



THE ZURICH CONFERENCE

United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Study Guide for Zurich Model United Nations

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Letter from the Chairs

We are Lena and Yael and not only do we both study International Affairs at the University of St. Gallen, but we are also your chairs for this year's United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at ZuMUN 2022. We are incredibly excited to be spending some very intense days with you and look forward to the fruitful debate ahead.

We both have done some years of MUN and know how overwhelming a conference can be in the beginning. Lena even has some experience of doing MUN in high school herself. So rest assured that we will be understanding and patient with every single delegate. We want to have a committee that fosters an atmosphere of openness and compassion. We want to see everyone shine, even more, we want to see everyone improve and learn something from their experience at the conference.

We both see MUN as the perfect place to try something new, as a place to make mistakes and learn from them. From our own experience, MUN conferences are only fun for anyone, when they are fun for everyone! And that is what we promise to do. We can't wait to learn, laugh, and debate with you all!

Diplomatic regards,

Lena and Yael



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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Introduction and Background

The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a program which reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly (GA). Its primary purpose is the protection of the rights and welfare of refugees. Initially it was created in the aftermath of World War II with only a three-year mandate, with a sole focus on displaced Europeans. Since then, the UNHCR has been called upon for action and has quickly become one of the UN's most valuable departments. 2020 marked the 70th anniversary of the UNHCR and in that time it helped well over 50 million refugees to successfully restart their lives.¹

The UNHCR dedicates most of their resources towards individuals which can be categorized as victims of forced migration or displacement. Forced migration/displacement makes a distinction between conflict-induced (typically caused by humans) and disaster-induced (typically natural causes) displacement. It is important to note that it is important to understand the type of displacement, in order to adapt the approach the international community should take, however the line between these two types may be blurred. For example, if a natural disaster is triggered by human activity.²

Worldwide there are over 84 million forcibly displaced people. 48 million are internally displaced people (IDPs), 26.6 million are refugees, 4.4 million are asylum-seekers, and 3.9 million are Venezuelans displaced abroad. Approximately 42% of the total forcibly displaced people are below the age of 18, and alone between 2018 and 2020 over 1 million children were born as refugees.³

1.2. Mandate

UNHCR's mandate is defined as: "providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and [...] private

¹ UNHCR (2022): [History of UNHCR](#)

² IOM (2022): [Forced migration or displacement](#)

³ UNHCR (2022): [Refugee Data Finder](#)

organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.”⁴

1.3. Terminology

The UNHCR has for your convenience defined key terminology here.⁵ Essential are the following: refugee, migrants, asylum-seeker, refugee resettlement, and statelessness.

Under international law, a **refugee** is someone who is forced to flee their home country to escape persecution or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom. This may be linked to their race, religion, nationality, political beliefs or membership of a social group. But also to situations of conflict, violence or public disorder. Refugees are protected by international law and cannot be sent back home if their life or freedom would be at risk.

The term ‘**migrant**’, unlike refugees, is not defined under international law and is sometimes used differently by different stakeholders. Traditionally, the word ‘migrant’ has been used to designate people who move by choice rather than to escape conflict or persecution, usually across an international border. This can include finding work or pursuing an education, but also for reuniting with family or other reasons. People may also move to alleviate significant hardships that arise from natural disasters, famine, or extreme poverty. Those who leave their countries for these reasons would not usually be considered refugees under international law.

An **asylum-seeker** is a person who is applying (or preparing to apply) for asylum in another country to seek international protection. A final determination of the protection need, however, has not yet been made for such persons. While not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, an asylum-seeker may not be sent back to their country of origin pending a final determination.

Refugee resettlement: Refugees cannot go home as long as conflict or persecution puts their lives at risk. But sometimes they are still unsafe in the country to which they fled. Resettlement is the selection and transfer of refugees to a third country, which agrees to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status, ensuring protection against

⁴ UNHCR (1950): [Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#)

⁵ UNHCR (2022): [Facts, figures and terminology](#)

refoulement and providing resettled refugees and their dependants with access to rights similar to those of nationals. Resettlement also carries the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen.

Statelessness refers to the condition of being stateless. A person is stateless when no State recognizes this person as a national according to the operation of the State's law. Stateless people often face significant challenges accessing basic rights. For example, a stateless person often isn't allowed to go to school, see a doctor, get a job, open a bank account, buy a house or get married.

1.4. International Legal Framework ⁶

Under various international treaties, refugees are privy to special fundamental rights. Everyone who is a refugee holds these unique rights. UNHCR includes "individuals recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute, individuals granted complementary forms of protection, and those enjoying temporary protection. The refugee population also includes people in refugee-like situations."⁷

The responsibility for protecting the rights of citizens within a territory falls to the respective state. However, situations occur where the government is unable or unwilling to protect those rights which not only put their citizens in severe danger, but also forces them to seek safety elsewhere. When that occurs, another country is responsible for stepping in and ensuring the basic rights of refugees.

The responsibility of protecting refugees is therefore both an individual and collective one. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants⁸ (which the UN General Assembly

⁶ UNHCR (2017): [A guide to international refugee protection and building state asylum systems](#), P. 15, 16

⁷ UNHCR (2022): [Methodology and Definition](#)

⁸ UN GA (2016): [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#)

adopted in 2016) states that a response to increased refugee flows is a shared responsibility of States. This underlying principle of solidarity and collective responsibility is crucial, since without the cooperation of States the UNHCR would not be able to carry out their mandate.⁹

The foundation of these rights began in 1948 with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁰ (introducing international human rights law) and is further complimented by international humanitarian law which regulates the law during wartimes. On the basis of these legal systems, the international protection system for refugees is built. Its core documents include the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol¹¹. Furthermore, regional treaties and declarations add onto this system.

⁹ UNHCR (2017): [A guide to international refugee protection and building state asylum systems](#), P. 33

¹⁰ [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (1948)

¹¹ [1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol](#)

Topic A

2. Deterring Discrimination and Violence Against Persons with Disabilities

2.1. Background

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol defines persons with disabilities to "include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"¹². For the purpose of this study guide, we will include here groups of people who exhibit neurodivergent or physical impairments that they themselves or other people may not consider a disability but that complicate their existence in an ableist, neurotypical society, such as autism.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 15 percent of the world's population live with disabilities. As such, it can be assumed that around 12.75 million of the world's 85 million forcibly displaced persons also live with disabilities¹³. In situations of forced displacement, the incidence of disability is usually higher because a larger proportion of people have injuries, lack access to medical services, and face barriers in their environment.

Persons with disabilities have the same rights and basic needs as others and face the same challenges. However, they face numerous additional barriers. They face particular protection risks, including a heightened risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, and high levels of stigma. They have difficulties accessing humanitarian assistance, education, livelihoods, health care and other services. They may be denied certain legal rights and are often excluded from decision-making processes and leadership opportunities. They face multiple and compounding forms of discrimination, on the basis of disability but also on other grounds, which may lead to situations of exclusion.

For disabled people who are also forcibly displaced, the situation becomes infinitely more complicated. They are often literally and programmatically "invisible" in refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) assistance programs. They are not identified or counted in refugee registration and data collection exercises; they are excluded from or unable to access mainstream assistance programs as a result of attitudinal, physical and social barriers; they

¹² UN GA (2006): [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

¹³ UNHCR (2019): [UNHCR's approach to forcibly displaced and stateless persons with disabilities](#), P. 2

are forgotten in the establishment of specialized and targeted services; and they are ignored in the appointment of camp leadership and community management structures¹⁴. Because of this, it is difficult to estimate accurately how many displaced persons are truly affected. Disabled persons' potential to contribute and participate is seldom recognized: they are more often seen as a problem than a resource.

Moreover, traditional community coping mechanisms, including extended families, neighbors and other caregivers, often break down during displacement. The loss of caregivers can leave persons with disabilities extremely vulnerable and exposed to protection risks.

Improving care for displaced persons with disabilities encompasses many factors, such as resources, awareness, and attitudes. Over 85% of the world's refugees live in developing countries, with several of them hosting over a million people each¹⁵. This presents a significant strain on the host country's resources and means countries can often not spend extra resources on accommodating the needs of disabled people. For countries who are overwhelmed with refugee populations, including parts of countries who are hosting internally displaced persons from their own country, the focus of care often has to be on quantity of care rather than quality.

A second hurdle to overcome is the lack of awareness and research about the specific challenges disabled migrants face. As Pisanía and Grech summarize, "migration theory grows without the disabled person, disability studies without the migrant, and practice without the disabled migrant"¹⁶. The research that exists treats disabled people as a homogenous group, and usually fails to take into account differences in needs, individual circumstances, and cultural embeddedness that are highly indicative of the experience disabled displaced people have.

In addition, disability is stigmatized in many societies, leading to less willingness to help disabled people because they are seen as difficult, lazy, or burdensome. This becomes relevant not only in logistical questions related to the transportation and housing of displaced persons, but also in the integration into host country societies. Disabled people may be unable or only partially able to comply with a host country's expectations towards its refugee population, such as submitting paperwork or attending language classes. This can further complicate their stay in a host country and increase the stigma already negatively affecting their physical and mental wellbeing and relationships with others.

¹⁴ Women Refugee Commission (2008): [Disabilities Among Refugees and Conflict-Affected Populations](#), P.2

¹⁵ UNHCR (2022): [Refugee Statistics](#)

¹⁶ Pisan and Grech (2015): [Disability and Forced Migration: Critical Intersectionalities](#), P. 421

2.2. UN and International Action

In 2010, the UNHCR laid the framework for the protection of displaced persons with disabilities in its *Conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR*. The Conclusion aims to, among other things, “protect and assist refugees and other persons with disabilities against all forms of discrimination” (Clause a), “raise awareness on disability issues and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities” (Clause b), and “ensure where appropriate a swift and systematic identification and registration of refugees and other persons with disabilities” (Clause c)¹⁷.

This was followed up with the *Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement Facilitator’s Guide*, the *Need to Know Guidance: Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement*, and several other research and guiding documents. Most recently, the Committee has published in 2022 its report on good practices and policies in the *UNHCR’s approach to forcibly displaced and stateless persons with disabilities*.

These documents have informed the action of other UN bodies that worked with disabled people, but most of them are intended as guiding points rather than concrete policies and instructions. There is therefore a lack of concrete, spelled-out measures that aim to create a clear and globally translatable standard for the protection of displaced persons with disabilities.

Outside of the UN and international bodies there have been many regional and national efforts to improve care for disabled refugees, for example the Swedish initiative Disabled Refugees Welcome, which aimed to improve the integration of disabled refugees arriving in Sweden. You may want to look at these initiatives to see how they can inform the solutions you find at the international level.

2.3. What the resolution could address

As this is a highly complex issue that encompasses many areas, your resolution can offer many different solutions that can address the needs of disabled displaced persons directly or indirectly.

For direct approaches, you can look at every step of the journey of a displaced person and see what could be improved. This includes temporary housing, transit between countries,

¹⁷ United Nations General Assembly (2010): [A/AC.96/1095](#)

and arrival in a host country/region. Be sure to take a differentiated approach, particularly with regards to the needs of people whose disabilities may be less visible. Tangible, logistical needs can be easier to recognize, for example the need to have more ramps and wheelchairs for people with limited mobility. However, many people have mental impairments that can be more difficult to recognize and find solutions to, for example the issue of preventing sensory overload for neurodivergent people in high-stress environments such as refugee camps.

Direct-impact solutions will require resources and funding, and you should think about how such resources will be procured and managed. Host countries with high numbers of displaced persons might need more assistance. It is therefore important to include these target countries in the discussion to understand what they need, and how the international community can best help them support the displaced persons in their care.

Less direct approaches that can be addressed in the resolution include research, awareness, and attitude approaches. There is a need for better knowledge about disabled displaced persons, their individual needs, their abilities to contribute, and their overall experiences. This includes research targeted at finding out how many disabled people live in displaced communities, which countries they might be more or less concentrated in, and what hurdles they face when adjusting to life in a new country, temporarily or permanently. Again, it is important to distinguish between different kinds of disabilities and associated situations, in order to gain a sophisticated and accurate understanding that can then inform targeted solutions. Here you could think about who could conduct such research, and which other bodies of the UN and other international organizations might be beneficial to the project.

Awareness and attitudes are important because they can influence the resources a country is willing to dedicate to the care of disabled people, as well as the approach of non-disabled people towards them. Particularly in countries where disability is seen as a burden or problem, and disabled people are excluded from daily life based on stereotypes and assumptions, it is important to educate and influence the non-disabled community. Disabled people want and need to be integrated into all spheres of life and can offer valuable input when it comes to the treatment of other disabled displaced persons. Such awareness campaigns also need to be brought to displaced populations themselves, in order to create the understanding that the extra care a disabled person might receive is not a privilege but necessary. In situations of high-stress and resource scarcity, which include many temporary housing communities and refugee camps, tension can arise if one person receives a different treatment, and awareness should aim to build solidarity among refugees, also with the disabled persons among them.

This is of course not an exhaustive list of possible solutions you could find; you are free to address any and all parts of the issue as you see fit. You may want to tailor your approach to the position of your country, and can begin your research with questions such as: What does my country do to include disabled persons in everyday life? Does my country host refugees? If so, do we know how many of them are disabled? What are my country's needs or abilities regarding refugee care?

2.4. Further Reading

- <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/43586/persons-with-disabilities>
- <https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/43580/Disability+among+refugees+and+conflict-affected+populations/2700f6f2-1e65-4ea5-9e86-cb86aada7462>
- [*UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*](#) and its [*Optional Protocol*](#) (2006).
 - Article 11 of the CRPD refers to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in conflict and emergency situations.
- Handicap International, [*Disability Checklist for Emergency Response*](#), 2010. In braille and large print.
- UNHCR Executive Committee, [*Conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR*](#), 2010.
 - Reaffirms UNHCR's responsibility and commitment to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with Executive Committee Conclusions, international conventions, and relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions. Outlines recommended actions by UNHCR, its partners, and States.
- UNHCR, [*Need to Know Guidance: Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement*](#), 2019.
 - Provides practical guidance on issues that must be considered to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities of concern to UNHCR are fulfilled without discrimination.
- UNHCR, [*Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity \(AGD\)*](#), 2018.
 - The policy reinforces UNHCR's commitment to ensure that people are at the centre of all we do. It consolidates commitments to a strong AGD orientation, [*accountability to affected people*](#) (AAP) and commitments to women and girls. It defines six areas of engagement and ten mandatory core actions for all UNHCR operations and headquarters.



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Topic B

3. Human Rights and Climate Change

As outlined in the section on the legal framework, refugees hold certain fundamental rights. The specific rights which refugees hold is not the focus of this debate. Instead the focus lies on how to best protect refugees which result from climate change disasters. To gain a deeper insight into which specific rights refugees hold and where they come from, see the list on further research. Instead of focusing on specific rights, focus on the general treatment of climate refugees and the preparedness of the international community.

3.1. Introduction

Between 2030 and 2050, the World Health Organization (WHO) has predicted that climate change will cause around 250'000 additional deaths per year. The most likely causes being from malnutrition, malaria, and heat stress. The risk of another pandemic occurring is increased by climate change and consequential loss of biodiversity.¹⁸

The amount of natural disasters which occurred in 2019 triggered almost 25 million new displacements. This annual number will only increase as every year the expected number of cyclones, floods, droughts, and locust outbreaks in Asia and Africa increases.¹⁹

3.1.1. Facts and Figures²⁰

More than two thirds of all refugees which fall under UNHCR's mandate come from just five countries: Syrian Arab Republic (6.8 million), Venezuela (4.1 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), South Sudan (2.2 million), and Myanmar (1.1 million).

Developing countries are those which, take on the vast majority of the world's refugees, at 85%. It is to be noted that 39% of the world's refugees are hosted in five countries, those being Turkey (3.7 million), Colombia (1.7 million), Uganda (1.5 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), and Germany (1.2 million).

¹⁸ WHO (2021): [Climate change and health](#)

¹⁹ UNHCR (2020): [COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change](#)

²⁰ UNHCR (2022): [Refugee Data Finder](#)

73% of refugees lived in neighboring countries. With climate change disproportionately affecting coastal nations, those neighboring states could expect a larger amount of refugees as the global situation deteriorates.

3.2. Background

Over the past century and with the rise of industrialization, humans have continuously produced carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other gases which collecting in the atmosphere and insulated the Earth. This effectively turned the planet into a greenhouse, which over time increased the global temperature. In the early 1980s, there was a sharp increase in global temperature which marked a critical turning point in societies attitude towards climate change. In 1989 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established under the UN. The resulting increase in research of possible ramifications of rising global temperatures yielded predictions such as severe heat waves, droughts, and increasingly powerful hurricanes as a result of rising sea surface temperatures. Additionally, the rising temperature was predicted the melting of massive glaciers and the polar ice caps, resulting in rising sea levels to the point that it would put most coastal cities uninhabitable.

There are countless international efforts underway to mitigate the effects of climate change, but also to prevent even greater natural catastrophes. With treaties and conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and various summits with the sole focus on this issue (like the recent COP26), or it being addressed in other constellations (like the G20 summit in October 2021). However, many of these efforts have been criticized due to lack of commitment of nearly all Member States. In recent years, and the term of the current UN Secretary General, climate change has become increasingly at the forefront of international discourse. Furthermore, domestic pressures increased slightly with civilian efforts such as the Fridays for Future movement. Despite some national efforts, progress has continued to be slow on a global scale.

There is a clear link between climate-related emergencies and forced displacement.²¹ However, this aspect of the consequences of climate change for those nations which are most vulnerable, is too often overlooked in public discourses. Across the globe, we already

²¹ UNHCR (2021): [Urgent steps needed now to mitigate climate impact on displaced people](#)

see how climate change is driving a rise in poverty, instability, and human movement. Many nations have time and time again warned the international community that the efforts of climate change are no longer hypothetical, and they are only getting worse. This continued increase of natural disasters has devastating effects on the enjoyment of the right to life, especially in developing countries. Even worse, it is developing countries which are in a more vulnerable position to the consequences (be that directly or indirectly) of these threats, such as disease, injury, malnutrition, and death. Additionally, some of the most climate-vulnerable countries are dealing with various other issues such as decade long conflicts.²²

The UNHCR has the responsibility to act, as 99% of refugees which fall under their mandate come from countries which are on the front lines of the current climate emergency. The increased poverty and instability have fueled tension and competition over resources which are quickly diminishing. As the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has stated: “Outbreaks of violence and extreme weather push people who have already fled once to flee again. But even if peace is restored, displaced people cannot go back if their home areas have been made uninhabitable by drought, floods or rising sea levels.”²³

3.3. Past UN Action

Previous action within the UN has been guided by the Common Core Principles for a UN System-wide Approach to Climate Action²⁴ and is supported also by UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience²⁵.

In the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026²⁶, it noted climate change as one of the three key challenges which guides body’s actions over the next 4 years. Based on this (and previous Strategic Directions) the UNHCR published their Strategic Framework for Climate Action. In this Plan, they state that “[i]t supports international commitments related to climate change, disasters and environmental degradation under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Agenda

²² UNHCR (2021): [Climate change is an emergency for everyone, everywhere](#)

²³ UNHCR (2021): [Urgent steps needed now to mitigate climate impact on displaced people](#)

²⁴ UNSCEB (2016): [Common Core Principles for a UN System-wide approach to Climate Action](#)

²⁵ UN (2017): [United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience](#)

²⁶ UNHCR (2022): [UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#)

for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the context of disasters and climate change. In doing so, it contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 at global, regional, national and local levels.”²⁷

The UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action²⁸ lays out 3 key pillars for actions²⁹. For the purposes of this debate, we recommend focusing on the second pillar, i.e. operations. This includes three objectives:

- 1.1. Preserve and rehabilitate the natural environment and mitigate environmental degradation in displacement settings
- 1.2. Enhance the resilience of displaced people and host communities to climate-related and other environmental risks
- 1.3. Strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action and response to support protection and solutions for people displaced and their hosts in disaster situations

3.3.1. COVID-19, Displacement, and Climate Change ³⁰

Both COVID-19 and climate change are risk multipliers, meaning they exacerbate inequalities since their effects are disproportional to the most vulnerable. Climate change has made the likelihood of a disaster occurring even higher during a major crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes its impact on those displaced even more severe. However the effects also occur the other way round. COVID-19 has increase the vulnerability of those groups which live in those regions which already have been impacted by climate change.

3.4. Conclusion

Climate change is a human crisis which touches on countless fundamental human rights. In order to ensure these, a robust and international effort must be taken in order to address the current and future effects of this man-made problem. By avoiding certain effects, the root of

²⁷ UNHCR (2020): [UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), P.2

²⁸ UNHCR (2020): [UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#)

²⁹ (1) Law and Policy, (2) Operations, (3) UNHCR’s Environmental Footprint

³⁰ UNHCR (2020): [COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change](#)

climate caused displacement would be addressed and would also increase the chance of finding a sustainable solution for those already, or soon to be, displaced persons.³¹

By delaying support for poorer countries, which are the ones most vulnerable to climate change, we increase the severity of the consequences. As a result, the response also becomes more complex and costly. The situation is becoming increasingly pressing as estimates predicts that the need for humanitarian assistance could increase to USD 200 million annually by 2050 (twice the current number), if there is no ambitious climate action and disaster risk reduction.³²

As stated in the Strategic Framework for Climate Action: “Climate change is exacerbating the causes and consequences of displacement and amplifying protection concerns for displaced people and returnees. Under all projected climate scenarios, the achievement of UNHCR’s objectives will require that we reduce and manage risks by adapting our internal processes and operations.”³³

3.5. Focus of the Resolution

When looking at the objectives laid out in the UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action it is important to be critical with concrete implementation of these rather broad objectives. Try and understand what challenges this committee may face and what is the best way to overcome them?

Furthermore, ask yourself what previous efforts your country has made in this discussion. Or alternatively, what does your country bring to the table for each objective. It is at this point important to remember that many have seen the COVID-19 response as an opportunity to learn. The UNHCR has outlined key lessons³⁴ which are also applicable to climate action.

³¹ UNHCR (2020): [UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), P. 8

³² UNHCR (2022): [Displaced on the frontlines of the climate emergency](#)

³³ UNHCR (2020): [UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), P. 9

³⁴ UNHCR (2020): [COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change](#)

The first being the importance of anticipating rather than reacting. Early mitigation is the only way to prevent a crisis from getting out of hand. This applies for both pandemics and climate change. Especially when you look at it from an economic perspective, it is the most cost-effective option. With both risk mitigation and increased preparedness systems, climate risks can be anticipated. Additionally, by preparing for what happens once the disaster has already happened, you decrease the costs of responding, rebuilding, and save lives.

The second important lesson which the pandemic has given the international community, is the general ability for drastic changes quickly. To protect the well-being of every, States were able to take radical and immediate measures towards a global response. The question remains, how can this same dedication be directed towards climate change action? Furthermore, how can we encourage states to “build back better” with more sustainable and climate-resilient societies?

3.6. Further Research

- UNHCR Strategic Framework for Climate Action.
<https://www.unhcr.org/604a26d84/strategic-framework-for-climate-action>
- Six Climate-Positive Actions to Help Rebuild Economies From COVID-19 Pandemic
<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/recovering-better/six-climate-positive-actions>
- Climate Change 2022: Impact, Adaptation, and Vulnerability (IPCC)
<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/reports>
- Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability 2022-2025 <https://www.unhcr.org/61b85fc84.pdf>
- UNHCR and Climate Change: An Overview
<https://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/540854f49/unhcr-climate-change-overview.html>
- Introduction and overview on international refugee law
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet20en.pdf>
- Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN_Protection_Agenda_Volume_I_-low_res.pdf
- COVID-19, Displacement and Climate Change
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20COVID->



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[19%20Displacement%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20June%202020.pdf](#)

- UNHCR (2016): [Global Trends of Forced Displacement](#)

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