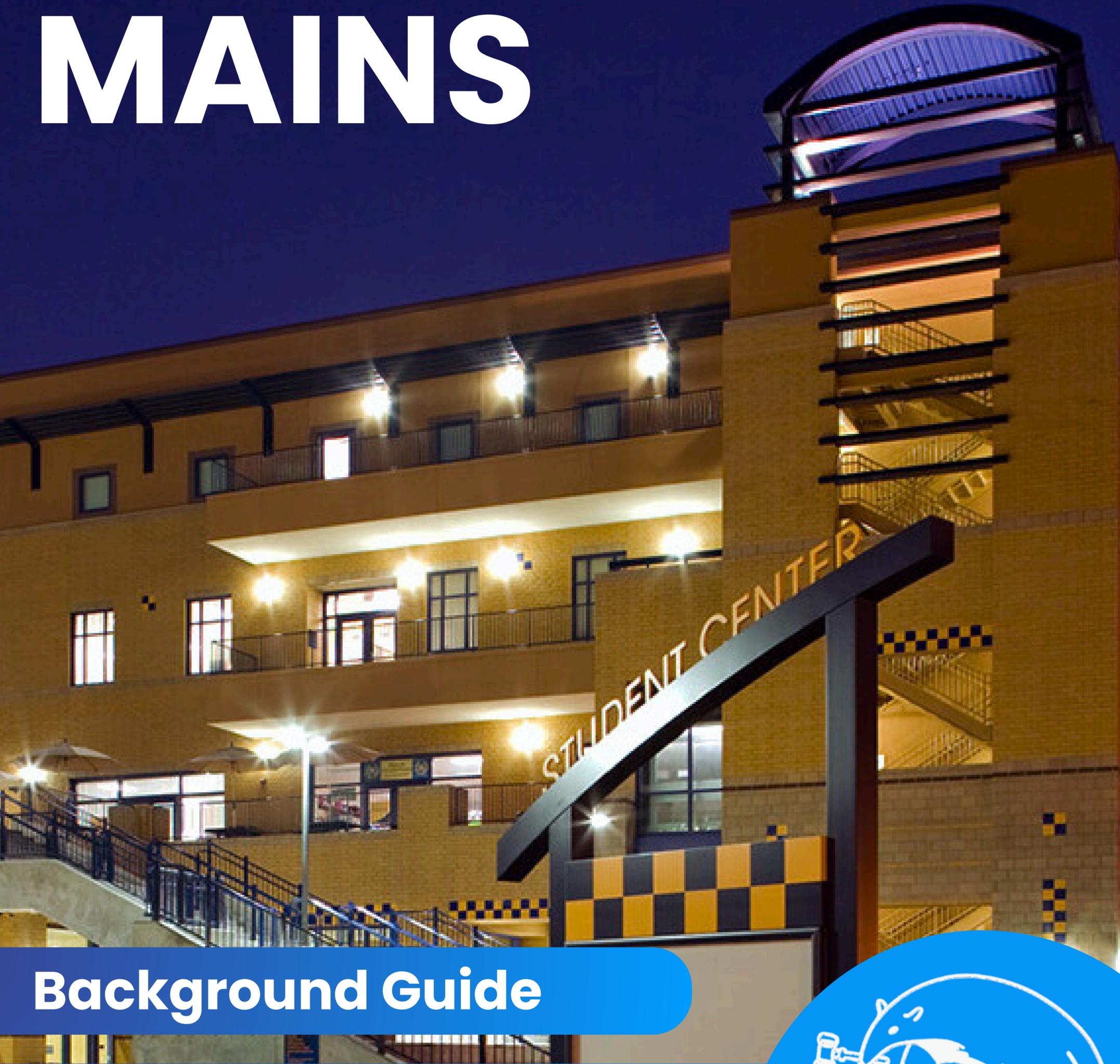


UCIMUN 2026 MAINS



Background Guide

UNEA

Claire Yoo



Director's Letter

Hello delegates!

I am highly honored to welcome you to participate in our 34th annual Model United Nations conference here at UCI! My name is Claire Yoo, and I am excited to serve as your Director for the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) committee! This school year, I embarked on my 3rd year working with UCIMUN. Given my past enriching experiences gained from working with delegates in the previous year's conferences, I am greatly looking forward to successfully carrying out an intellectually and creatively fulfilling experience with you all in this upcoming 2026 conference!

As a fourth year student majoring in International Studies, my college experience has been filled with diverse experiences that have helped me grow tremendously as a student and an individual. The various internships and volunteer positions I have held have varied in realms including politics and domestic/foreign policy, human rights advocacy, research, translation work, and project management. Thanks to the opportunities supported by the university, my educational and professional experience has spanned from Southern California to Washington D.C. and Seoul, South Korea. If time allows, I'd be happy to address any questions you may have about your anticipated college experiences as well!

Focusing back on the topics our committee will be discussing this conference, our two main topics will be: (A) Climate Debt and Financing: Bridging Responsibilities Across Nations, and (B) Regulating the Impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As the climate crisis is one capable of creating irreversible change that impacts different populations periodically but everyone inevitably, it has sparked great activism but also opposition and denial by different political and social groups. Among the multitude of topics that have been discussed and debated by the United Nations regarding climate change and environmental justice, these two topics that we will be debating are ones that require immense international conversations and negotiation in a timely manner. I look forward to the thoughtful and creative insights and solutions that you all will bring and develop collectively throughout the duration of the conference.

As you begin your research journey, I hope you are able to unleash your curiosity and further expand and magnify your understanding beyond these synopses. In other words, don't forget that these topic synopses should serve as a starting point to your research!

My Assistant Directors and I are beyond excited to get this conference started! Please don't hesitate to email me if you have any questions or concerns! With that, I look forward to meeting you all soon during our conference in May!

Best regards,

Claire Yoo

[Insert email]

Topic A: Climate Debt and Financing: Bridging Responsibilities Across Nations

Introduction:

Climate change is universal, meaning its impacts will affect everyone on Earth within a matter of time. However, because climate change disproportionately impacts people in developing countries and those of lower socio-economic status, it is essential to examine this issue through a climate justice lens. Our topic for today underlines the importance of integrating climate justice into the issue of climate change, with a topical focus on the self-reinforcing cycle of the climate debt crisis and climate financing plans. There have been continuous efforts to discuss climate financing plans in international negotiations, such as the annual meetings held by the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the supreme decision-making body under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). To maintain the momentum of using international diplomacy to combat the emerging social dimensions of climate change, it is essential that international bodies continue their climate justice efforts.

Before moving on, we must quickly examine the basics of the climate debt crisis and international climate finance efforts. Human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, has significantly increased the concentration of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This enhances the natural greenhouse effect and thus accelerates global warming. These climatic changes drive warmer temperatures, increase the frequency and intensity of extreme climate events, and exacerbate biodiversity loss (Khushal & Woolfenden, 2022). To cope with these severe impacts of climate change, least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) are often forced to take on debt to finance necessary repairs and climate adaptation efforts. Climate debt refers to the concept where developed

countries that have historically contributed the most to greenhouse gas emissions – such as the U.S. and China – must compensate LDCs and SIDS for the disproportionate harm they have caused on the climate. However, developing countries face a complicated dilemma: while they are among the most heavily affected by anthropogenic climate change, they often rely on fossil fuel industries to grow their economies. This dynamic underscores the urgent need for systemic action to address the climate debt issue and break the ongoing cycle of vulnerability many developing countries face.

While there are arguments against climate debt being a justice issue, the core answer lies in the disproportionate burden climate change places on vulnerable populations. The United Nations Development Programme counts over 50 developing countries that are most at risk from climate change, most of which are also burdened with hundreds of billions of dollars in climate-related debt (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). Despite only accounting for three percent of the global economy, these countries account for over 50 percent of the world's most extreme poverty (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). Meanwhile, the global economy remains heavily dependent on the fossil fuel industry, the main driver of climate change. In other words, the countries contributing the least to both global emissions and economic output are the ones suffering from the most severe impacts of climate change. Despite this, financial support from developed nations – the largest historical contributors to climate change – is largely insufficient to lift these countries out of the climate debt crisis.

Description:

Weighing the various climate-related responsibilities countries hold based on their geoeconomic leverage and historical contributions to global warming, the United Nations set

legally-binding international agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol and its successor, the Paris Agreement. Both of these international treaties set targets for emission reductions and outline the specific roles developed countries should play in driving climate action.

Adopted in 1997 and effective from 2005, the Kyoto Protocol committed industrialized nations to limit their greenhouse gas emissions. Using the “polluter pays” principle, this protocol placed a heavier burden on developed nations to combat climate change by requiring them to set binding emission-reduction targets (United Nations Climate Change). Going through its second legal expiration by the end of 2020, the Kyoto Protocol is no longer in effect. The Paris Agreement succeeded this protocol in November of 2016, when it was adopted by 195 parties during the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris (United Nations Climate Change). Unlike its predecessor, which largely placed responsibility on developed nations to adhere to binding commitments, the Paris Agreement adopts a universal approach, requiring all nations to submit an NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution), a pledge where parties delineate their climate action commitments and emission-reduction targets. As a legally binding international treaty, the Paris Agreement operates with an overarching goal to limit the global temperature increase to well below 2 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels (United Nations Climate Change). Recently, global leaders have placed an emphasis on the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius by the end of this century. Under the UNFCCC, the Conference of the Parties has held UN Climate Change Conferences annually, and it has established various funds as financial mechanisms of the Convention (United Nations Climate Change).

Debt accumulation of climate-vulnerable developing nations

Debt is not solely a negative force, as it can provide countries with opportunities for development and investment; however, it must be backed with stability and predictability of future conditions to operate productively (Wiedenbrüg, 2024). For LDCs and SIDs, measures for adapting to the changing climate are often unattainable without borrowing large sums of money, and the increasingly severe and frequent climate disasters add to this burden. Furthermore, the issue of the overarching debt crisis that stretches beyond climate-related sums has become more severe, as there has been a surge of sustained global debt levels following the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic (Wiedenbrüg, 2024). Between the global financial crisis in 2008 to 2017, global government debt increased to over double the previous amount, reaching 60 trillion dollars (Goldshtein et al., 2018). In 2020 alone, global debt levels increased by 24 trillion dollars, reaching a record high of 281 trillion dollars according to the Institute of International Finance (Guo et al., 2025).

The accumulation of climate debt not only destabilizes a country's capacity to invest in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, but it also largely takes away from their ability to spend necessary resources on essential infrastructure, such as healthcare and education. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, developing countries, specifically the Vulnerable 20 (V20), spend less on essential public infrastructure such as these and more on debt servicing (Wiedenbrüg, 2024). The V20 refers to a cooperation initiative made up of 68 member countries established by the Climate Vulnerable Forum. Therefore, the climate debt accumulation can cause a snowball effect of the inability to install preventative measures for climate disasters, the inability to respond effectively to climate disasters, and the overall inability to spend on the development of essential public infrastructure.

National responsibility in the face of global climate injustice

To combat this tension between climate responsibility and the accumulation of climate debt, the Paris Agreement calls for developed countries with more financial resources to assist those most climate-vulnerable while also encouraging voluntary contributions from other parties (United Nations Climate Change). In the most recent session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) held in Baku, Azerbaijan, developed nations agreed to increase their financial support for developing countries threefold compared to their previous targets, which now amounts to 300 billion dollars annually by the year 2035. The Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC stated that this finance goal was set at this amount to serve as an insurance policy to protect billions of lives amid the worsening climate impacts hitting all countries (United Nations Climate Change). The key to this agreement is that the target is set to at least 300 billion dollars, meaning that this number is the minimum amount of money required for the prevention of the climate debt cycle, as well as climate action initiatives. According to the IISD, the total financing for these developing countries needs to be closer to 700 billion dollars a year until 2030 to preserve biodiversity, and an additional annual 3.9 to 4.3 trillion dollars are necessary to also meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (Wiedenbrüg, 2024).

Debt-for-climate swaps

Outside initiatives that increase climate financing efforts, debt-for-climate swaps are another type of method that aims to directly tackle the climate debt issue. Debt-for-climate swaps (DFCS) indicate an agreement where a portion of ongoing debt is refinanced or cancelled in exchange for investments in climate initiatives. These swaps are an exchange between the debtor country and its creditors (Borra et al., 2024). This is a productive opportunity for indebted developing nations to attain better fiscal stability while striving for a climate-adaptive and preventative future.

There are three main types of DFCS's: bilateral, multilateral, and third-party swaps (Grigoryan et al., 2023). When there is an exchange with one creditor country, it is a bilateral swap. When more than one creditor country participates in the deal, it becomes a multilateral swap. Most commonly, there are swaps that involve a third party, typically a non-governmental organization, that acts as a mediator between the indebted country and the creditors in facilitating the deal (Grigoryan et al., 2023). These are categorized as third-party swaps.

The first DFCS occurred in Bolivia in 1987. This swap was facilitated by Conservation International, and these initial swaps more broadly involved general development financing. Through the years, swaps became more specialized in addressing nature conservation efforts (Sharma, 2025). In recent years, DFCS's have gained another wave of interest from developed countries as climate change and debt became headlining topics. With this renewed sense of interest, DFCS deals have become increasingly ambitious and innovative (Sharma, 2025). For example, a recent DFCS that occurred in 2023 was in Ecuador, where the historically biggest deal was made with the Inter-American Development Bank and the US Development Finance Corporation, with advice from the Oceans Finance Company (Sharma, 2025). In this deal, 1.6 billion dollars worth of commercial debt was converted into a 656 million dollar loan with Ecuador's commitment to improve sustainable fishing practices (Sharma, 2025). Examples like these provide an example of how countries can work together to foster deals and negotiations that provide positive financial and environmental outcomes.

Although DFCS's enable climate initiatives to prosper without collapsing from the pressure of uncontrollable debt, the strategy doesn't always result in a win-win outcome. Some challenges associated with DFCS's include high transaction costs, the difficulty for debtor countries to make long-term fiscal commitments due to political and economic volatility, the risk

of currency inflation or devaluation, and the limited impact of unambitious swaps that result in minimal change (Grigoryan et al., 2023). Understanding these challenges highlights the importance of learning from and addressing shortcomings from past DFCS's, and it underscores the importance of continuous international cooperation and conversation when addressing the issue of climate debt and financing.

Bloc Positions:

African Bloc

While African countries contribute very minimally to greenhouse gas emissions, they face the sharpest consequences of climate change – ranging from issues such as prolonged droughts in the Sahel to rising sea levels along coastal regions. As a result, the African bloc calls for climate finance to be provided primarily as grants rather than loans, emphasizing that new borrowing would deepen an already severe debt burden (Haas, 2025). To address the evolving impacts of climate change throughout regions in Africa, eight former heads of state and government of Africa made an appeal, launching the African Leaders Debt Relief Initiative (Thomasson, 2025). Launched in February of 2025 in Cape Town, South Africa, this initiative proposes objectives such as debt restructuring and lowering the cost of capital for developing countries. Beyond finance, the bloc advocates for technology transfer, capacity building, and the fulfillment of long-standing commitments such as those of the Paris Agreement. Overall, the African bloc generally focuses its advocacy on climate justice and debt relief with an emphasis on sustainable development.

Asian Bloc

The Asian Bloc contains a diversity in positions regarding the climate debt crisis due to

the continent's diversity in geography, economic development, and levels of climate vulnerability. While countries like India and China are among the largest emitting countries, developing countries in South and Southeastern Asia, along with those in the Pacific Islands, remain targets of climate injustice. Although conversations on contributing to climate funds continue, countries like India and China emphasize the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (Chaturvedi & Kumar, 2025). Given the fact that they are countries that have rapidly increased their emissions within recent years, their position is that countries with a historically larger responsibility for emissions should also be more responsible for climate funding. Across the region, there is broad support for innovative solutions like regional green funds, but a shared insistence that climate action cannot come at the expense of development priorities (Basu & Lim, 2024).

European Bloc

The European bloc generally positions itself as a leader in international climate finance and diplomacy. European Union members, along with the United Kingdom and other regional partners, frequently emphasize the importance of fulfilling existing climate finance pledges and supporting the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund under the UNFCCC (European Commission). Western European states tend to highlight technology transfer, green investment, and market-based solutions as core elements of their approach to climate justice, while Eastern European countries often balance climate commitments with their domestic economic transitions (Andersson et al., 2025). Overall, the bloc supports ambitious action on climate debt and finance but often frames its contributions as partnerships or investments in global resilience, rather than as direct reparations for historical emissions.

North American Bloc

Similar to the Asian Bloc, the North American bloc also holds a mix of perspectives. Countries like the United States and Canada acknowledge the need for international climate finance but usually prefer voluntary contributions, private sector engagement, and risk-based financial instruments over formal recognition of “climate debt” (IISD, 2025). They tend to advocate for market-driven solutions, including carbon markets and climate insurance mechanisms, as pathways to mobilize global funds (IISD, 2025). In contrast, Caribbean nations in the bloc—many of which are small island developing states—take a far more urgent stance, emphasizing the existential threats of hurricanes and sea-level rise. These states voice the necessity of debt relief, loss and damage funding, and international support, treating climate adaptation as a matter of survival rather than charity (Rasheed, 2025). In terms of the United States, the recent cuts to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had a major impact on the U.S.’s role as a major climate actor, and the termination of climate initiatives creates uncertainty for the country’s upcoming involvement in climate action (Perry, 2025).

South American Bloc

The South American bloc strongly emphasizes climate justice and equitable finance, often linking environmental protection to the region’s development needs (Guevara-cue, 2025). Countries like Bolivia and Ecuador underscore the concept of historical climate debt, calling for substantial financial commitments from industrialized nations and for mechanisms such as debt-for-nature swaps to protect critical ecosystems (Whiting, 2024). Collectively, the bloc positions itself alongside African and parts of the Asian bloc in urging that climate finance

obligations be treated as both a moral and practical necessity for a just global transition.

Committee Goals:

Climate change is an ongoing issue with a future that could exhibit irreversible effects, and it is essential to discuss large-scale solutions through the lens of climate justice. The current climate debt crisis is one that countries are increasingly negotiating for strategies, and there have been many milestones hit as exhibited in the most recent COP conference in Baku. Nevertheless, the present trajectory is not enough to repair previous damages as well as prepare for future events, and it is essential for countries to unite and collectively raise ambitious initiatives for this universal issue. This committee aims to create an intellectually fluid space for countries to combine ideas and perspectives to pave the way for target goals that are properly addressing the severity of the climate debt crisis. In order for the flow of debate to result in such results, we encourage delegates to create an open space where diverse perspectives and ideas can be shared to form flexible, multifaceted, and innovative solutions.

Research Questions:

1. What methods can developing nations employ to advocate for adequate climate funding from developed nations?
2. Given the history of DFC swaps, how can these be a continuously sustainable solution to the climate debt crisis?
3. Pulling the focus from top-down solutions to bottom-up action, what are some grassroots methods that could be implemented to tackle the climate debt issue - both in developed and developing nations?

4. How can climate-vulnerable communities be meaningfully included in the monitoring and decision-making around climate finance allocations?
5. How can debtors and creditors co-create climate finance agreements that recognize historical injustices without perpetuating paternalistic aid models?

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Topic B: Regulating the Environmental Impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Introduction:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used largely as a widespread buzzword in today's generation, with its usage increasing exponentially in both the personal and work setting in subfields such as generative AI. According to Stanford University's annual AI Index Report, AI usage within organizations has seen a 23 percent increase from 2023 to 2024 alone (Stanford University HAI, 2025). While the security concerns of AI, such as deepfakes and malware, and the illegitimate use of AI in schools and workplaces are covered extensively, the impact of AI has on the environment and public health is largely overlooked.

The environmental concerns of AI can be traced throughout its lifecycle, such as the processes of production, generation, and distribution. When identifying these concerns, it is important to use climate justice as a lens to examine AI's environmental implications. Climate injustice arises as a concept in climate issues when certain populations/regions are disproportionately impacted by environmental problems. These vulnerable groups can range from regions within countries that contain marginalized populations to entire developing countries.

Despite the framing of AI as a solution to global challenges—including those related to sustainability—it increasingly contributes to climate-related harms that remain concentrated in communities least responsible for its development or use. From the extractive mining of rare earth minerals for AI hardware to the massive water and energy consumption of data centers powering generative models, AI systems are intensifying environmental burdens in both direct and indirect ways. By interrogating AI's environmental footprint alongside questions of

responsibility and accountability, we can better understand how to align technological advancement with equitable climate action.

Description:

On the UN radar, there are numerous concerns regarding AI's current environmental impacts and other undiscovered social implications. In the most recent COP 29 summit, AI was brought up as a critical issue both as an issue-causer and a solution-maker (United Nations News, 2024). For example, AI can be used as a predictor tool for governments, businesses, and even individuals – observing historical data and current trends to predict future climate outcomes (United Nations Environment Programme, 2024). However, it is crucial to examine its environmental impacts such as the e-waste it creates, how and to what extent rare minerals are collected for production, the use of electricity contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, and the extensive use of water at data centers. Furthermore, the issue requires a look through the environmental justice lens as well, as AI can pose significant public health risks disproportionately.

AI's impact on the environment and global warming

AI workloads are handled by data centers, which are specialized facilities that house IT infrastructure to run digital services such as AI. These datacenters are located globally, and it is estimated that there will be over 6,000 AI data centers located worldwide by the end of 2025 (Wong, 2024). There are various issues that are rooted in these data centers, including the e-waste that is produced and the extensive use of water and electricity. E-waste is forecasted as the most quickly growing type of solid waste in recent years, and in 2022, an estimated 62 million tons of e-waste was produced worldwide (Phillips, 2025). Further, less than a quarter of

that e-waste is properly disposed of and recycled. Within AI data centers, the e-waste produced often contains substances such as mercury and lead which are greatly hazardous (UNEP). Not only does e-waste often not get properly recycled, it has harmful and long-lasting effects to human and ecological health (Parvez et al., 2021).

Additionally, data centers are large consumers of water. Not only is water used during the process of constructing data centers themselves, but water is also continuously used to cool the electrical components during their operation (United Nations Environment Programme, 2024). To put the severity of this issue into context, it is found that the water used for AI-related infrastructure globally surpasses the amount of water used by the entire country of Denmark by 6 times (United Nations Environment Programme, 2024). This is a severe problem considering that a quarter of the world is already lacking access to clean water. Not only is the water usage of data centers alarming given its scale compared to global conditions, but this also has a severe impact on the regions surrounding these centers, as they are facing long-lasting water scarcity and contamination in homes and their everyday lives.

Third of all, data centers rely on rare elements and critical minerals that are often acquired using unsustainable mining practices (United Nations Environment Programme, 2024). Furthermore, creating the computers weighing 2 kilograms to be used for these centers requires around 800 kg of such raw materials (United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, 2025). These computers also use massive amounts of electricity which causes them to contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions – which are the largest cause of global warming. The continuously and quickly growing demand for AI led scholars to forecast that approximately 6% of the total electricity usage of the U.S. will be made up by AI data center electricity usage by 2026 (Ren & Wierman, 2024).

Environmental Injustice: the public health impacts of AI

The rapid expansion of AI technologies has introduced new forms of environmental injustice which disproportionately affect marginalized communities. As mentioned previously, AI systems, particularly those relying on energy-intensive machine learning models, require massive data centers and computing infrastructure. These facilities often consume vast amounts of electricity and water for cooling, contributing to localized pollution and resource depletion. Notably, these data centers are frequently sited in low-income or rural areas where regulatory resistance is minimal, exacerbating existing environmental burdens (Marrinan, 2025).

This unequal distribution of the environmental harm of AI has direct public health consequences. Communities living near AI infrastructure may experience increased exposure to air and water pollutants due to the energy sources powering data centers, such as fossil fuels (Slagowski & DesAutels, 2024). Moreover, the noise pollution and thermal output from such facilities can degrade local quality of life and exacerbate heat island effects, especially in areas already vulnerable to climate change (Marrinan, 2025). Additionally, prolonged exposure to such pollution can result in the increase of respiratory diseases, heart problems, and cancer.

These impacts are compounded by a lack of transparency and accountability from the tech companies deploying AI systems. Without meaningful public consultation or environmental assessments, affected populations are excluded from decisions that affect their health and well-being. As a result, the reality of the development of AI can reinforce or deepen the environmental health disparities rather than promoting equitable technological progress.

Regulatory measures on AI's environmental impact

As awareness grows about the environmental costs of artificial intelligence, particularly its contribution to public health disparities, calls for regulatory oversight have intensified. However, existing environmental regulations often lag behind the pace of AI development, leaving significant gaps in accountability and transparency. Most countries currently lack targeted legislation to assess or mitigate the ecological footprint of AI technologies.

Where environmental regulations do exist, they typically treat data centers and AI infrastructure as standard industrial facilities, failing to account for the unique and escalating resource demands of large-scale AI models. This oversight enables companies to build in underserved areas with limited political power and infrastructure oversight—perpetuating environmental injustices and increasing the risk of health hazards such as air and water pollution (Ren & Wierman, 2024). Additionally, within the U.S., there has been recent executive action on reducing environmental law on the impact of AI data centers (Walling & Daly, 2025).

Some jurisdictions have begun exploring policy tools to address these issues. For instance, the European Union's AI Act – despite having a primary focus on algorithmic transparency and ethics – has opened the door for incorporating sustainability metrics into AI risk classification (EU Artificial Intelligence Act). Similarly, environmental agencies in a few states in the U.S. have started requiring impact disclosures for high-energy tech developments (Saltzman et al., 2025). Yet, these measures remain fragmented and voluntary in many regions.

There is a growing consensus among public health experts, environmental justice advocates, and policymakers to further develop regulatory frameworks mandating more comprehensive environmental impact assessments for AI infrastructure. This can include requirements such as enforcing stricter energy efficiency codes or requiring emissions standards

for data centers. The development of equity-focused regulations that prevent the concentration of high-impact technological facilities in vulnerable communities are also an important aspect of the conversation. Transparent public reporting on AI's environmental footprint, including water usage and carbon emissions, must also become a regulatory norm to ensure both accountability and informed decision-making. Without comprehensive regulation, the expansion of AI risks reinforcing patterns of environmental injustice and exposing frontline marginalized communities to avoidable public health threats.

Bloc Positions:

European Bloc:

Although the European Bloc greatly acknowledges the benefits of AI in the aspects of healthcare, transportation, manufacturing processes, and sustainable energy, it also acknowledges that regulation is necessary to implement this technology in a safe, transparent, and ethical way (European Parliament, 2025). The bloc supports the development of binding regulatory frameworks to mitigate the environmental impact of artificial intelligence. The European Union has taken early steps through initiatives like the EU AI Act. While primarily focused on transparency and safety standards, the act opens pathways for integrating criteria on environmental impact (European Parliament, 2025). The bloc advocates for global cooperation on mandating environmental impact assessments for AI infrastructure and calls for the adoption of carbon and water transparency standards for data centers (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2025).

Asian Bloc:

The Asian Bloc represents a diverse range of countries, from highly industrialized nations that have booming AI industries to developing economies that are vulnerable to environmental

harm. While leading tech economies like China, Japan, and South Korea invest heavily in AI, there is growing awareness of its environmental footprint. Several Asian nations are exploring energy-efficient AI infrastructure and green computing initiatives (Azalia, 2025). However, concerns about economic growth and technological competitiveness remain central. The bloc mainly supports a balanced approach, which includes voluntary international guidelines that promote sustainable AI development and flexible implementation to respect national priorities (Azalia, 2025). There is also interest in technology-sharing and investment from wealthier nations to support greener infrastructure in developing parts of Asia (Khanna, 2020).

North American Bloc:

The North American Bloc, represented largely by the United States and Canada, acknowledges the environmental impact of AI and the importance of addressing environmental justice. While regulatory efforts in this area remain fragmented at the federal level, both countries are witnessing growing public and legislative interest in sustainable tech policy. Canada has shown stronger leadership in environmental regulation and could play a mediating role in global standards (Government of Canada, 2025). This bloc supports increased transparency in corporate environmental reporting and encourages innovation in energy-efficient AI models (Stewart et al., 2025). The region prioritizes market-driven approaches and industry self-regulation over binding international mandates (Davtyan, 2024). Therefore, the bloc advocates for partnerships and incentives rather than rigid compliance mechanisms.

South American Bloc:

The South American Bloc emphasizes the importance of equitable development and the protection of vulnerable communities from environmental harm (Draining cities dry, 2025).

While most countries in the region are not major producers of AI technologies, they are affected by the environmental externalities of global digital infrastructure, including resource extraction and data center siting (Garcia, 2025). There is advocacy on the inclusion of environmental justice in international AI regulations and a call for international funding mechanisms to help developing countries transition to greener digital infrastructure without compromising their right to development (Pangestu, 2021).

African Bloc:

The African Bloc exhibits a relatively positive outlook on the future of AI. Including ways to enhance disaster preparedness and boost agricultural resilience, AI has been used to better equip the region to the impacts of climate change (Obonyo, 2024). Although AI is seen as a solution to Africa's complex systemic issues, the bloc greatly recognizes the challenges that AI may bring as well. Therefore, there is a great emphasis on the need for a balance between regulations and innovation, and it is greatly kept in mind that this technology should be used for the progress and prosperity of all within the bloc – no matter one's socio-economic background (Obonyo, 2024). Ultimately, there is a positive look on AI being the future of more accessible sustainable development within Africa (Moors, 2023).

Committee Goals:

AI is a relatively new and growing issue that poses both significant risks as well as significant solutions to global issues. This committee aims to confront the growing environmental impact of AI and its consequences for global public health, with a particular emphasis on environmental justice. As AI technologies become more widespread, their energy consumption, water usage, and emissions increasingly affect communities—often those already

facing systemic disadvantages. The committee seeks to promote international cooperation in developing regulatory frameworks that ensure AI infrastructure is built and operated in a sustainable and equitable manner. Furthermore, the committee will work to elevate the voices of marginalized communities most affected by these developments, ensuring that their needs and rights are respected in global decision-making. By fostering collaboration among member states, the committee strives to create guidelines and recommendations that balance technological advancement with environmental responsibility and public health protections. Ultimately, this committee aims to discuss how AI's environmental impacts can be significantly minimized while finding ways to simultaneously use AI to tackle difficult climate issues.

Research Questions:

1. How does the lack of transparency in AI infrastructure impact environmental injustice?
2. How effective are current regulatory frameworks in addressing the environmental impact of AI?
3. How can international cooperation create a balance between AI innovation and environmental sustainability + equity?
4. How can AI be leveraged to predict and mitigate the environmental impacts of its own infrastructure?
5. To what extent do existing environmental impact assessments (EIAs) account for the full lifecycle of AI systems, including training, deployment, and disposal?

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