to the SDGs.<sup>103</sup> As Dubai sustains resilience despite crisis, it maintains an inclusive, safe, and sustainable city, directly contributing to SDG 11.<sup>104</sup> Additionally, Dubai continues to preserve the safety and future of Dubai’s citizens and residents despite the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>105</sup> At the start of the pandemic, Dubai’s local and federal authorities quickly worked to limit the spread of the virus.<sup>106</sup> Through policy and implementing regulations to keep people safe at home, Dubai residents were also able to benefit from the UAE’s advanced digital infrastructure and innovative services.<sup>107</sup> Such services include the DubaiNow mobile app, which allows residents and visitors access

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<sup>91</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *New Resources Presented to Help Build Resilience to Climate Change*. 2022.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Disaster Risk Reduction, Governance, and Development*. 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>98</sup> Red Cross EU Office. *Good disaster risk governance helps to save lives*. 2020.

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<sup>100</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready*. 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Dubai as a smart, sustainable, and resilient role model city to establish a city resilience hub under the MCR 2030 Programme*. 2020.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *About Making Cities Resilient 2030*. 2023.

<sup>105</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Dubai as a smart, sustainable, and resilient role model city to establish a city resilience hub under the MCR 2030 Programme*. 2020.

<sup>106</sup> Smart Dubai. *Covid-19: City Experience Resilience & Impact Report*. 2020. p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



to 120 services from 33 entities—both private and public.<sup>108</sup> One of those services has the ability to digitally sign documents, which enables the use of legal services, for instance.<sup>109</sup> In addition, the continued development and operation of the UAE Pass, the Emirates' national digital identity, allows for the secure identification of individuals remotely while providing digital signing capabilities.<sup>110</sup> According to Smart Dubai, this authentication software underpins many vital smart services offered in Dubai.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, through technology, Dubai has demonstrated itself as flexible and resilient despite the crisis and shocks imposed by the pandemic.<sup>112</sup>

From the perspective of employees, operations, and services (customers), the report finds low levels of disruption and negative impact on services in Dubai.<sup>113</sup> In addition, operations have detailed they had significant infrastructure and services digitized and working, allowing the continuation of online delivery.<sup>114</sup> In cases where services have not been digitized, operations—people who work to deliver a viable infrastructure—report that there has been “quick and agile” behavior within their organization (government, semi-government, and private entities) to provide remaining services to digital and in a useable condition.<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that the report strongly emphasizes the employee experience.<sup>116</sup> This allowed for the recognition of a new broader online culture with its challenges and lessons learned, which include increased operational flexibility and options for maternal staff.<sup>117</sup> According to Smart Dubai, there have been reports of new mothers and pregnant women seeking variety in their lives and wanting to return to work while caring for their children.<sup>118</sup> The duality of this issue was initially a challenge; however, remote work offers an opportunity for such women and allows them the flexibility of part-time work while at home.<sup>119</sup> The report also highlights some predominately technological options.<sup>120</sup> This is primarily due to the past implementation of foundation infrastructure established by the Dubai government, semi-government, and private entities.<sup>121</sup>

As for crucial recommendations, Dubai aims to embrace a post-COVID-19 culture of productivity and is outcome-oriented, which allows for remote work.<sup>122</sup> According to Forbes, remote work has five benefits: increased productivity, performance, engagement, retention, and profitability.<sup>123</sup> Telecommuters are, on average, 35-40% more productive than their office counterparts, while organizations save an average of \$11,000 annually per part-time telecommuter.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, enabling technology will be the basis of a smart, resilient city if it is accessible and inclusive, and it can help build resilience to crises and shocks by improving preparedness, facilitating communication and coordination, enabling better data analysis, and improving access to critical services.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, according to Smart Dubai, maintaining a holistic city view will allow governments to thrive under pressure.<sup>126</sup> Because Dubai prioritized collective action, organizations in both the public and private sectors could respond to various needs across the city.<sup>127</sup> Ultimately, the combination of tools and technologies, with coherent solid leadership and vision, has

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Smart Dubai. *Covid-19: City Experience Resilience & Impact Report*. 2020. p. 17.

<sup>123</sup> Farrer. *Forbes. 5 Proven Benefits of Remote Work for Companies*. 2020.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Smart Dubai. *Covid-19: City Experience Resilience & Impact Report*. 2020. p. 17; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *How science, technology, and innovation can help build resilience to multiple shocks*. 2020.

<sup>126</sup> Smart Dubai. *Covid-19: City Experience Resilience & Impact Report*. 2020. p. 18.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

allowed the city of Dubai to maintain control and thrive despite these challenging times.<sup>128</sup> Dubai continues to build resilient cities, invest in infrastructure, and provide vital services, making it a pivotal Role Model City in a new era.<sup>129</sup>

### **Case Study: Community-led Efforts and Their Impact in Ethiopia**

Land degradation significantly challenges Ethiopia's rural development and poverty alleviation.<sup>130</sup> More than 85% of land in Ethiopia is estimated to be moderate to severely degraded, of which an estimated 75% of the land is affected by desertification.<sup>131</sup> Rangeland—any form of an open country used for grazing by livestock—degradation is the most significant challenge for pastoral livelihood in the Somali region as the reduction in nutritional quality and quantity of vegetation and the expansion of localized deserts and barren land is evident.<sup>132</sup> For instance, land degradation is becoming a significant challenge in three districts (or woredas)—Shebelle, Harores, and Gursum—resulting in big gullies—long narrow valleys with steep sides—rendering land unproductive.<sup>133</sup> Major causes of degradation include climate change causing, drought and arid conditions, flooding, and human factors leading to the overuse of natural resources.<sup>134</sup> As a result, a loss of pastures and failure of crops forces local communities to abandon their land and migrate to other areas for better livelihood options.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists of the Somali region depend on livestock and their products for livelihood, resulting in high vulnerability due to one source of income.<sup>136</sup> Poor agro-pastoralists and farmers along the riverbank cannot get agricultural inputs and technology to ensure household food security.<sup>137</sup>

In response, from May 2019 to June 2022, a project in the Fafan (Dolo Ado district) and Liben (Shebelle Harores and Gursum district) zones of the Somali Region, Ethiopia took place that highlights Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) interventions.<sup>138</sup> There are three components of the Eco-DRR model that can work to upscale community resilience: Ecosystem Restoration/Protection; DRR; and Climate Smart livelihood.<sup>139</sup> In Ethiopia, there is a greater emphasis on Climate Smart Livelihood and Ecosystem Restoration/Protection due to the geopolitics within the region.<sup>140</sup> For instance, within the Fafan Zone of Ethiopia, particularly Hare 2 Kebele, the implementation of water spreading weirs (WSWs)—structures made of natural stones and cement that span the entire width of a valley to spread floodwater over the adjacent land area—is an innovative and successful Eco-DRR measure.<sup>141</sup> WSWs slows down the speed of run-off water and facilitates infiltration to the ground and the settling soil, which also improves the productivity of the land by enhancing moisture gradients across farming fields.<sup>142</sup> With the technical support of the German Development Agency (GIZ) and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS), agro-pastoralists have regained confidence and hope in their land.<sup>143</sup> Foundationally, the project demonstrates the need for large-scale implementation of Eco-DRR in advancing the *Sendai Framework* and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>144</sup> The objective of the project, presented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with Partners for Resilience (PfP)—a five-year program that focuses on three key areas: strengthening community resilience, empowering civil society,

<sup>128</sup> Smart Dubai. *Covid-19: City Experience Resilience & Impact Report*. 2020. p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Dubai as a smart, sustainable, and resilient role model city to establish a city resilience hub under the MCR 2030 Programme*. 2020.

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Case Study: Upscaling community resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction in Ethiopia*. 2022. p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

and policy dialogue—, is to upscale community resilience through Eco-DRR activities.<sup>145</sup> The project addresses three key risks—droughts, flooding, and food insecurity—via the Eco-DRR model.<sup>146</sup> To address these risks the project aims to augment the resilience of communities to disasters and climate risk through the piloting and scaling of Eco-DRR activities.<sup>147</sup> The project also aims to reach 44,000 vulnerable people in about 80 communities in Ethiopia.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, through the support of a participatory ecosystem, community disaster risk assessments, and action planning, the project hopes to scale up Integrated Risk Management (IRM)—a strategic and collaborative way to manage risk across an organization, or in this case a national region—and inclusive risk governance— a belief that integration of knowledge and values can best be accomplished by involving those actors in the decision-making process regarding risk.<sup>149</sup> The project also aspires to scale up Eco-DRR action while promoting citizen-based monitoring of disaster and climate resilient policies.<sup>150</sup>

A solution via the Eco-DRR project entails the adoption of a community-based approach, where DRR is identified from an ecosystem, climate, and livelihood perspective.<sup>151</sup> The project influenced the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), a nationwide, multi-billion dollar program launched and led by the Ethiopian government in 2005.<sup>152</sup> The program’s primary objective was to address rural food insecurity, build resilience, and reduce the need for humanitarian appeals.<sup>153</sup> Since its inception, the program has grown from 2.5 million rural households to 8 million direct beneficiaries.<sup>154</sup> Influenced by the Eco-DRR project, the public work component of the PSNP program is recognized as an upscaling opportunity as it would aid in effective and sustainable risk reduction among vulnerable communities.<sup>155</sup> In addition, the promotion of Eco-DRR approaches in the PSNP provides a viable option for effective and sustainable risk reduction among vulnerable communities.<sup>156</sup> In collaboration with project partners such as the ERCS, Wetland International, Cordiad, the regional and Woreda Agricultural and Natural Resources Offices, GIZ, and Jigjiga University, Woreda technical working groups were formed from agricultural, natural resource, and water offices, especially in Shebelle, Harores, and Gursum woredas.<sup>157</sup> Ultimately, including key Eco-DRR measures in the Woreda PSNP plan exemplifies successful upscaling via community-led efforts.<sup>158</sup>

## **Conclusion**

As the resiliency agenda proceeds, institutions must act cohesively rather than silo their response to crises perceived as individual.<sup>159</sup> As the world grapples with several crises with complex disruptions and long-term consequences, it is through innovative risk management practices that Member States will evolve.<sup>160</sup> According to scholars, resilience can be an essential condition where recovery cannot be done alone.<sup>161</sup> Resilient institutions bounce back better than before and thrive.<sup>162</sup> As societies continue to develop sophisticated ways to manage crises and shocks, it is through strong, stable institutions that recovery is possible.<sup>163</sup> Member States must look to Role Model Cities for recommendations and ways to move forward despite disaster.<sup>164</sup> They must also seek opportunities within their countries to engage civil

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 2-3.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Brende et al. *Resilience for sustainable, inclusive growth*. 2022.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready*. 2019.

society and empower community-led efforts.<sup>165</sup> Ultimately, building resilience to crises and shocks is a concerted effort that requires all stakeholders to act together, not alone.<sup>166</sup>

### **Further Research**

Delegates should consider these questions when performing their research: What are the best practices and strategies for building resilience? What resources and support are available at the local, national, and regional levels? How do the policies and programmes of my Member State advance the resiliency agenda? What are the potential crisis and shocks that impact my Member State? What is the potential impact of those crises and shocks on vulnerable populations? How do local, national, and regional social protection programs cushion the effects of crises and shocks? How do Member States advance the voices of civil society when building resilience to crises and shocks? How can disaster risk governance maintain a flexible and innovative mindset?

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<sup>165</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Case Study: Upscaling community resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction in Ethiopia*. 2022.

<sup>166</sup> Brende et al. *Resilience for sustainable, inclusive growth*. 2022.





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## 2. Promoting Legal Frameworks to Ensure the Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment

*“Recognition of the right to a healthy environment would not require a sea-change in human rights law; on the contrary, it would highlight what has already become clear: all human beings deserve to live in an environment that enables them to enjoy their human rights.”<sup>167</sup>*

### Introduction

According to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), the environment is currently facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution.<sup>168</sup> These crises present some of the biggest threats to humanity, as rising global temperatures, water shortages, air pollution, and climate-related disaster displacement all affect a myriad of human rights.<sup>169</sup> The right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (R2HE), as defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), consists of six substantive elements that include a safe climate; clean air; healthy ecosystems and biodiversity; safe and sufficient water; healthy and sustainable food; and a non-toxic environment.<sup>170</sup> There are also three procedural elements of this right that include access to information; public participation in decision-making; and access to justice.<sup>171</sup> Given the interlinkage between the environment and human rights, R2HE is critical to the full enjoyment and exercise of the right to food, water, sanitation, health, and life for all.<sup>172</sup> In the past two years, there has been international recognition of R2HE as a human right and filling the gap between environmental justice and international law.<sup>173</sup> On 8 October 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 48/13 (2021) on “The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment,” constituting the first formal recognition of access to a clean environment as a universal right for all.<sup>174</sup> Less than a year later, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the landmark resolution 76/300 on “The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment” on 28 July 2022, which is the second formal recognition of the right to a clean and sustainable environment at the global level.<sup>175</sup>

While these two recent United Nations (UN) documents are not legally binding, General Assembly resolutions have proven to be significant in enacting change in laws, policies, and legal bodies within Member States as well as international law norms.<sup>176</sup> For example, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/292 on 28 July 2010, which recognizes the human right to water and sanitation.<sup>177</sup> As a result, many Member States updated their legal frameworks to reflect this right; courts issued judgments reflecting water as a human right; and regulatory bodies were created to focus on water and sanitation services.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Knox. *Presentation of Four Reports: Children’s Rights and the Environment, Country Visit to Uruguay, Country Visit to Mongolia, Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment*. 2018. p. 7.

<sup>168</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *What is the Triple Planetary Crisis?*. 2022.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?*. 2023. p. 9.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>173</sup> Gueye et al. International Labour Organization. *UN General Assembly recognizes human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment*. 2022.

<sup>174</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council. *The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (A/HRC/RES/48/13)*. 2021.

<sup>175</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (A/RES/76/300)*. 2022.

<sup>176</sup> Heller. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *10th anniversary of the recognition of water and sanitation as a human right by the General Assembly: Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Léo Heller*. 2020.

<sup>177</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to water and sanitation (A/RES/64/292)*. 2010.

<sup>178</sup> Heller. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *10th anniversary of the recognition of water and sanitation as a human right by the General Assembly: Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Léo Heller*. 2020.



As such, UNDP developed a three-pronged approach for promoting R2HE and other rights directly affected by environmental degradation.<sup>179</sup> The first component of this strategy is establishing national and international legal frameworks that integrate human rights-based approaches (HRBA), which addresses existing inequalities in policies, practices, and uses of power that often leave those most vulnerable behind.<sup>180</sup> Two additional components that support UNDP's approach in fostering R2HE include strengthening institutions to be accessible, competent, and impactful and guaranteeing that people are legally empowered in environmental justice matters.<sup>181</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

Guided by the principles of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), Article 12 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) outlines the right to the highest attainable standard of health and well-being.<sup>182</sup> Specifically, it further calls on Member States to improve all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene.<sup>183</sup> In June 1972, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment occurred and led to the inception of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).<sup>184</sup> Additionally, the *Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment* (1972) was adopted, symbolizing the first international document to recognize the relationship between human rights and the environment.<sup>185</sup> Following the Stockholm Declaration, the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992) became one of the largest outcome documents of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, held on the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm Human Environment Conference.<sup>186</sup>

Article 24 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989) underscores the importance of Member States ensuring that children have the right to receive services and care that promote their health and well-being, keeping in mind the risks posed by environmental pollution.<sup>187</sup> The rights of indigenous peoples to land and resources as well as quality of life are enshrined in Articles 23, 26, and 43 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) (2007).<sup>188</sup> Article 29 of the UNDRIP also recognizes indigenous peoples' right to maintain and protect their territories free from discrimination and the disposal of hazardous substances.<sup>189</sup>

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, includes several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that promote a healthy environment.<sup>190</sup> In particular, target 9 of SDG 3 (good health and well-being) highlights the need to reduce death and illnesses around air pollution and unsafe water.<sup>191</sup> Further, target b of SDG 13 (climate action) promotes prioritizing vulnerable communities in capacity-building efforts related to climate change planning and management.<sup>192</sup> Lastly, targets 3, 6, 7, 10, and b of SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) calls for achieving many of the procedural elements of R2HE, such as advancing the rule of law, inclusive and

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<sup>179</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Guidance Note*. 2022. p. 7.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>182</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200(XXI))*. 1966.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 5-16 June 1972, Stockholm*. n.d.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992*. n.d.

<sup>187</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*. 1989.

<sup>188</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*. 2007.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

participatory decision-making at all levels of institutions, and public access to information.<sup>193</sup> Shortly after the launch of the 2030 Agenda, the *Paris Agreement* (2015), drafted at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), became the first multilateral climate change agreement to explicitly reference respecting and promoting human rights.<sup>194</sup> The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) *Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment* (2018), specifically principles 1, 2, 3, and 13, advocate for Member States to establish and enforce legal frameworks to prevent environmental damage that hinders the full enjoyment of human rights.<sup>195</sup>

At the regional level, Article 24 of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* (1981) by the African Union includes the right to a satisfactory general environment favorable to their development.<sup>196</sup> Article 11 of the *Protocol of San Salvador* (1988) adopted by the Organization of American States outlines the right to live in a healthy environment.<sup>197</sup> In 1998, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) adopted the *Aarhus Convention* (1998), where the preamble promotes the right to live in an environment adequate to individuals' health and well-being and the protection of the environment for present and future generations.<sup>198</sup> Additionally, Article 38 of the *Arab Charter of Human Rights* (2004), adopted by the League of Arab States, affirms an adequate standard of living and the right to a healthy environment as well.<sup>199</sup>

### **Role of the International System**

UNDP remains committed to ensuring R2HE through its extensive experience in constitutional reform, environmental rule of law, and securing individuals' access to justice through legal empowerment and aid.<sup>200</sup> Since 2008, the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development (Global Programme) serves as the leading operation to promote human rights and the rule of law throughout 40 conflict and crisis-affected areas around the world.<sup>201</sup> The Global Programme, a part of UNDP's Crisis Bureau, holds an annual meeting, releases a yearly report, and partners with governments, businesses, and civil society organizations to establish a culture with practices and policies that protect those who are most affected by environmental degradation.<sup>202</sup> Phase IV of the Global Programme's Blueprint for Transformative Change (2022-2025) is guided by governance and resilience and supports organization-wide efforts related to the environment.<sup>203</sup> The Tripartite Partnership (TPP) between UNDP, OHCHR, and Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) also holds an annual meeting and aims to strengthen national human rights institutions (NHRI) through capacity building and assessment, accreditation reviews, strategic planning, and institutional adaption in response to COVID-19.<sup>204</sup>

In 2020, UNDP, OHCHR, and UNEP co-led a thematic task team in the Secretary-General's "Call to Action for Human Rights" (C2A) that focuses on fulfilling R2HE for future generations.<sup>205</sup> After the adoption of HRC resolution 48/13 (2021) and General Assembly resolution 76/300 (2022), UNDP

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>194</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Integrating human rights at the UNFCCC*. n.d.

<sup>195</sup> Knox. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment*. 2018.

<sup>196</sup> African Union. *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*. 1981. p. 8.

<sup>197</sup> Organization of American States. *Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 'Protocol of San Salvador'*. 1988.

<sup>198</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*. 1998. pp. 2-3.

<sup>199</sup> League of Arab States. *Arab Charter on Human Rights*. 2004.

<sup>200</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Securing Our Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*. 2022.

<sup>201</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Rule of Law and Human Rights Annual Report*. 2021.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Blueprint for Transformative Change through the Rule of Law and Human Rights*. 2022.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Tripartite Partnership to Support National Human Rights Institutions*. 2021.

<sup>205</sup> Office of the Secretariat. United Nations. *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights*. 2020.

released a report titled *Environmental Justice: Securing Our Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment* (2022) and its *Strategic Plan (2022-2025)* integrating efforts between environmental justice and the rule of law, human rights, and governance and nature.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, two of the six signature solutions in the strategic plan highlight the committee's promise to "future-proofing" existing governance systems and assisting governments in minimizing Member States' negative contributions to the environment.<sup>207</sup> In particular, UNDP's Climate Promise continues to serve as the largest global support in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation by helping over 120 Member States meet their long-term goals and targets under the *Paris Agreement*.<sup>208</sup> UNDP also works at the regional level to improve current environmental regulatory framework and amend land laws through initiatives like their Environmental Governance Programme (EGP) with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>209</sup> This body also played a major role in the development of Tanzania's Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance, Vietnam's *Biodiversity Law* (2008) and its subsequent revisions, and the *Escazú Agreement* (2018) in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>210</sup>

Likewise, UNEP's Environmental Rights Initiative advances R2HE by working with organizations to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge around environmental rights, particularly to vulnerable communities.<sup>211</sup> Additionally, it advises businesses on best practices for a HRBA culture and decision-making that puts people first.<sup>212</sup> UNEP also frequently supports OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment on consultations, expert seminars, and regional negotiations to enhance capacity-building on environmental matters among states.<sup>213</sup> The Special Rapporteur is also mandated to conduct country visits and provide recommendations and practical solutions for R2HE to Member States through annual reports submitted to the HRC and General Assembly.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides assistance to those displaced by climate disasters and advocates for the legal protection of refugees through its climate action agenda, which is carried out by their Special Advisor on Climate Action.<sup>215</sup> In doing so, UNHCR acknowledges the significance of fulfilling R2HE in the context of climate-related displacement and the international community's responsibility to protect individuals forcibly displaced by climate change and disasters.<sup>216</sup>

### ***Measures to Ensure a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment***

Despite the proliferation of environmental justice laws in the past decade, UNDP estimates 1.2 billion people could be displaced by the triple planetary crisis by 2050.<sup>217</sup> Presently, the World Health Organization (WHO) states that nearly the entire global population breathes air that exceeds WHO air quality limits due to both household and outdoor air pollution exposure.<sup>218</sup> Low- to middle-income countries experience the highest levels of exposure to air pollution, which can result from multiple sources including the use of household combustion appliances, emissions from fossil fuel combustion, and forest

<sup>206</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Securing Our Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2022.

<sup>207</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2022.

<sup>208</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise Explainer*. 2022.

<sup>209</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Governance for Sustainable Natural Resource Management (SEPA EGP)*. n.d.

<sup>210</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Guidance Note*. 2022. p. 10, pp. 12-13.

<sup>211</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *What is the Environmental Rights Initiative?*. n.d.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment*. n.d.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Climate change and disaster displacement*. n.d.

<sup>216</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *UN Human Rights Committee decision on climate change is a wake-up call, according to UNHCR*. 2020.

<sup>217</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *STOCKHOLM+50: A Global Synthesis Report of National Consultations*. 2022. p. 19.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

fires.<sup>219</sup> As a result, exposure to pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) all contribute to adverse health issues and diseases.<sup>220</sup>

According to the OHCHR, 150 states include environmental protection or R2HE in their constitutions.<sup>221</sup> However, many of these laws lack clear standards, mandates, do not address issues on the ground, and legal and regulatory bodies are underfunded, resulting in a lack of implementation, enforcement, and accountability.<sup>222</sup> Thus, states have an obligation to reform and adopt environmental laws that account for constant monitoring, evaluation, and realignment of priorities.<sup>223</sup> In addition to effective public policy, states are encouraged to consider their judicial branches to include specialized courts or tribunals tasked with hearing environmental cases.<sup>224</sup> Independent national human rights institutions (NHRI) also play a key role in ensuring R2HE by serving as a rights-based advisor to the government and providing human rights education to vulnerable communities on their rights and access to justice.<sup>225</sup>

Businesses are one of the major contributors to air pollution, and serve as a crucial actor in respecting R2HE.<sup>226</sup> Endorsed by the HRC, the second pillar of the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (2011) emphasizes the corporate responsibility to uphold human rights and to avoid adverse human rights impact resulting from its own activities.<sup>227</sup> Similarly, the *Children's Rights and Business Principles* (2012-2015), created by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), and Save the Children, highlights the corporate responsibility to ensure the protection and safety of children in all activities and decision-making.<sup>228</sup> Accordingly, the private sector should adopt responsible business practices, transparent decision-making, and strive for operations and supply chains that are climate resilient.<sup>229</sup> Other ways that private companies can proactively advance R2HE include implementing green policies, shifting to sustainable production methods, and performing annual environmental and human rights impact assessments.<sup>230</sup> Civil society organizations are another key actor in supporting R2HE as they can create a space to represent and advocate for those most affected by climate change.<sup>231</sup> For example, civil society organizations from the Human Rights & Climate Change Working Group launched a Global Campaign for the Right to a Healthy Environment in 2020, gathering over 1,350 signatures from 75 Member States and contributing to the successful adoption of HRC resolution 48/13 (2021) and General Assembly resolution 76/300 (2022).<sup>232</sup> Thus, the involvement of civil society advocacy bridges knowledge and communication gaps, promotes accountability, and facilitates a holistic, inclusive, and effective approach to R2HE.<sup>233</sup>

### **Safeguarding the Most Vulnerable Through Legal Protections**

UNEP estimates that without improved institutions, the world's poor living in resource-rich Member States is expected to rise from 20% to 50% by 2030.<sup>234</sup> Weak institutions contribute to low-quality provision of services, imposing more considerable barriers to access for the poor and other vulnerable groups, such

<sup>219</sup> World Health Organization. *Air pollution*. n.d.

<sup>220</sup> World Health Organization. *Air quality and health: Types of pollutants*. n.d.

<sup>221</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Right to a healthy environment*. 2022.

<sup>222</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Environmental Laws Impeded by Lack of Enforcement, First-ever Global Assessment Finds*. 2019.

<sup>223</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?*. 2023. p. 17.

<sup>224</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Environmental Rule of Law: First Global Report*. 2019. pp. 185-191.

<sup>225</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?*. 2023. p. 18.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework*. 2011. p. 13.

<sup>228</sup> United Nations Children's Fund. *Children's Rights and Business Principles*. 2012.

<sup>229</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?* 2023. pp. 18-19.

<sup>230</sup> Morrison. Business. *Can You Make a Profit and Be Socially Responsible?*. 2023; United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?*. 2023. p. 18-19.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>232</sup> Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group. *Recognizing the Right to a Healthy Environment*. n.d.

<sup>233</sup> ESCR-Net. *Advancing the Right to a Healthy Environment*. 2023.

<sup>234</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Environmental Rule of Law: First Global Report*. 2019. p. 39.



as women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, and children.<sup>235</sup> For women in rural areas, water shortages place them in the position to travel far to fetch safe water for their families, as they typically are caregivers in the household.<sup>236</sup> Further, girls often have to assist their mothers in domestic responsibilities during extreme weather conditions, which contributes to school absenteeism.<sup>237</sup> Also, gendered cooking responsibilities expose millions of women and girls to respiratory and heart disease due to household air pollution from inefficient cookstoves.<sup>238</sup> In the 2023 annual report *Women, girls and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment*, the Special Rapporteur notes that it will take 286 years to guarantee full legal protection for women and girls at current rates of progress.<sup>239</sup> These rates are further exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>240</sup>

Another critical group that needs legal protections and R2HE are children, who account for half of the global extreme poor.<sup>241</sup> WHO indicates that over a quarter of the 5.9 million deaths of children under the age of 5 in 2015 were attributed to environmental risks.<sup>242</sup> Additionally, children are considered the most vulnerable group to environmental degradation because they breathe at a faster rate, drink more water, and eat more food per pound of body weight than adults.<sup>243</sup> Air pollution places children at greater risk of diseases like asthma and lung cancer and interrupts physical and cognitive development.<sup>244</sup> Water pollution, climate change, food scarcity, and malnutrition also limit a child's right to life, health, development, safety, and environment.<sup>245</sup> For example, inadequate nutrition and water scarcity caused by extreme weather conditions leads to unsafe sanitation, which then results in children contracting communicable diseases and infections.<sup>246</sup>

Environmental harm also disproportionately interferes with the rights of indigenous peoples who depend on land and resources for their survival and customary practices.<sup>247</sup> While there has been an increased recognition of their rights to land and resources in national laws and agreement, political and policy changes result in land titling, demarcation, and resource mapping processes being delayed or abandoned.<sup>248</sup> The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reports that 370 million indigenous people, representing up to 5,000 indigenous cultures, occupy 20% of the world's territory.<sup>249</sup> Further, indigenous lands encompass 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity.<sup>250</sup> However, unsustainable practices like mining activities and large dams, tourist development, and toxic waste affect indigenous peoples' livelihood and their right to land.<sup>251</sup> Moreover, some mitigation measures for climate

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>236</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Climate Change Fuels Violence Against Women and Girls: Human Rights to Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*. 2022.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Boyd. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Women, girls, and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/HRC/52/33)*. 2023.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> United Nations Children's Fund. *Child poverty*. n.d.

<sup>242</sup> Knox. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/HRC/37/58)*. 2018. p. 5.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-8.

<sup>247</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Indigenous peoples and environment*. n.d.

<sup>248</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. *Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories, and resources*. 2018.

<sup>249</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Indigenous peoples and environment*. n.d.

<sup>250</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. *Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories, and resources*. 2018.

<sup>251</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Indigenous peoples and environment*. n.d.

change, such as biofuel initiatives, aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but are often pursued without indigenous peoples' consent<sup>252</sup> and affects their communities' ecosystems and water supply.<sup>253</sup>

Subsequently, protecting R2HE for those most vulnerable to climate crises leads to the achievement of additional SDGs such as SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 5 (gender equality), and SDG 15 (life on land).<sup>254</sup> UNDP's NDC Support Programme provides technical support to 24 Member States to incorporate gender-responsive measures in their NDCs.<sup>255</sup> The Children's Environmental Rights Initiative (CERI) is a joint coalition of international bodies that work under the Special Rapporteur to advocate for children's R2HE.<sup>256</sup> CERI achieves this through campaigns, promoting universal standards, gathering stakeholders, and empowering youth around the world.<sup>257</sup> The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child is also working with Member States, regional organizations, UN agencies, NHRIs, and children to create General Comment No. 26, an authoritative guide that will provide recommendations to the governments of 196 Member States.<sup>258</sup> The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples highlights the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD-plus) and Green Climate Fund's Indigenous Peoples Policy as two efforts working to bridge the gap in legal protections for indigenous people in environmental policy.<sup>259</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Every individual should have the right to a clean, healthy, safe, and sustainable environment.<sup>260</sup> The adoption of HRC resolution 48/13 (2021) and General Assembly resolution 76/300 (2022) on "The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment" is the beginning of international recognition for R2HE.<sup>261</sup> However, it is imperative for states, public institutions, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders to recognize their responsibility in ensuring R2HE is a reality for all.<sup>262</sup> UNDP remains dedicated to promoting inclusive governance systems and supporting constitutional reforms.<sup>263</sup> Additionally, it actively works to advance the rights of future generations through capacity-building and expanding upon existing programs that emphasize the link between human rights and the environment.<sup>264</sup> Member States are encouraged to protect the rights of women and girls by prioritizing water, sanitation, and hygiene provision in households, schools, and public spaces; strengthening regulations that prevent air pollution exposure; and creating targets to ensure that women hold leadership positions in the environmental sector.<sup>265</sup> States should also guarantee the procedural rights of children's R2HE by creating educational programs that increase children's knowledge of climate change and environmental harm; enforcing recommendations from UN agencies that include best practices of environmental standards; and working with the private sector to respect children's rights in business practices and

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<sup>252</sup> United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. *Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories, and resources*. 2018.

<sup>253</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. *Indigenous peoples and the nature they protect*. 2020.

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<sup>255</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Responsive NDC Planning and Implementation*. n.d.

<sup>256</sup> Children's Environmental Rights Initiative. *Right to a Healthy Environment*. n.d.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child commits to a new General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change*. 2021.

<sup>259</sup> Tzay. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples: Impacts of climate change and climate finance on indigenous peoples' rights (A/HRC/36/46)*. 2017.

<sup>260</sup> Gueye et al. International Labour Organization. *UN General Assembly recognizes human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment*. 2022.

<sup>261</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?*. 2023. p. 6.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>263</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Securing Our Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*. 2022. pp. 27-28.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Boyd. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Women, girls, and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (A/HRC/52/33)*. 2023. pp. 21-23.

decisions, similar to UNDP's Business and Human Rights Programme.<sup>266</sup> Lastly, the international community should recognize the relationship between environmental harm and indigenous peoples' right to land and their well-being, and promote their participation in climate change planning.<sup>267</sup>

### **Further Research**

Delegates should consider further exploring the following: How can the international community better protect the rights of environmental defenders and journalists? What are some ways to promote the private sector to comply with environmental standards and make responsible business decisions? What are the socio-economic benefits of the universal recognition to R2HE? How can public and private institutions put effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure the implementation of R2HE?

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*This report produced by UNDP examines worldwide environmental justice trends from the perspective of the legal empowerment of the poor. The report also contains current strategies used across the Asia-Pacific, Arab States, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean to include environmental justice in national constitutions, laws, and policies. Further, this document highlights how poor, marginalized, and indigenous communities are almost entirely dependent upon key natural resources yet are also most affected by the triple environmental crisis resulting from unsustainable development practices. Since this report includes comparative analysis, case studies, and policy recommendations, delegates will be able to incorporate the document's suggestions into their Member State's position.*

United Nations Development Programme. *Environmental Justice: Securing Our Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*. 2022. Retrieved 14 February 2023 from: <https://www.undp.org/publications/environmental-justice-securing-our-right-clean-healthy-and-sustainable-environment>

*This paper is one of the most recent documents on this topic, which outlines UNDP's new strategy for advancing environmental justice. The agency will now take a three-pronged approach to this work that includes increasing access to justice and legal empowerment, strengthening people-centered and effective institutions, and establishing enabling legal frameworks. Delegates will also find a helpful supplemental document that identifies priority areas, strategic measures, and links to additional resources that will best guide them in their research about the work of UNDP.*

United Nations Environment Programme. *Environmental Rule of Law: First Global Report*. 2019. Retrieved 15 February 2023 from: <https://www.unep.org/resources/assessment/environmental-rule-law-first-global-report>

*This report, produced by UNEP, provides delegates with a comprehensive explanation of the environmental rule of law and the substantive and procedural rights to a healthy environment. As the first-ever global assessment of the environmental rule of law, the report reveals a concerning trend: despite the significant growth in environmental laws and agencies over the past 40 years, inadequate enforcement remains to be an underlying issue. Understanding the elements of a*

<sup>266</sup> Knox. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (A/HRC/37/58)*. 2018. pp. 18-19.

<sup>267</sup> Tzay. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples: Impacts of climate change and climate finance on indigenous peoples' rights (A/HRC/36/46)*. 2017. pp. 20-22.



*healthy environment and the history of the evolution of environmental law will help delegates see both the successes in this field and areas of growth for the international community.*

United Nations, General Assembly. *The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (A/RES/76/300)*. 2022. Retrieved 4 May 2023 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/300>

*This landmark document was adopted by the General Assembly in July 2022 and is the second formal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. It has been noted that this effort is a culmination of five decades of work, dating back to the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, which was the first international document to recognize the link between human rights and the environment formally. General Assembly resolutions have often served as catalysts for change and encouraged Member States to evaluate and reshape national laws and policies.*

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*The landmark General Assembly resolution 76/300 shortly followed the adoption of this outcome document, which is the first formal recognition of access to a clean environment as a universal right for all. This resolution was adopted by the Human Rights Council in October 2021 and cited several other key documents on this topic that will assist delegates in identifying the role of the international system. This will also serve as a critical starting point for delegates when they begin their research into the international framework related to the topic.*

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