

## Forum: Sustainable Development Goal 13 Committee

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# TOPIC (3): The Question Of The Jurisdiction Of Non-State Actors Regarding Climate Change

[Link To SDG 13 Topic Libguide](#)

## I. Introduction to the Topic

Climate change is a significant global issue that requires immediate action from all stakeholders, including non-state actors (NSA), around the world. NSAs such as businesses, cities, and civil society organisations are active participants in global climate governance. NSAs have played an important part in international climate governance, as well as in dealing with domestic climate change challenges. Their involvement can promote national initiatives that decrease CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and close the emissions gap left by governmental actors. However, their participation in climate change mitigation calls into question the extent of their jurisdiction in international, national, and regional contexts.

When it comes to the international context, non-state actors have been officially recognized as crucial members of climate mitigation through the Paris Agreement. The treaty established a worldwide stocktake and transparency system to monitor collective progress toward long-term goals and to evaluate the actions of state and non-state actors. The innovative governance mode from the Paris Agreement brings together state actors, the private sector, research institutions, and civil society organisations. This project seeks to involve NSAs in the implementation of the agreement, increasing the effectiveness of their contributions. However, from an international perspective, protesters have attempted audacious acts of desecrating historical monuments and events in the name of "climate change". Delegates should take into consideration the extent of jurisdiction NSAs possess internationally post-Paris Agreement.

Nationally, the Paris Agreement incorporates non-state actors through their innovative governance mode, making their contributions more effective. While NSAs lack the legal authority of state actors, they can still play an important role in climate governance. They can influence policymakers, take independent action, and track states' progress toward their pledges. To address global climate change, NSAs can participate in transnational networks, academic research, and subnational authorities.

Regionally, controversies from non-state actors have risen through their forms of protest and activism. Activist groups such as the Just Stop Oil organisation have recently garnered negative international attention for their extreme acts of protest. As of recently, Just Stop Oil activists have attempted to desecrate invaluable artworks and disrupted internationally loved events such as the F1 races in attempts to "raise awareness" about climate change. Delegates must once again reconsider the extent of jurisdiction of NSAs within their resolution.

Overall, non-state actors' jurisdiction in climate change is an ever evolving discussion, and their contributions to global climate governance are becoming more widely recognized. While they lack the legal authority of state actors, their participation can still be considered critical in the foundations of global climate governance.

## II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

**Constituency Groups:** Constituency groups of non-state actors include business and industrial non-governmental organisations (BINGOs), environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOs), indigenous peoples' organisations (IPOs), and local government and municipal authorities (LGMAs).

**Non-state Actors:** This is an umbrella term that refers to individuals, or organisations independent from nation states involved in addressing climate change such as businesses, cities, and civil society organisations.

**Greenwashing:** This is the practice of advertising the wrong impression or providing misleading information about a stakeholder's environmental impact.

**Net Zero Goals:** The term refers to the goal of achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gases created and the amount removed from the atmosphere..

**Governance Profiles:** The term provides a framework for comprehending the comparative benefits of various non-state actors by analysing their levels and types of agency.

## III. Key Stakeholders

**Civil Society Organizations (CSO):** Organisations that represent a range of interests commonly seen as activist groups or protest groups. Such as the Just Stop Oil group, they're a civil society organisation that acts in the interest of raising awareness of climate change.

**Businesses:** Businesses represent the private sectors including companies, and industry companies and associations are prevalent in climate change mitigation. Consider how carbon emissions are common byproducts of the production of goods and services from businesses.

**Cities and Substate Authorities:** Local and regional governments play a significant role in climate governance because they implement climate policies, encourage sustainable practices, and respond to the effects of climate change.

**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) :** The IPCC is an intergovernmental body, first established in 1988, that presents scientific information and political perspectives to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

## IV. Key Issues including Background Information

### Legal Obligations of Non-state Actors

As non-state actors are becoming more prevalent in mitigating climate change, there is controversy about whether non-state actors, such as businesses, cities, and civil society organisations, have any legal obligation to mitigate climate change. Possible ethical conflicts may occur from businesses.

### Mobilisation and Action

As non-state actors such as businesses, cities, and civil society organisations have the major impacts on climate action, from the ability to influence policy makers to taking independent action, their mobilisation and action will play a crucial role in mitigating climate change. However, to what extent is their jurisdiction in climate change?

### Jurisdiction of Non-state Actors

Despite the fact that non-state actors are acknowledged in the Paris Agreement. Recent activist group operations have generated debate. Acts of protest, such as vandalism of precious art in the name of increasing awareness, like the recent Just Stop Oil protest, create a tight line between activism and criminal activity.

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

Date	Description of event
1988	This was when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the UN to conduct regular scientific assessment on climate change.
March 21, 1994	This was when The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established. The UNFCCC was formed to control the consequences of climate change and establish a global average temperature ceiling.
December 11th, 1997	This was when the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty to reduce carbon emissions, was adopted in Japan. The treaty required 37 developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions based on scientific consensus about the correlation between human-made CO <sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change.
December 12th, 2015	This was when the Paris Agreement, an international treaty aimed to keep the global average temperature well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, was adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, France.
February, 2022	This was when the Just Stop Oil, a British activist group aimed at ending the use of fossil fuels, was founded. From then, they have committed acts of civil

resistance, vandalism and traffic obstruction to protest against fossil fuels.

December 1, 2023 At the UN Climate Conference in Dubai, world leaders came together and signed a document along with 200 non-state actors to unite behind a common vision of transforming food and agriculture to become a key solution, rather than the main cause of food and climate crises.

## VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

### Legal Obligations of Non-state Actors

The lack of a clear legal framework may pose challenges for non-state actors to properly assume obligations. Other challenges may arise such as the lack of transparency and effective monitoring of NSAs. This raises the question of whether non-state actors have a legal commitment to mitigate climate change, or whether they may legally accept such an obligation. Delegates should take into account all perspectives of non-state actors and consider establishing an incentive system.

### Mobilisation and Action

Certain challenges that may arise from the mobilisation and action of NSAs such as the overstepping their jurisdiction. Delegates must consider the limitations of incorporating NSAs while also weighing the benefits in their ability to influence policy changes.

### Jurisdiction of Non-state Actors

Delegates must consider the societal implications from extreme acts of protest from activist groups when considering the jurisdiction of NSAs. What right do they have desecrating art? What repercussions must they face? These are questions delegates must consider when writing their resolution.

### Role of economically developed countries

more economically developed countries have more capacities for these contributions while developing countries are in a position to be supported by these countries. For example, this raises the role of cities in the G20 nations context. In 2017, Germany stated that the United States' rejection of climate science would not undermine other countries' commitments, leading to an extraordinary G19 statement on the subject.

## VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

Delegates should take into account various aspects of this intricate topic when drafting, debating, and voting on resolutions. Seek to merge resolutions with other countries with similar perspectives that will either benefit NSAs or seek to abolish their jurisdiction. When researching for resolutions, our committee mentor: Mr. Christie advises delegates to use all of their resources to their fullest extent such as OpenAI

(Please use responsibly and only as a research assistant). However, for essential resources regarding the topic, please refer to the [UNISMUN SDG 13 LIBGUIDE](#).

As for country stances, the role of sub-state and non-substate actors in international climate processes should be assessed. At the national level, these non-state actors play an important role in shaping nationally determined contributions. In countries such as Chile and India, extensive consultation with subnational jurisdictions and the private sector took place, feeding into both countries' contributions. In the United States, cities, businesses, and others were actively mobilised to support its position and insulate the administration from domestic critiques. A trend is that more economically developed countries have more capacities for these contributions while developing countries are in a position to be supported by these countries.

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## IX: Additional Resources

According to data from Stanford's School of Sustainability, more than 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide will be emitted globally in 2023, with around 37 billion tons coming from fossil fuels. In line with a 10-year plateau, overall emissions are up 1.1% from 2022 levels and 1.5% from pre-pandemic levels.

NASA's GLOBAL LAND-OCEAN TEMPERATURE INDEX:

