

## Forum: Sustainable Development Goal 13 Committee

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## TOPIC (#1): The question of climate vulnerability in lower-income countries

[Link to UNISMUN LibGuides](#)

### I. Introduction to the Topic

Climate change significantly affects all stakeholders to a great degree. However, it is the lower-income countries that are most prone to the harmful effects of climate change. The vulnerability of these regions to climate change is a significant issue that requires international cooperation to address.

Climate-vulnerable areas are more susceptible to extreme weather events, and hence climate change is not just a mere environmental dilemma, but also an economic crisis for lower-income countries.

Lower-income countries are more susceptible to extreme weather events such as droughts, and floods, and the limited resources these countries have exacerbate the impact of these events. Moreover, lower-income countries heavily rely on sectors such as agriculture. These sectors are climate-sensitive and can be significantly impacted by climate change. For instance, the crops may be completely destroyed, which at the same time exacerbates food scarcity.

At a local level, climate vulnerability can affect communities in many different ways. For instance, people, even communities as a whole are forced to migrate as their homes are destroyed from climate-related disasters such as rising sea levels. Furthermore, lower-income communities often lack access to basic necessities such as clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. Climate change only worsens the situation.

More on a micro-level, climate vulnerability has tangible effects on individual lives. Disruptions in food production and availability, the loss of homes, and the general exposure to various social and economic risks are all ways individuals can be impacted due to climate vulnerability.

### II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

#### Climate Change

Climate change is the long-term shift in temperatures and weather patterns majorly due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, perpetuating the process of global warming. This is significant as climate change is the culprit that created climate vulnerability in the first place. As lower income countries often have limited resources and funding, they become vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It is extremely important for delegates to understand climate change to address vulnerability to climate change.

#### Vulnerability

Vulnerability is the ability to be easily harmed. This is significant as vulnerability or more specifically, climate vulnerability (vulnerability to climate change), is the issue at hand the delegates will be debating on.

### **Low-income countries**

Low-income countries are countries with a GNI (Gross National Income) per capita, of \$1,135 or less. These countries often have characteristics such as inequality, poverty, unemployment, economic instability and more. This is significant as these countries are the vulnerable and primary stakeholders in this topic. They are the ones struggling with climate vulnerability. Delegates must suit the needs of these low-income countries, as well as the individuals when trying to address climate vulnerability in these regions.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Adaptation is predicting the effects of climate change, and taking actions to minimise the damage of the effects or prevent such effects from taking place completely. This is significant as it is a crucial component in addressing climate vulnerability in low-income countries. This includes taking measures such as building sea walls to prevent rising sea levels from taking effect.

### **Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Mitigation is reducing the emission of greenhouse gases to make the effects of climate change less severe. This is significant as it is a crucial component in addressing climate vulnerability in low-income countries. This includes establishing net-zero policies to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases.

## **III. Key Stakeholders**

### **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

The UNFCCC is a key stakeholder as it is the international treaty under the United Nations that provides the framework for global cooperation on climate change. It plays a central role in facilitating negotiations, promoting climate action, and low-income countries in addressing climate change and vulnerability.

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a key stakeholder as it is an international body established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988. It provides policymakers with scientific assessments of climate change, including its impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation measures.

### **International Financial Institutions (IFIs)**

IFIs such as the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are a key stakeholder as they can finance climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in lower-income countries. They can

provide funding, resources, and technical assistance to the low-income countries, as well as help implement climate policies for climate action.

### Low-income countries

Low-income countries themselves are definitely crucial stakeholders as they are the ones vulnerable to the detrimental effects of climate change. These countries are in need of better adaptation and mitigation measures to minimise the effects of climate change, however are unable to do so in solitude, without the support of the international community.

### Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

NGOs fighting against climate change and climate vulnerability are important stakeholders in advocating for the needs and interests of vulnerable communities in lower-income countries. They can provide support and expertise to these climate-vulnerable regions, in areas such as capacity building, policy advocacy, and resource mobilisation.

## IV. Key Issues including Background Information

### Casualties due to climate vulnerability

Climate vulnerability in low-income countries is undoubtedly a serious issue. Climate change is causing an increase in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and natural disasters. These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable populations in low-income countries who lack the resources and infrastructure to protect themselves. As a result, casualties due to climate change-related events, such as floods, heatwaves, and storms, are on the rise. Human lives are at stake here. Especially in the status quo, with the already severe climate change, protecting human lives and reducing the vulnerability of communities is paramount.

### Exacerbation of existing inequalities and poverty

Climate change exacerbates inequalities and poverty, particularly in climate-vulnerable countries, namely the low-income countries. Extreme weather events, such as droughts and thunderstorms lead to crop failures, and displacement which significantly disrupts individual lives, especially those that are already on the bottom half of the wealth ladder. Such events only increase poverty rates and worsen existing inequalities.

### Incentive

While in an ideal world, developed and wealthy countries would help low-income countries adapt to climate change, the reality is, there is little to no incentive for such aid to be given. Thus, it is of utmost importance for delegates to create a complex and comprehensive resolution that incentivizes developed nations to adhere to addressing climate vulnerability. Without, international cooperation would fail.

### Resource allocation

Resource allocation in the context of climate change refers to the distribution of financial, or technological resources to support mitigation and adaptation efforts. The problem in the status quo is, low-income countries lack such resources and expertise to effectively adapt and mitigate climate change, which is why resource allocation is essential.

## V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1972	The United Nations held a conference on the Human Environment called the Stockholm conference, where countries recognized the connection between human activities and climate change.
1988	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
1992	The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was found during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
2007	The IPCC had their fourth assessment report, which provided a scientific assessment of climate change, showing the disproportionate vulnerability of low-income countries to climate change.
2015	The Paris Agreement was adopted during the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21). It provided clear sets of goals, guidelines, and frameworks for countries to follow.
2019	The UN Climate Action Summit took place, emphasising world leaders to support vulnerable communities.
2021	The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) took place in Glasgow, Scotland. The meeting emphasised countries to reduce emissions even more, and address climate-vulnerability in low-income countries to ensure a globalised approach in climate mitigation.

## VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

### Casualties due to climate vulnerability

In the perspective of developing countries, preventing the rise of casualties due to climate change would be a serious challenge. This would require international aid, and the successful development of adaptation measures. This includes the development of early warning systems, enhanced infrastructure, adaptive and sustainable agriculture, and the strengthening of humanitarian aid and social welfare programs. When the communities are undergoing a climate crisis, it is essential for there to be effective humanitarian aid, and robust social welfare programs such as healthcare systems. On the other hand, for developed countries, a challenge would be providing support such as technical training, resource funding, and financial funding without risking their own economy, or putting themselves in a climate-vulnerable position. A potential solution is to have a progressive funding system where different countries, depending on their state of development (i.e. HDI or GDP), fund and aid these low-income countries differently. Moreover, UN related agencies or organisations may help in terms of humanitarian aid and climate-vulnerability assessments.

### Exacerbation of existing inequalities and poverty

Similarly, developed countries will face the challenge and question of, in what ways and to what extent should aid be provided to the lower-income countries? Thus, there needs to be specific clauses in the resolution with reasonable mechanisms in addressing this dilemma, such as the solution stated earlier, a progressive funding system. Nonetheless, in addition to funding, “knowledge transfer” can be a potential solution, where developed countries provide technical training and expertise in the aspects of climate change, and climate change adaptation.

### Incentive

This is another huge issue low-income countries would face. How will developed countries have the incentive to support the climate-vulnerable regions in the first place? Perhaps, it is the moral obligation the developed countries have to support those most affected by climate change, particularly the lower-income countries. Or countries may create a system in which the lower-income countries receiving the aid will repay the debt in the future. The countries can establish such agreements. Either way, it is imperative that developed countries have the incentive to help the vulnerable countries.

### Resource allocation

A challenge with resource allocation is the process of it. There may and probably will be controversies on how the process will work, and the guarantee in equitable allocation. In order to address these challenges, first off, there needs to be a globalised approach. Only with international cooperation can there be a success in the network of resource allocation. But more importantly, there should be a robust, comprehensive, and transparent allocating process. For instance, with frequent reports to, or checkups by the UN.

## VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

Delegates, remember that in MUN, it's not about your opinion. Rather, it's the country that you're representing. Thus, it is important for you to research your country's stance on climate change. These are some exemplar questions for you to get started on your country research:

- Does my country agree with net-zero?
- Has my country adopted any such policies?
- Is my country a climate-vulnerable country?

Now if you are a more developing country or a lower-income country that is climate-vulnerable, your goal is to pass a successful resolution that helps you adapt to climate change and protect your citizens. If you are a developed country, try to aim for a resolution that is fair, and not too harmful to you. Thus you should keep two things in mind.

- 1) Try to seek out other delegates with similar perspectives/goals with you, so that there can be teamwork. For instance, if the delegate of the USA forms a bloc/seeks teamwork with the delegate of China, the delegate of the US might submit an amendment, and yield the floor to the delegate of China for further support on the amendment.
- 2) Take into consideration the diverse perspectives on this topic from different countries. This means, when you are writing your resolution or submitting an amendment, you should try to make it appealing to the majority of the delegates so that it passes. This requires careful consideration of diverse priorities and values. For instance, if you are a lower-income country, you need to figure out how to incentivize developed countries to support you, otherwise they simply won't.

My last tip is to go through this chair report without leaving out any parts. Also, refer to the [UNISMUN LibGuides](#) for specific resources to help you on your researching journey. However, the bibliography and the additional resources sections are also extremely useful as you may also get additional information from there. Nonetheless, this chair report should only be used as a researching guide. You are highly encouraged to do your own research on top of this chair report, more specific to your own country. Email me, or any of the SDG13 chairs, if you have any questions at all regarding this topic or need help in anything such as your country stance, resolution writing, or MUN guidelines (specifically UNISMUN guidelines).

## VIII. Bibliography

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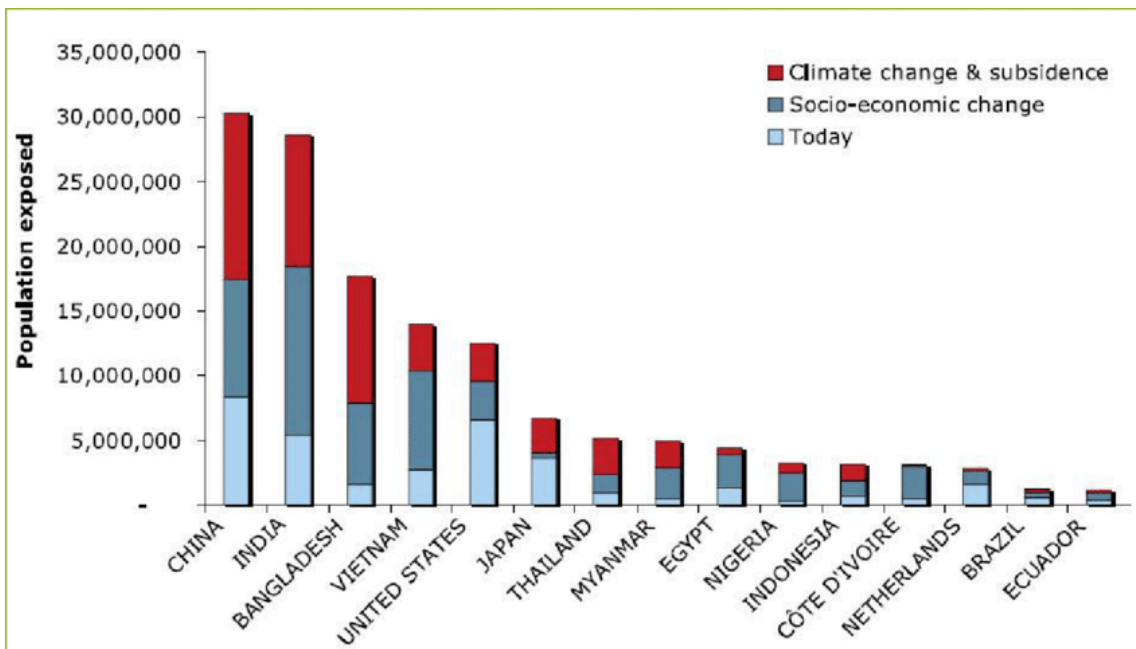
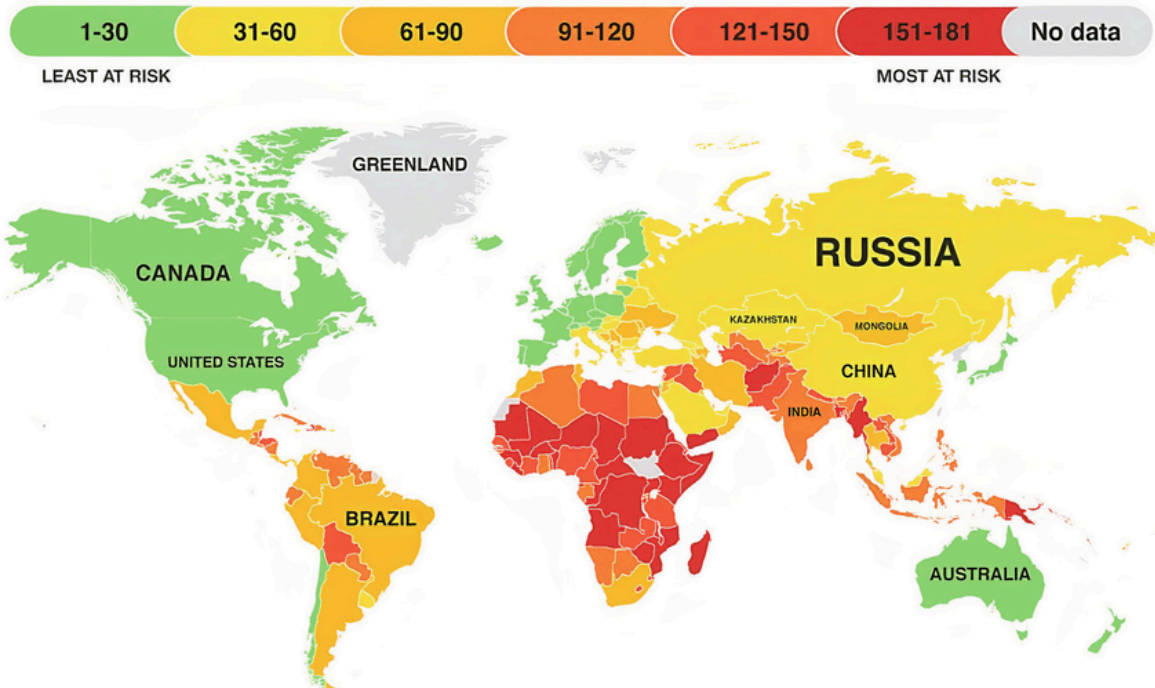
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### IX: Additional Resources

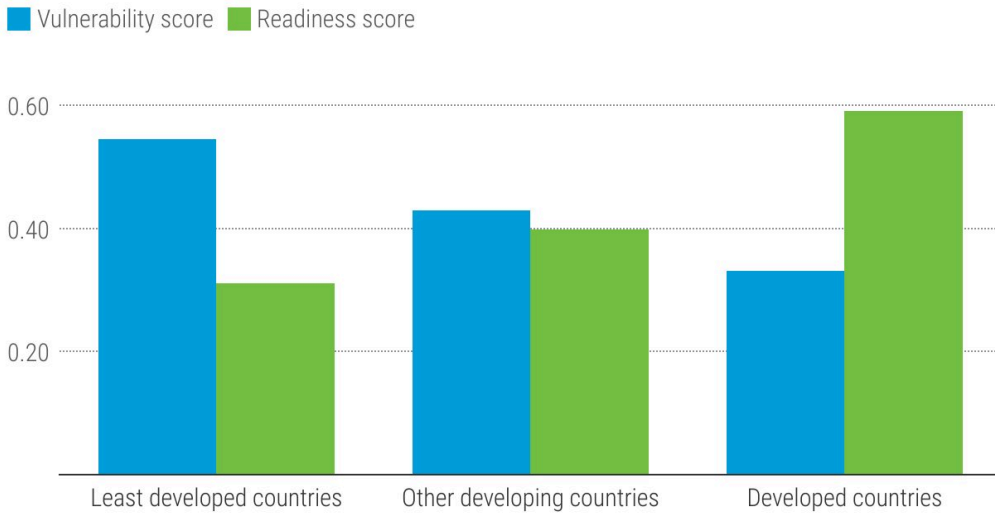






# Climate change: The most vulnerable and least prepared

Scores for climate vulnerability and readiness, by country group, 2021



Note: Data for Kiribati, South Sudan and Tuvalu were not available.

Source: UNCTAD secretariat calculations, based on data from the University of Notre Dame's Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) dataset (accessed 12 October 2023).

“17 of the 20 most climate-vulnerable and least climate-prepared countries were least developed countries, which have suffered 69% of global climate-related deaths over the last 50 years.” (UNCTAD, 24’)

**Adaptation** involves modifying our decisions, activities and ways of thinking to adjust to a changing climate

**Mitigation** aims to reduce the causes of climate change

**Goals**

- Increasing our capacity to adapt
- Improving our ability to thrive under different climate conditions
- Building resilience to extreme weather and climate changes

**Examples**

- Forest protection
- Infrastructure and building design
- Flood protection
- Green infrastructure
- Water and energy conservation

**Overlapping examples**

- Green infrastructure
- Water and energy conservation

**Goal**

- Cut down greenhouse gas emissions

**Examples**

- Energy efficient technology
- Sustainable transportation
- Industrial process improvements
- Renewable energy

**Changing agricultural practices**  
Planting different crops to respond to changing growing seasons and temperatures, or planting a variety of crops to reduce damage from pests that could migrate northward

**Creating community and home gardens**  
Increasing local agricultural capacity helps reduce the need to import food over long distances, and by extension the consumption of fossil fuels

## Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation

For the whole Canada in a Changing Climate report, visit [Adaptation.NRCan.gc.ca](http://Adaptation.NRCan.gc.ca)

Ingenium | Let's Talk Energy | Canadian Geographic | Canada