



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



THE QUESTION OF INCORPORATING THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE INTO PUBLIC EDUCATION



Letter from the Chair

Dear honorable delegates,

Hereby, I would like to welcome you to Žilina Model United Nations 2018 and specifically, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization committee! My name is Daniel Bdžoch and I am the President of UNESCO this year. I have been active as a MUN delegate for several years now and this year will be my premiere as a President of a committee.

Incorporation of Climate Change into the Public Education is a relevant, but more importantly, acute topic. Thanks to conspiracies and mass „alternative“ media, climate change became more controversial than crucial to the society. Numerous people either question it, or completely disbelieve this issue. It is not dangerous to deny climate change today, but it may be very dangerous to spread these ideas freely without any opposition from science and education in the future.

In Paris Agreement and other key UN documents, majority of world's countries agreed that climate change is already happening and that we are at a crucial point, where we must decide how to combat it. Otherwise, this may pose quite a danger to human race and life on Earth.

As this topic is equally important as any other topic discussed at ZAMUN18, I would like to ask all of you to carefully research the topic, your country's position and, last but not least, have fun!

If you have any questions regarding your Position Paper, ZAMUN, or the topic, please, contact me at daniel.bdzoch@gmail.com.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Bdžoch,
UNESCO President

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UNESCO and its mission

UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication.¹ For most of us, UNESCO's most notable activity is preserving the world heritage sites, however, that is only one small part of its competences and activities. One of its main aims is to motivate Member States of the UN to co-operate in education in sharing methods, publication, scientific research etc., in order to provide people with knowledge that is crucial for sustainable development of themselves as individuals, as well as the world as a whole. Moreover, through education, UNESCO's focus is on connecting the people and cultures through better understanding of each other and thus creating a peaceful, non-ignorant world.

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco>

PARIS AGREEMENT, excerpts concerning our topic

Affirming the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters addressed in this Agreement,

Recognizing the need for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge,

Recognizing the importance of the engagements of all levels of government and various actors, in accordance with respective national legislations of Parties, in addressing climate change,

Also recognizing that sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed country Parties taking the lead, play an important role in addressing climate change,

Article 11

(1) Capacity-building under this Agreement should enhance the capacity and ability of developing country Parties, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the least developed countries, and those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as small island developing States, to take effective climate change action, including, inter alia, to implement adaptation and mitigation actions, and should facilitate technology development, dissemination and deployment, access to climate finance, relevant aspects of education, training and public awareness, and the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information.

Article 12

Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

Article 6

(a) Promote and facilitate at the national and, as appropriate, subregional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within their respective capacities:

(i) The development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects;

(b) Cooperate in and promote, at the international level, and, where appropriate, using existing bodies:

(i) The development and exchange of educational and public awareness material on climate change and its effects;

(ii) The development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries.

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Article 10

(e) Cooperate in and promote at the international level, and, where appropriate, using existing bodies, the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national capacity building, in particular human and institutional capacities and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries, and facilitate at the national level public awareness of, and public access to information on, climate change. Suitable modalities should be developed to implement these activities through the relevant bodies of the Convention, taking into account Article 6 of the Convention

Introduction to the topic

Climate change is a process, during which the change of climate directly or indirectly connected to human activities occurs, in addition to natural climate variability.¹ Several climate phenomena are included in the term “climate change”, many of them natural. However, a concerning number of them is caused by human activities, mainly connected with industrial advances of the past centuries.

One of the turning points in human history definitely was the Industrial Revolution. It brought the mankind numerous inventions that started the exponential technological growth, which still persists. However, what the Industrial Revolution brought with it too was carbon dioxide in huge masses being the byproduct of all the fossil fuel burning. This caused the greenhouse effect that we can observe today in Earth’s temperature that is 1-2°C higher than it used to be in half a decade ago. In addition to the temperature rise, 15-37% of the species known in the tested regions will be extinct by 2050.²

Climate change is a very complex topic that needs to be tackled by the public education as soon as possible, so the next generations can “fight” it more effectively than the previous ones. Current state of people’s knowledge about climate change and threats connected with it is abysmal, therefore, UNESCO must take a next step to connect more people with the resources of knowledge in this field in the mass public education and start from early age. Only this way we can save the blue planet!

Note that this study guide provides only key information on the topic, so consider it a good basis for your further research about climate change and your country’s position. It is useful to research country’s current state in this matter, future plans, and past problems/situations that led to later solutions, as from them you can adapt some methods and possibly use them in our resolution.

¹ UN. *UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE*. unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf. Article 1, definition on Climate Change

² Thomas, Chris D., et al. “Extinction risk from climate change.” *Nature News*, Nature Publishing Group, 8 Jan. 2004, www.nature.com/articles/nature02121.

Climate change and Education

Climate change is a very complex problem that can be divided into many subcategories such as greenhouse effect, waste management, overuse of plastic materials, fuel burning, and excessive CO₂ amounts in the atmosphere. As you can see, there are a lot of problems connected with climate change that need solutions. However, most of the people either do not realize, how they help climate change to spread, or do not know that it exists or that it is connected with parts of their daily lifestyle at all. These most common parts of lifestyle can be excessive car usage, excessive production of waste and subsequent non-separation for further recycling, and so on. These are also the easiest to get rid of, when people are not only informed, but also led to change it and will be shown other solutions. Therefore, we need to focus some part of education on these environmental issues connected with climate change.

Several countries already adapted plan coordinated by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) called Education for Sustainable Development.¹ However, this program only covers the European continent, which is fairly small and the biggest world's powers, which pollute the climate the most are outside of Europe, so there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Education is the key

Although more and more people have access to the information stored on the Internet and, therefore, to information about climate change, studies show that education is the “single strongest predictor” in the matters of public awareness of climate change.²

Moreover, this study shows that more than one third of world's adult population never heard of climate change! Therefore, education of the future generations is the key to spread awareness of climate change, to show that it is a threat to humanity and, finally, find a solution to this fairly young, but very crucial problem of our generations.

I strongly advise you to read the article, as it not only shows how many countries are undereducated in the matters of climate change, but it also might help you with the statistics and other useful info with your country's research.

¹ <https://www.unece.org/env/esd.html> - Education for Sustainable Development

² “Global survey: Where in the world is most and least aware of climate change?” *Carbon Brief*, 5 May 2016, www.carbonbrief.org/global-survey-where-in-the-world-is-most-and-least-aware-of-climate-change.

What should be addressed in the final resolution

To narrow your case studies and give you guidelines when preparing your resolution, these are the areas that you should focus on primarily (but not limited to!):

1. The importance of climate change education and why to incorporate it into public education
2. The extent of incorporation into public education (mandatory or not for all the students, high school only?, etc.)
3. Guidelines for governments with personal and material requirements
4. Additional programs that would help educate not only the students

These are only several options, however, make sure to be ready to solve more than these with concrete ideas and measures to be taken. This resolution must cover the problem as a whole, not only the ideas stated earlier, so please make sure to prepare these solutions carefully and, of course, in agreement with your country's policy.

Closing remarks

Being aware of all previous actions taken, UNESCO shall in the end adopt a new resolution covering the field previously uncovered or covered unsatisfactory in the current situation of climate change education issue. It is important to understand that each one of us can help the environment, when given some professional advice with little to no effort in our daily life. Citizens of more developed countries have the privilege to be closer to sources of information covering this issue, however, most of the world has very little of knowledge about climate change, not even mentioning the prevention.

Therefore, UNESCO should adopt a resolution that would shorten the distance between the sources of knowledge and people that get the public education provided by the governments of the Member States. As this resolution must be agreed on with the respective governments, there is a bigger chance to incorporate climate change education to their national education systems easily and more efficiently.

Further reading

Global survey: Where in the world is most and least aware of climate change:

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/global-survey-where-in-the-world-is-most-and-least-aware-of-climate-change>

Climate change education for sustainable development: the UNESCO climate change initiative (2010):

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001901/190101E.pdf>

UNFCCC

[http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/background/application/pdf/convention_text_with_a
nnexes_english_for_posting.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/background/application/pdf/convention_text_with_annexes_english_for_posting.pdf)

Paris Agreement

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

Integrating Climate Change in Education at Primary and Secondary Level

[https://www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/resource_guide_on_integrating_cc_in_education_pri
mary_and_secondary_level.pdf](https://www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/resource_guide_on_integrating_cc_in_education_primary_and_secondary_level.pdf)