UTMUN 2024

United Nations Economic and Social Commission For Asia and the Pacific

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Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this conference, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an equitable manner, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

This Background Guide and UNESCAP presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to the following: discussion of natural and human-made disasters, death, and mental illness. Great care will be taken by staff in handling any/all of these topics should they arise.

UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: preparing yourself before reading this background guide, seeking support after reading the background guide, or filling out the committee switch form beforehand. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org. We want you to feel safe and comfortable at UTMUN.

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee for purely an equity-based concern, please do the following:

1. Fill out the UTMUN 2024 Committee Switch Request Form: https://forms.gle/EVfikp6r6ACnBooR6

If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts at any point, please do any of the following:

1. Email equity@utmun.org to reach Harvi Karatha or email deputy.equity@utmun.org to reach Iva Zivaljevic or reach out to me at escap@utmun.org

1. Fill out the Anonymous (if preferred) UTMUN Equity Contact Form: https://forms.gle/XEH3DCTwX3JzzSnr6

1. Notify/Ask any staff member to connect you to Harvi Karatha or Iva Zivaljevic

Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to all attendees of UTMUN 2024 for the entire duration of the conference, and any conference-related activities (including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies).

1. Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,
    a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect). discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;
        i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;
        ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;
    b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harassment, such as, but not limited to,
        i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;
        ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;
        iii. Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;

2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,
    a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;
    b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;
        i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;
        ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;

c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;
d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha at equity@utmun.org;
e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff, members;
i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,
a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;
b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;
c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;
i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;
ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to impose restrictions on delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,
a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;
b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);
c. Disqualification from awards;
d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on UTMUN's policies regarding equity or conduct, please see this form. For any questions/concerns, or any equity violations that any attendee(s) would like to raise, please contact UTMUN's Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org or fill out this anonymous Equity Contact Form: https://forms.gle/Psc5Luxp22T3c9Zz8.

Letter From The Director:

Dear delegates,

My name is Candace Chen, and it is with great honour that I will be serving as your director of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) for the upcoming annual session of the UTMUN 2024. I have been a part of Model United Nations since my sophomore year of high school. I'm currently in my second year at the University of Toronto double majoring in Human Biology and Psychology with a minor in Education & Society.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome every delegate to ESCAP of UTMUN 2024. My fellow dais members and I cannot wait to witness the remarkable endeavours and efforts made by each delegate coming to life in February. The agenda of ESCAP this year revolves around two pressing matters, climate change and aging. First, we will dive into a discussion of the various consequences the issue of climate change brought to the social and economic landscape of the Asia-Pacific countries and how to combat it with green energy and technology. Then, we will shift our focus to the topic of aging and how an aging population could impact each individual and society on a larger scale.

Aside from me, this committee's dais team consists of our esteemed vice director, Han, and moderator, Gokul Parasuraman. Han is an international student from Shanghai, China who is currently in his second year of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Toronto. His engagement with Model United Nations started in grade 9 and has continued to this day. He has really enjoyed those experiences and hope all delegates feel the same about this committee.

To all attending delegates, we kindly request everyone to have a mindful and equitable manner when engaging in the discussion concerning these topics during and outside of committee sessions, particularly around potentially sensitive matters that might cause discomfort when handled poorly. The dais team urges all delegates to conduct some prior research and maintain an open-minded and empathic perspective to comprehend the realness of these issues for other fellow delegates or individuals around the world. In the meantime, we look forward to the diverse approach each delegate might have for tackling the matters discussed in this committee.

To all first-time delegates, there is no need to worry, we empathize with you and have all been through what you are going through. Hence, we strive to create an inclusive and welcoming committee environment to support you. Feel free to contact me at unescap@utmun.org for any questions or concerns regarding the conference or the committee. This email is also the place to submit your position papers, should you choose to write one. We wish you all the best with the research process and we look forward to seeing everyone during the conference.

Sincerely,
Candace Chen
Director of The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
escap@utmun.org

Position Papers:

At UTMUN 2024, position papers are required to qualify for awards. Each committee will also give out one Best Position Paper award. Only delegates in Ad Hoc are exempt from submitting a position paper. To learn more about position paper writing, formatting, and submission, please check out the position paper guidelines. Please read through the guidelines carefully as this page will describe content recommendations, formatting requirements, and details on citations. If you have any questions about position paper writing, feel free to contact the Dais via our committee email or reach out to academics@utmun.org.

Introduction:

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is a regional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that was established in 1947 in hopes of promoting cooperation among 53 member states and 9 associate members in the Asia-Pacific region with exceptions of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.[1] Initially, the commission was established as the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) to assist in the rebuilding and recovery in the post-World War II period.[2] However, in the present day, ESCAP works in close cooperation with the United Nations in pursuing and implementing solutions to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[3] ESCAP's main role is to encourage member states in the Asia-Pacific region to have a collective effort to initiate shared economic growth and greater social equity, with a particular focus on areas of poverty reduction, trade with innovation, transportation, communication technology, energy, and many others.[4]

In alignment with ESCAP goals and objectives, the ESCAP committee in UTMUN 2024 will discuss the issue of climate change and aging. The first topic of climate change covers a wide range of potential discussions including but not limited to social, economic, environmental, and technological aspects in trying to promote development in the Asia-Pacific region. The second topic of aging is more socially centered, examining the ways member states can progress in terms of creating a society that acknowledges and adapts to the current trend of the aging population.

[1] ESCAP. "ESCAP Members and Associate Members," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states.
[2] ESCAP. "ESCAP History," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/about/history.
[3] "Home | Sustainable Development," n.d. https://sdgs.un.org/.
[4] ESCAP. "About ESCAP," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/our-work.

Definitions:

GREENHOUSE GASES

Gases in the earth's atmosphere that trap heat and raise the surface temperature by absorbing radiation (heat energy) emitted by the earth. The most common types of greenhouse gas include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapor.[5]

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Any type of energy produced from a natural resource that can naturally replenish over a short period of time, often includes solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, and biomass energy.[6]

GREEN ENERGY

A specific type of renewable energy that refers to any type of energy generated from natural resources that does not produce any carbon emission or leave damaging environment footprints during generation, examples include water, wind, or sunlight.[7]

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Any type of energy generated to fulfill our energy needs without compromising future generations, often also taking into consideration the efficiency of generation and distribution of a particular type of energy.[8]

ENERGY SECURITY

The goal to have uninterrupted access to energy at an affordable price, the long-term goal is focused on investment in energy whereas the short-term goal is ensuring adaptivity of energy in the supply-demand market.[9]

OLDER PERSONS

Individuals who are aged 60 and over.[10]

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[5] Mann, Michael E. "Greenhouse Gas | Definition, Emissions, & Greenhouse Effect." Encyclopedia Britannica, October 1, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/science/greenhouse-gas.
[6] Wigley, Reed. "Renewable Energy vs Sustainable Energy: What's the Difference?" MA In Sustainable Energy, January 11, 2023. https://energy.sais.jhu.edu/articles/renewable-energy-vs-sustainable-energy/.
[7] Terrapass. "Difference between Green, Renewable, and Clean Energy?" Terrapass, January 31, 2023. https://terrapass.com/blog/whats-the-difference-between-green-renewable-and-clean-energy/.
[8] "What Is Sustainable Energy and Why Do We Need It?," n.d. https://www.routledge.com/blog/article/what-is-sustainable-energy-and-why-do-we-need-it.
[9] IEA. "Emergency Response and Energy Security - About - IEA," n.d. https://www.iea.org/about/emergency-response-and-energy-security.
[10] ESCAP. "Ageing Societies," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/ageing-societies.

HEALTHY AGING

The process of creating and optimizing an environment that gives individuals the opportunity to be able to do what they want to maintain their physical and mental health, independence, and quality of life.[11]

FERTILITY

The ability to conceive a child, often referred to as fertility rate, which is the average number of children born during a lifetime.[12]

MORTALITY

Death, often measured as mortality rate and is the number of deaths in a specific population when taking into account the size and unit of time.[13]

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

An umbrella concept that describes any technologies, infrastructures, or resources used to transmit, store, create, share, or exchange information, such as computers, internet, phone, and many more others.[14]

[11] "Healthy Ageing and Functional Ability," October 1, 2022. https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/healthy-ageing-and-functional-ability.
[12] Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Fertility and Reproductive Health," n.d. https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/fertility-and-reproductive-health.
[13] "Definition of Mortality." In Merriam-Webster Dictionary, September 23, 2023. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mortality.
[14] "Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) | Poverty Eradication," n.d. https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/issues/information-and-communication-technologies-icts.html.

Abbreviations:

UN
United Nations

UNESCAP
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific

APAC
Asia-Pacific

SDG
Sustainable Development Goal

ECOSOC
United Nations Economic and Social Council

ICT
Information and Communications Technology

MIPAA
United Nations Economic and Social Council

APEF
Information and Communications Technology

GHG
Greenhouse Gases

PM
Particulate Matters

UNDRR
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Historical Background:

Topic A: Climate Change

Climate change has a rich historical background dating back centuries as earth's climate has always been dynamic and ever-changing throughout the past. Initially driven by natural causes, climate change has slowly evolved and progressed to be recently driven by human activities.[15] There have been numerous ice ages and warm periods that occurred in the last 800,000 years, the most recent being the last ice age 11,700 years ago which marks the start of the modern climate era in which our current human civilization takes place.[16]

Historically, atmospheric carbon dioxide has stayed below a certain threshold as most emissions came from natural factors such as changes in the sun and variations in Earth's orbit. However, since the mid-1800s industrial revolution, the changes to earth's climate began to take course on an unpredictable and unprecedented trend.[17] Primarily due to human activities, specifically the widespread use of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas to produce energy, the emission of Greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere reached a level no one has witnessed before. The GHGs created discernible impacts on the climate as they trapped extra energy and allowed it to warm up the atmosphere, ocean, and land, therefore substantially raising the surface temperature.[18]

Fortunately, with earth-orbiting satellites and scientific climate change innovations, researchers in the 19th century began to recognize and acknowledge the connection between human activities and the changing climate pattern. Moreover, many observations such as rising temperatures, warming oceans, retreating glaciers, and rising sea levels all point to the existence of climate change. Finally, in 1988, the public shifted their attention onto debates and political agenda regarding climate change and formed The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to examine, compile, and then produce assessment reports using evidence related to climate change.[19] In 1992, countries collectively joined an international treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), that lays a foundation for actions needed to limit the progression and consequences of climate change. Since then, other frameworks and protocols such as the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015 were agreed upon by member states with an overarching goal of reducing emissions and combating climate change.[20]

[15] Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. "Climate Change Evidence: How Do We Know?," n.d. https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/.
[16] United Nations. "From Stockholm to Kyoto: A Brief History of Climate Change | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/stockholm-kyoto-brief-history-climate-change.
[17] BBC News. "A Brief History of Climate Change." BBC News, September 20, 2013. https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-15874560.
[18] United Nations. "Causes and Effects of Climate Change | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/causes-effects-climate-change.
[19] Le Treut, H., R. Somerville, U. Cubasch, Y. Ding, C. Mauritzen, A. Mokssit, T. Peterson and M. Prather, 2007: Historical Overview of Climate Change. In: Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis
[20] ESCAP. "13. Climate Action," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/sdg/13-climate-action.

In the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, resolving the challenges of climate change is of utmost importance to its development as this region is home to 6 of the top 10 global carbon emitters, together, the APAC countries contribute over half of the world's total GHG emission. Therefore, in 2012, UNESCAP established the Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific, a report that explores the opportunities that a low carbon green growth path offers to the region and outlines the tracks needed to be pursued in order to achieve low carbon green growth.[21] As a result of ESCAP Resolution 67/2, The Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF) was established in 2013 to provide a ministerial-level platform for enhancing energy security and sustainable energy.[22] To track the progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UNESCAP convened an Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) to provide an opportunity for governments to share regional perspectives and knowledge regarding climate change and means of implementation.[23] More recently, the Race To Zero campaign was launched as a global campaign to move toward net zero carbon emission by targeting over 20 economic sectors and outlining actions required to move toward a decarbonized economy.[24] Despite previous efforts, in 2022, APAC countries continue to experience climate-induced disasters, hence, more ambitious action is needed to change the current situation.

[21] Hyŏmnyŏktan, Han'guk Kukche. Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific : Turning Resource Constraints and the Climate Crisis into Economic Growth Opportunities, 2012. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB11215804.
[22] ESCAP. "The First Asian and Pacific Energy Forum," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/apef1.
[23] ESCAP. "Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/2030-agenda/regional-processes-and-dialogue.
[24] ESCAP. "The Race to Net Zero : Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2023/race-net-zero-accelerating-climate-action-asia-and-pacific.

Topic B: Ageing

Population aging has a relatively brief history but is an issue that has rapidly progressed over a short span of time. Life expectancy has stayed relatively low in human history due to high rates of infant mortality, infectious diseases, and limited access to healthcare and nutrition.[25] As a result, the population trends of societies were characterized by a predominantly young demographic. In 1950, the number of older persons in a country remained under 10 percent of its population. However, between the 19th and 20th centuries, advancements in overall public health, and economic and social developments resulted in a demographic transition toward an aging population. The better living conditions and access to medical care played a crucial role in reducing mortality and increasing life expectancy. In recent decades, the shift in population age has been accelerated by several factors like fertility rate, medical innovations, family roles, and migration.[26] It is estimated that by 2050, one in every six people in the world will be classified as an older person. As such, every country in the world is facing one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century, population aging.[27]

As home to 60% of the world's population, the APAC region will receive a more substantial impact from this issue compared to other regions. On a global scale, the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) has been the agenda and action plan for addressing population aging, and as a result of ECOSOC resolution 2020/8, UNESCAP organizes intergovernmental meetings to discuss and review the progress of the implementation MIPAA in the APAC countries. MIPAA was then regionally implemented, through ways such as the Shanghai Implementation Strategy and the Macao Plan of Action of Ageing for Asia and the Pacific that focuses on creating enabling environments and ensuring well-being in old age.[28] Moreover, in 2015, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted the Kaula Lumpur Declaration on Ageing which promotes healthy, active, and productive aging for older persons.[29] Ever since the establishment of declarations and action plans, most countries developed policies that target different sectors to assist the aging population through long-term care, pension, and housing while balancing the needs of older persons with the economic and social realities of each country.

[25] United Nations. "Ageing | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ageing.
[26] Rowland, Donald T. "Global Population Aging: History and Prospects." In Springer EBooks, 37–65, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-8356-3_3.
[27] "Population Ageing | Demographic Changes," n.d. https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing.
[28] "Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) | Demographic Changes," n.d. https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/mipaa.
[29] ESCAP. "Expert Group Meeting on the Proposed Regional Action Plan to Implement the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/events/expert-group-meeting-proposed-regional-action-plan-implement-kuala-lumpur-declaration-ageing.

Topic A: Climate Change

The APAC region holds a unique position in the global climate discourse, with a significant share of the world's population and a flourishing industrial sector. It is home to both the world's largest carbon emitters and some of the most climate-vulnerable nations.[30] From the numerous detrimental consequences threatening the safety of communities around the region to the potential for sustainable energy innovation, this section aims to provide a comprehensive insight into the issue and some policy recommendations for fostering climate resilience and sustainable development. The committee will dive into the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that the APAC region presents in the context of climate change. First covering the social, environmental, and economic impact of global warming as a result of climate change. Then discuss the need for a structural change to achieve an energy transition from fossil-fuel-based energy to green and sustainable energy. Finally, it examines the implementation of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies.

Subtopic 1: Global Warming

Climate change refers to the broad range of changes that can occur to the climate over time, but this section will focus on a crucial aspect more commonly referred to as global warming. The earth's temperature is warming at an unprecedented rate. From 1880 to 1981, the temperature increased at an average rate of around 0.07 degrees Celsius per decade. However, from 1981 to 2020, this rate more than doubled to approximately 0.18 degrees Celsius per decade. Over the past few decades, the surface temperature has risen by a total of 1.2 Celsius and all 10 warmest years in historical records occurred after 2010.[31] This phenomenon is primarily caused by the release of GHGs, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere from human activities like burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. Although GHGs can occur naturally and are essential to numerous organisms' survival, excessive and concentrated quantities of them can result in detrimental impacts. Unfortunately, similar to the rate of warming, the rate of emission has been steadily increasing since the 1900s.[32]

[30] "Key Findings | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/key-findings.
[31] NOAA Climate.gov. "Climate Change: Global Temperature," January 18, 2023. https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature.
[32] US EPA. "Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data | US EPA," February 15, 2023. https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data.

The current landscape of global warming is perhaps the most imminent and prevalent in the APAC region. Home to 6 of the top 10 global carbon emitters and contributing over 50% of the worldwide GHG emission, many countries in the region either currently struggle with climate-induced disasters or are extremely vulnerable to such disasters. Climate-induced disasters refer to examples such as pollution, rising sea levels, drought, flooding, and many more.[33] Indeed, the APAC region faces a serious pollution challenge stemming from both natural and anthropogenic sources. Major contributors to this issue include heavy traffic congestion, rapid industrialization, and soaring energy consumption. It's important to note the diversity of pollution types, each involving a range of pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and carbon monoxide. In addition, pollution can manifest in various forms, including urban air pollution, household air pollution, industrial air pollution, and agricultural pollution, impacting not only the air but also water and soil quality.

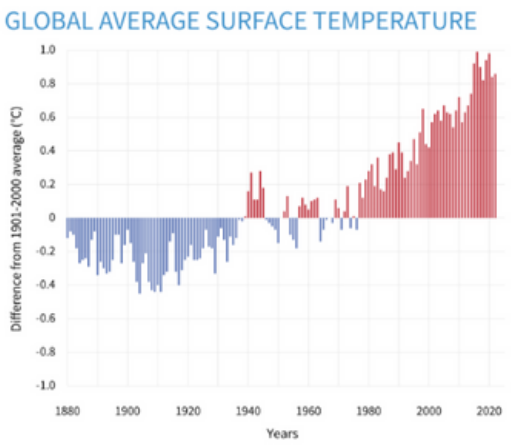


Figure 1: Yearly surface temperature compared to the 20th-century average from 1880–2022

The consequences of this pollution are detrimental as it can affect the region's economy, food production, and public health. Economically, the cost of pollution control and healthcare expenses for pollution-related illnesses places a substantial burden on governments and businesses. Pollution also hampers food production, as it degrades soil quality, harms ecosystems critical for agriculture, and alters the predictability of the climate.[34] Moreover, pollution results in adverse health effects such as increasing the risk of respiratory diseases and premature deaths.[35]

Addressing this complex issue requires regional cooperation and collaborative efforts. For instance, countries can standardize methods for pollution identification and monitoring by developing consistent metrics for measuring pollution across regions. This will be beneficial for gathering data to establish more concrete solutions. To overcome these challenges, member states of ESCAP have taken initiatives such as creating the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP), which is a platform for collaborative efforts among APAC nations to improve air quality management, facilitate air quality monitoring, share open data, exchange practices, and support capacity building.[36] Another noteworthy initiative aimed at tackling air pollution is the Urban Air Pollution Project, which seeks to enhance regional city's knowledge and policies on mitigating air pollution.[37]

[33] ESCAP. "Weather, Climate and Water across Generations – What Does This Mean?," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/blog/weather-climate-and-water-across-generations-what-does-mean.
[34] Ukaogo, Prince O., Ugochukwu Ewuzie, and Chibuzo V. Onwuka. "Environmental Pollution: Causes, Effects, and the Remedies." In Elsevier EBooks, 419–29, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-819001-2.00021-8.
[35] Kampa, Marilena, and Elias Castanas. "Human Health Effects of Air Pollution." Environmental Pollution 151, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 362–67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2007.06.012.
[36] ESCAP. "High-Level Forum on Clean Air," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/events/High-Level-Forum-Clean-Air.
[37] ESCAP. "Urban Air Pollution," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/projects/urban-air-pollution.

Case Study: China

China, as one of the world's largest economies, has experienced rapid industrialization and urbanization in recent decades. Although its resource-intensive industries fueled economic growth, it also contributed significantly to its pollution development. In 2017, a report by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment in China suggested that approximately 70% of the 388 municipal cities failed to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS), which is a limit to the concentration of the six pollutants in the atmosphere.[38] As a result, a study on the effect of air pollution on life expectancy and deaths in China discovered that nearly 1.2 million premature deaths in a year in China were caused by outdoor air pollution. Not only are the health effects prevalent, but the air pollution situation also worsens the acid rain issue, adversely impacting the ecosystem.[39]

Fortunately, China's commitment to environmental improvement is evident through the launch of the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan in 2013. This plan aims to reduce pollution and improve air quality in certain regions by decreasing the concentration of PM10 by at least 10 percent relative to the 2012 levels.[40] In addition to the action plan, the 1+N policy framework and the Five-Year Plans also outline ambitious targets for reducing emissions, particularly concerning air and water pollution by targeting various fields and industries.[41] With persisting efforts, China has the potential to serve as a compelling model for tackling the climate crisis through the resolution of pollution.

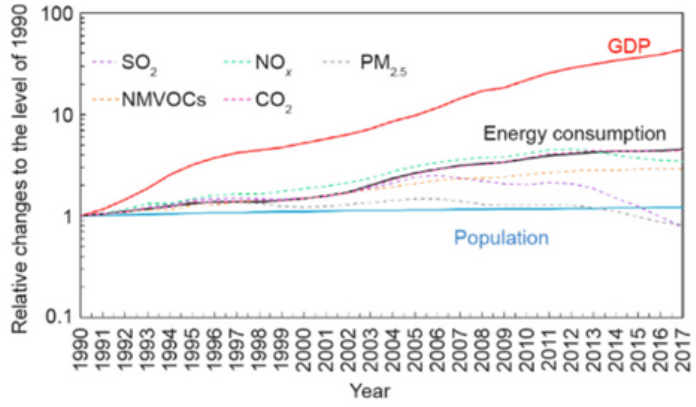


Figure 2: Trend of China's GDP, Energy Consumption and Emission of Various Pollutants

[38] "Report on the State of the Ecology and Environment in China," n.d. http://english.mee.gov.cn/Resources/Reports/soe/.
[39] Yin, Peng, Michael Bräuer, Aarón Cohen, Haidong Wang, Jie Li, Richard T. Burnett, Jeffrey D Stanaway, et al. "The Effect of Air Pollution on Deaths, Disease Burden, and Life Expectancy across China and Its Provinces, 1990–2017: An Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017." The Lancet Planetary Health 4, no. 9 (September 1, 2020): e386–98. https://doi.org/10.1016/s2542-5196(20)30161-3.
[40] AQLI. "China: National Air Quality Action Plan (2013) - AQLI," August 29, 2023. https://aqli.epic.uchicago.edu/policy-impacts/china-national-air-quality-action-plan-2014/.
[41] De Boer and Fan Danting, Dimitri. "Impressive Progress in China's 1+N Policy Framework - CCICED." CCICED, May 15, 2023. https://cciced.eco/climate-governance/how-is-progress-in-chinas-1n-policy-framework/.

Subtopic 2: Green and Sustainable Energy

The seventh SDG advocates for access to clean and affordable energy. The United Nations predicts that by the year 2030, there will still be 660 million people without access to electricity, and approximately 2 billion people who will rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking.[42] Member states must accelerate electrification, increase investments in renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and develop enabling policies and frameworks to ensure access to energy for all by 2030.

There are two main categories of energy that are classified as green energy. The first one is carbon-free energy and the second is renewable energy.[43] It should be known that there is a distinction between carbon-emitting renewable energy and carbon-free renewable energy. In addition, there are also carbon-free non-renewable energy sources. As the name suggests, carbon-free energy refers to all sources that generate energy with no carbon emissions. Typical examples include solar, wind, hydroelectricity, and nuclear energy. Those energy sources are categorized by their nature of minimal GHG emissions, thus are considered to be environmentally friendly and "green". Renewable energy on the other hand refers to all sources that generate energy with materials that are produced faster than they are consumed. Some typical examples include solar, wind, geothermal, and biomass. Those energy sources are categorized by their ability to utilize an infinite source, thus considered to be "green".

It is agreed that energy sources that are both carbon-free and renewable such as geothermal, solar, and wind energy are considered green energy, but policymakers and political entities have long debated whether some other energies that only satisfy one of the two criteria should also be considered green energies. Typical carbon-emitting renewable energies include the burning of alternative fuel and biomass, while typical non-renewable carbon-free energies include nuclear power and large hydropower.

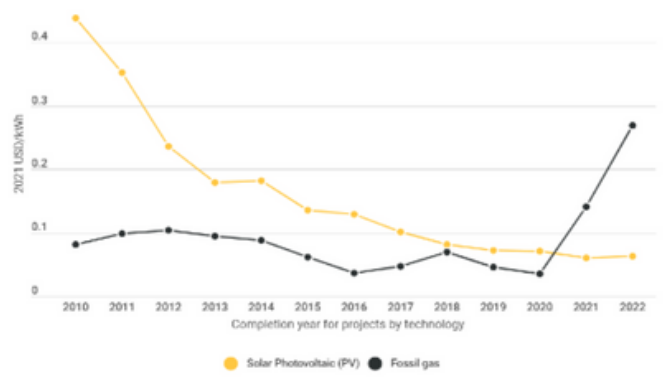
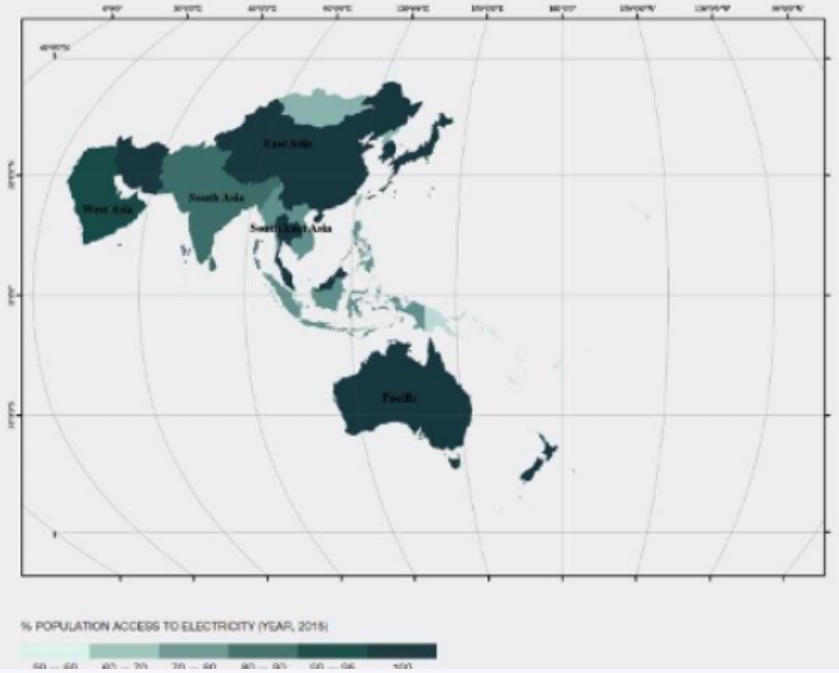


Figure 3: Cost of Electricity for Solar Photovoltaic Energies and Fossil Gas

[42] Martin. "Energy - United Nations Sustainable Development." United Nations Sustainable Development, September 8, 2023. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/energy/.
[43] Dillemuth, Sarah. "What's the Difference between Carbon-Free & Renewable Energy?" MCE Community Choice Energy, September 16, 2022. https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/mce-news/whats-the-difference-between-carbon-free-renewable-energy/.

Aside from the obvious environmental benefits of the lack of carbon emission, renewable energy has also been associated with economic benefits. A report from the International Renewable Energy Agency suggests that the cost of electricity generated from renewable sources has lower costs than the cheapest coal-fired option. The agency estimates a 55 billion USD saving on global energy costs due to the application of renewable energy. The report also notes that the cost of renewable energy has continuously decreased over the previous years, while coal and fossil gas have seen an increase.[44]

Although renewable energy has been associated with affordability in recent years, there exists a high upfront cost for the implementation of those technologies. Fossil fuels currently account for more than 80% of global energy production,[45] and switching all of them to renewable sources would cost more than 60 trillion USD.[46] The upfront cost of switching to renewable energy may prevent countries currently with a power grid that is highly dependent on fossil fuel from switching to renewable sources. The financial difficulty may further be emphasized by the difference in technological capabilities between nations. While some regions are concerned with the implementation of renewable energies, other regions are more concerned with the lack of electricity regardless of the renewability of the source. Based on UNESCAP data, 157 million people lacked access to electricity across the Asian Pacific region. It is also noteworthy that as of 2018, 22.1% of total energy output is renewable, which has seen a steady growth from 16.1% in 2010.[47]



[44] "Renewable Power Remains Cost-Competitive amid Fossil Fuel Crisis," July 13, 2022. https://www.irena.org/news/pressreleases/2022/Jul/Renewable-Power-Remains-Cost-Competitive-amid-Fossil-Fuel-Crisis.
[45] "Renewable Energy – Powering a Safer Future | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/raising-ambition/renewable-energy.
[46] Jacobson, Mark Z., Anna-Katharina Von Krauland, Stephen J. Coughlin, Emily Dukas, Alexander J. H. Nelson, Frances C. Palmer, and Kylie R. Rasmussen. "Low-Cost Solutions to Global Warming, Air Pollution, and Energy Insecurity for 145 Countries." Energy and Environmental Science 15, no. 8 (January 1, 2022): 3343–59. https://doi.org/10.1039/d2ee00722c.
[47] Bruley, Enora, Bruno Locatelli, and Sandra Lavorel. "Nature's Contributions to People: Coproducing Quality of Life from Multifunctional Landscapes." Ecology and Society 26, no. 1 (January 1, 2021). https://doi.org/10.5751/es-12031-260112.

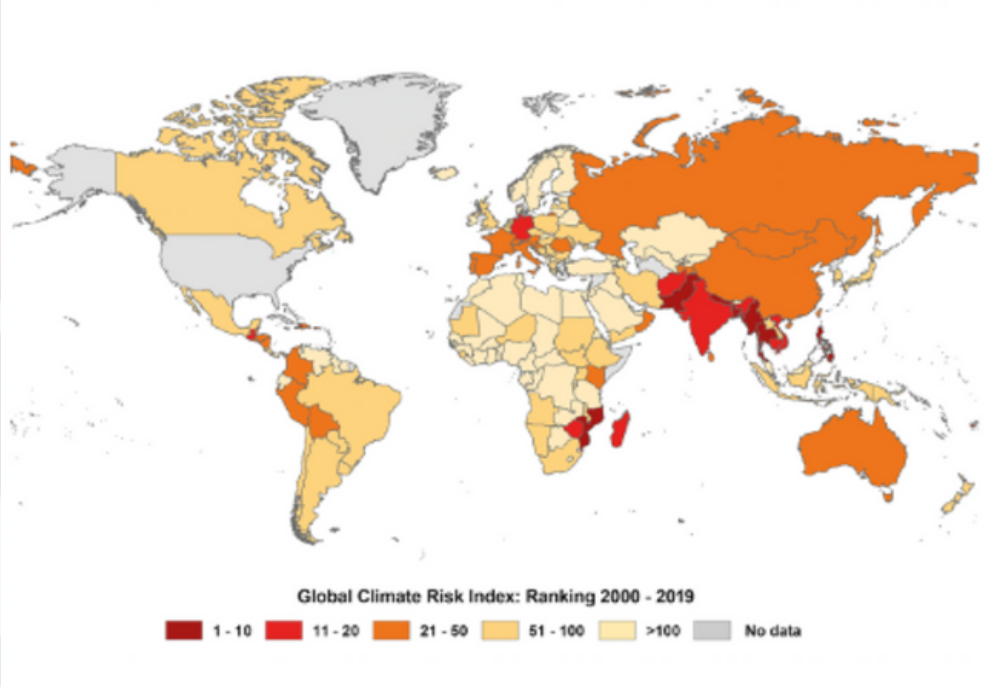
The mission of this committee is to ensure the affordability reliability and sustainability of energy for all in Asia as outlined by the Sustainable Development Goal 7 while also working toward the enhancement of energy security and connectivity through regional cooperation. UNESCAP has identified policies and strategies for governmental and intergovernmental entities to promote investment in renewable energy, regional cooperation on energy connectivity, and member states communications.

Among the various actions taken to support sustainable energy, the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum as a global cooperating platform was one of the most crucial initiatives.[48] Established by the ESCAP energy committee resolution 67/2, the first APEF addressed the concept of "enhanced energy security". As a result, the Ministerial Declaration and Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific was published. During the second APEF, member states focused on the theme of regional cooperation between entities which includes governments, international bodies, private sections, and civil societies. The third APEF is scheduled for October 2023, where member states will review the progress of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 in the Asia-Pacific region and discuss the implementation of the Minister Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Energy Transition towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific.[49]

[48] ESCAP. "Committee on Energy," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/committee/committee-on-energy.
[49] ESCAP. "Asian and Pacific Energy Forum," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/apef.

Subtopic 3: Disaster Risk Management

Disaster risk management is an approach focused on minimizing the impact of natural or human-induced climate disasters on communities, economies, and ecosystems. It involves a range of measures and processes to identify, assess, and reduce the risk while enhancing the resilience of communities to potential future disasters. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is a UN organization that was established to help policymakers around the world understand and act on risks in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda through resilience building. More specifically, taking steps to prevent disasters from becoming too detrimental through collaboration with local governments, intergovernmental organizations, and private sectors. Disaster risk management is also related to sustainable development in the sense that both share a common goal of creating resilient and thriving communities. Currently, major breakthroughs regarding techniques of risk management have been around multi-hazard early warning systems that enable individuals and communities to take action in advance of a disaster.[50]



[50] "Our Work," March 9, 2023. https://www.undrr.org/our-work.

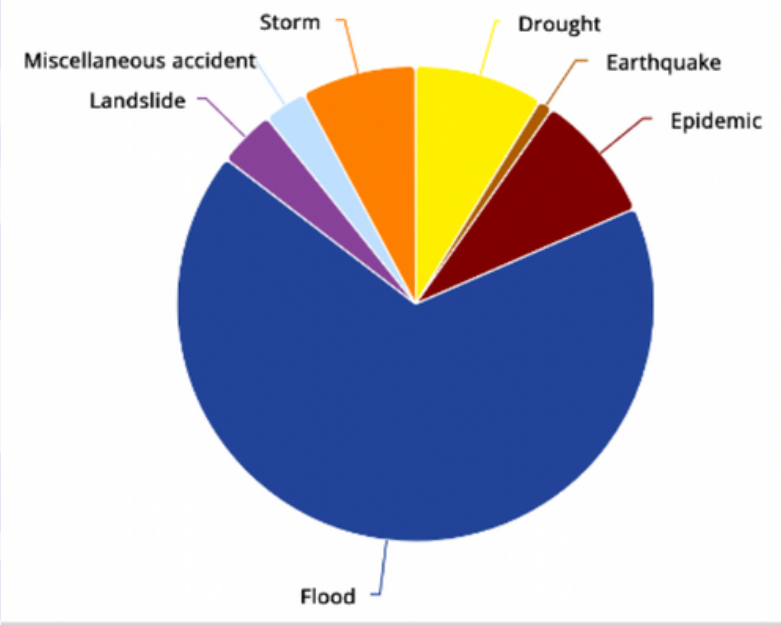
Disaster risk management is extremely crucial in the context of climate change in APAC countries due to the fact that this is the most disaster-prone region in the world. Individuals living in the APAC region are almost 30 times more likely to be influenced by a disaster than individuals living in North America or Europe. There are also region-specific risks East Asia is typically more susceptible to heavy precipitation whereas Central Asia usually experiences extreme heat and South Asia experiences flooding. Climate disasters also have dramatic financial impacts through the damage they can do as evident through the damage of disasters in 2013 that resulted in a deficit of up to $125 billion USD.[51] In the near future, the APAC region will likely witness rapid economic growth and population expansion, which means the repercussions of climate change will exacerbate, increasing the risk and vulnerability of the region to disasters. Seeing as disasters can have such an impact on the social and financial aspects of the region, it is crucial for there to be effective disaster risk management measures implemented alongside each country's developmental plans.

UNESCAP has been actively involved in promoting disaster risk management as a solution to the climate issue and the disaster-prone region. The APAC region has been heavily reliant on information and communication technologies (ICT) and space technologies since these innovations provide the opportunity to more efficiently navigate disaster risk management. For instance, the Regional Cooperative mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning utilizes data from space technologies to effectively monitor droughts, issue early warnings, and trigger emergency response all before the drought becomes visible to the human eye. Similarly, the Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster, and Climate Preparedness established in 2005 is used to support disaster, specifically tsunamis, early warning systems and facilitate regional cooperation through pooling resources from member states to strengthen the region's capacity to combat disasters.[52] Aside from gathering resources and set up early warning systems, UNESCAP is also assisting with policymakers in expanding their knowledge for risk from climate disasters through the creation of the Risk and Resilience Portal under the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network. This portal provides evidence and analysis for countries to conduct proper risk assessments, informed planning, and accurate budgeting to either prepare for or recover from disasters.[53] Additionally, the committee on disaster risk reduction under UNESCAP also holds bi-annual sessions to discuss the current status of regional cooperation efforts and craft regional action plans that target resilience building. However, despite the attempts and the progress made, the APAC region still needs significantly more regional cooperation since countries are very digitally divided, meaning they often won't have access to reliable technology or warning systems to manage disaster risks.[54]

[51] ESCAP. "ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/our-work/ict-disaster-risk-reduction.
[52] ESCAP. "ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/disaster-preparedness-fund.
[53] Asia-Pacific Risk & Resilience Portal 2.0 | Resilience Portal," n.d. https://rrp.unescap.org/.
[54] ESCAP. "Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/committee/committee-on-disaster-risk-reduction.

Case Study: Sri Lanka

Ranked as the 4th most affected country by climate change in 2016, Sri Lanka, an island country located off the southern coast of India, faces a range of severe climate-rated disasters that threaten the island's biodiversity, population, and economy. Historically, the most common disasters that Sri Lanka experiences include droughts, floods, landslides, cyclones, and coastal erosion.[55] Seeing as over half of the population lives in coastal areas around the island, the coastal regions are considered hotspots for being extremely vulnerable to climate change, specifically future sea level rise and flooding. Sri Lanka's special variation in topography also contributes significantly to its vulnerability to climate risks. For instance, although the Northwest region has an annual average rainfall of less than 1 meter, the Southwest region has an annual average rainfall above 5 meters. This imbalanced rainfall pattern results in erosion and landslides in wet areas whereas dry regions experience increased frequency and intensity of drought days. This has a dramatic impact on agriculture, livelihood, and availability of drinkable water.[56] The effects of climate change extend beyond the local population to the other organisms and their ecosystem. For instance, birds have lost habitats due to disasters, which lead multiple species toward extinction or endangerment.[57]



[55] "World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal," n.d. https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/srilanka/vulnerability.
[56] Global Climate Change. "Climate Risk Profile: Sri Lanka," December 26, 2018. https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-profile-sri-lanka.
[57] "Protecting Sri Lanka's Ecosystems to Preserve Natural Habitats and Resources to Improve Lives." World Bank, April 25, 2016. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/04/25/protecting-sri-lankas-ecosystems-preserve-natural-habitats-resources-improve-lives.

However, fortunately, in response to these risks, Sri Lanka has been active in adopting and implementing disaster risk reduction measures. The Sustainable Sri Lanka 2030 Vision is an outline and framework to help Sri Lanka achieve sustainable development that is more climate-proof and able to mitigate disasters. The strategies focused on improving the living standards and economy by increasing non-agricultural jobs by 30%, average education attainment, and export earnings.[58] Additionally, Sri Lanka also joined an initiative at the UN International Court of Justice led by The Republic of Vanuatu to clarify the future obligation and consequences related to climate change.[59] Policy-wise, Sri Lanka is committed to reducing GHG emissions by 14.5% by 2030 while increasing its forest coverage by 32%.[60]

[58] "Building Sri Lanka's Resilience To Climate Change." World Bank, September 21, 2018. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/09/21/building-sri-lankas-resilience-to-climate-change.
[59] De Silva, Sanjali. "What International Climate Justice Means for Sri Lanka." The Equation, August 24, 2023. https://blog.ucsusa.org/sanjali-desilva/what-international-climate-justice-means-for-sri-lanka/.
[60] UNDP Climate Promise. "Sri Lanka," n.d. https://climatepromise.undp.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/sri-lanka.

Questions to Consider:

- What are the specific social impacts of climate change, and how to best tackle each challenge through local resources or regional collaboration?
- What are the current policies and initiatives in place to mitigate climate change in the APAC region, and how effective have they been?
- What role do international organizations and regional partnerships play in addressing climate change in the APAC region, and what can they do to provide greater assistance?
- How is the APAC region contributing to international climate agreements and commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, and what are the challenges and opportunities in meeting these targets?

Topic B: Aging

Population aging in the APAC region is a demographic shift with a profound significance. As life expectancy continues to rise and birth rate continues to decline, numerous countries in the region are witnessing a remarkable transformation in their population age structure. This phenomenon is driven by several factors and its implications are multifaceted that span across various aspects of society and governance. The challenges and problems posed by this demographic trend require careful consideration and strategic planning to ensure the well-being and economic sustainability of APAC nations. With a growing elderly population, there is a pressing need for innovative policies and practices that promote healthy aging. Therefore, this section will discuss in depth the current demographic trends, feasible approaches to best establish an enabling environment for older persons, and the incorporation of technology for the accommodation of the aging population. Addressing the issue of aging is a critical task for APAC countries, one that demands forward-thinking solutions and a perspective-altering approach.

Subtopic 1: Minimizing Discrimination and Establishing Enabling Environment

Ageing has been a primary topic of concern for nations in the APAC region, yet countries have done little to combat discrimination against elders. Hence, this section will primarily focus on the current state of age-based discrimination.

Ageism refers to the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination cast against people based on their age. Researchers believe that the common contributor to ageism is that individuals tend to view one's own aging in an unfavorable way. Individually, this may adversely affect both the psychological and physical well-being of the elders. On a broader aspect, ageism has denied elders access to goods and services, while impeding their integration into networks of families, friends, and committees. In Asia, due to the rise of youth-centered consumerist cultures, the respect of elders has seen a decline regardless of its age-centered culture.[61] The phenomena of ageism also prevent participation in the labor market even though having elders engage in work-related activities has proven to be beneficial. A simulation in Thailand shows that if retirement were delayed, a 1.4% GDP saving on social expenditure could be seen by 2050.

[61] ESCAP. "Combating Ageism and Ensuring Age Equality in Asia-Pacific," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/blog/combating-ageism-and-ensuring-age-equality-asia-pacific.

One of the potential actions is to legally enforce regulations against ageism. For instance, the Act on Prohibition of Age Discrimination in Employment and Aged Employment Promotion in the Republic of Korea aims to outlaw age discrimination in the labor market. Additionally, other solutions can include the delaying or abolishment of mandatory retirement, which has been adopted by Australia and New Zealand to remove barriers to elder's participation in society. Many member states in the UNESCAP have also attempted to implement legislatures targeting the physical abuse of elders.

Aside from legal enforcement, media efforts are also needed to prevent ageism. The Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022 has suggested the promotion of educational and intergenerational interventions on ageism, which focuses on using facts and research to better the public understanding of aging, as well as to eliminate stereotypes. It is also suggested to build movements to raise awareness and change the narrative around age and aging. The paper also suggested cross reference with the World Health Organization which currently recommends investing in evidence-based strategies to respond to ageism.[62] Generally, to combat ageism, elders should be allowed to age with dignity.

Although it was believed that Eastern cultures are less prone to ageism due to their tradition of respect and obedience to elders, (i.e., The idea of Xiao shun embedded in Confucian values) research conducted has found a more negatively inclined attitude toward elders in a selective group of youth surveyed. In the research, 184 young people from the UK and 249 from Taiwan were surveyed on both their meta-perceptions and opinions on elders. While the perception and admiration for elders as a group were more positive in Taiwan, personal opinions seem to differ as they are more negative when compared to those surveys in the UK.[63] Therefore, it is important to distinguish the general perspective of elders and personal opinions. The effect of opinion on actions and social attitudes should also be recognized.
It should be recognized that the health and well-being of individuals includes both the physical and mental aspect. The latter is rather heavily influenced by the surrounding environment. Considering the current social view on aging, a significant amount of investment ought to be made to create an enabling environment. The most relevant document to this issue is the *National Programmes for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities: A Guide*.[64] The publication provided the general guiding framework for establishing such an environment, which includes 5 elements, which are: partnership, networking, and stakeholders; leadership and strategic thinking; resources; capacity building; research and innovations; and Measurement and Evaluation. These element aims to provide a general guideline, rather than region-specific solutions. With consideration of the rapid aging in the APAC region, it is certain that there will be regional-specific adaptational methods if such guidelines were to be implemented.

[62] ESCAP. "Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022: Trends, Policies and Good Practices Regarding Older Persons and Population Ageing," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/asia-pacific-report-population-ageing-2022-trends-policies-and-good-practices-regarding.
[63] Vauclair, Christin-Melanie, Katja Hanke, Li-Li Huang, and Dominic Abrams. "Are Asian Cultures Really Less Ageist than Western Ones? It Depends on the Questions Asked." International Journal of Psychology 52, no. 2 (July 4, 2016): 136–44. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12292.
[64] Demographic Change and Healthy Ageing. "National Programmes for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities: A Guide." WHO, April 19, 2023. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240068698.

Subtopic 2: Support and Care Through Information and Communications Technology

Asia and the Pacific is a primary contributor to ICT development and adoption, but the region is also the most digitally divided in the world, where there exist disparities across different ages.[65] This would stimulate potential social issues. Specifically, while the COVID-19 pandemic shows how ICTs can help combat pandemics as well as support people, those who are unable to access those technologies were left behind with minimal support.

Currently, ICT has seen implementation in various fields, one of them being providing an opportunity to enhance cost-efficiency of service delivery, which includes, health care, financial and public services. As many of the services start to transform to digital platforms, ensuring elder's access to those digital services is mandatory from a human rights perspective. 17 countries out of the 22 countries studied have implemented initiatives to promote digital inclusion for the elders. ICT applications can also support elders from a service provider perspective.[66] This includes the storing and managing of information, for example, health records, and remote medical consultation. ICT has also seen its appearance in assistive adaptive and rehabilitative devices, which can support elders in different scenarios in their daily lives. Other implications are associated with the use of ICT in medical institutions, which would benefit patients of all ages.[67]

However, research has found that although older adults have a positive attitude toward technologies, they usually suffer when using and learning such devices due to decreased learning capabilities caused by aging.[68] The research discovered that the primary concern for elders centered around the navigation of devices. As a result, there is a tendency among elders where they prefer to use mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets rather than computers potentially due to their ease of navigating through directories. This problem is starting to get addressed as some recent research focuses on improving accessibility options for elders.

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[65] Bank, Asian Development. "Information and Communication Technology in Asia: ADB's Take." Asian Development Bank, December 19, 2017. https://www.adb.org/features/connecting-asia-bit-bit-adbs-take.
[66] Looi, Chee-Kit, and David Hung. "ICT-in-Education Policies and Implementation in Singapore and Other Asian Countries." In Kluwer Academic Publishers EBooks, 27–39, 2006. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-2799-0_2.
[67] ESCAP. "Using Information and Communication Technologies to Address the Health-Care Needs of Older Persons Managing Chronic Disease : A Guidebook and Good Practices from Asia and the Pacific," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/using-information-and-communication-technologies-address-health-care-needs-older-persons#.
[68] Li, Qingchuan, and Yan Luximon. "Older Adults and Digital Technology: A Study of User Perception and Usage Behavior." In Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing, 155–63, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41694-6_16.

Aside from changing the devices, efforts have also been made to educate elders on digital literacy through a professionally designed course. Those courses usually aim to teach elders the operation of digital devices, and by doing so, enable elders to keep up with technology, increase their confidence in online activities, which have become an essential part of modern life, and improve digital inclusion. An example is the Digital Literacy Training for Seniors operated by the Government of New Zealand. This service has provided digital literacy training for an estimated 4,700 older people. However, an expansion in the service will have to be made for the program to become more efficient and effective in the future.[69]

[69] Government of New Zealand. "The Digital Literacy Programme for Seniors and the Essential Digital Skills/Literacy Evaluation Framework - Age-Friendly World." Age-Friendly World, July 20, 2021. https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/the-digital-literacy-programme-for-seniors-and-the-essential-digital-skills-literacy-evaluation-framework/.

Questions to Consider:

- What kinds of social welfare or support systems need to be implemented to best support healthy aging and address the needs of a diverse elderly population?
- How to best provide support and care through ICT in regions without access to technology and how to ensure the use of technology is equitable among the individuals within a region?
- What evaluation framework or method is currently in place or needs to be put in place to assess the implementation and effectiveness of aging-related policies in either improving the lives of older persons or minimizing discrimination against the aging population?

Tips for Research:

The purpose of this background guide is to provide an initial overview of the key information on the two topics that will be discussed in this committee throughout the conference. Although this background covers necessary information to ensure all delegates can have a general understanding of this committee and its topics, its information is by no means sufficient, meaning delegates are highly recommended to research for additional information to complement the information presented in this background guide or assigned country stance. This process will also significantly help with position paper drafting as those papers should include a general summary of the topics, countries' views on them, and any potential solutions. To begin, I recommend taking a look at this background guide, the key resources provided below, and the website for UNESCAP or any other relevant UN organization like ECOSOC. Take note of any aspects or perspectives related to your assigned country or anything interesting you would like to know more about. Once you have some understanding and knowledge of the topics, you can conduct further research into your assigned country, including its stance on the topics and its current state of affairs, policies, or relationship with other countries. When you feel like you have an in-depth and well-rounded comprehension of both the topic and the country's stance, you can consider drafting some feasible solutions that could be discussed in committee. Always remember to think from the perspective of the country you are representing rather than your personal opinion. If you feel lost at any point in the research process, use the "Questions to Consider" to guide you into discovering more information about each topic.

Good luck, have fun, and feel free to reach out if you have any specific questions about the position paper or information in this background guide!

Key Resources, Topic A: Climate Change

ESCAP. "Asia-Pacific Riskscape @1.5C : Subregional Pathways for Adaptation and Resilience," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/asia-pacific-disaster-report-2022-escap-subregions-summary-policymakers.

ESCAP. "The Race to Net Zero: Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2023/race-net-zero-accelerating-climate-action-asia-and-pacific.

Germanwatch e.V. "Global Climate Risk Index," n.d. https://www.germanwatch.org/en/cri.

United Nations. "Causes and Effects of Climate Change | United Nations," n.d. https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/causes-effects-climate-change.

Key Resources, Topic B: Aging

ITU. "Ageing in a Digital World," n.d. https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Pages/ageing-in-a-digital-world/default.aspx.

"Madrid Plan of Action and its Implementation." United Nations, 2002. https://social.desa.un.org/issues/ageing/madrid-plan-of-action-and-its-implementation-main/madrid-plan-of-action-and-its.

ESCAP. "Population Ageing | Demographic Changes," n.d. https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing.

ESCAP. "Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing 2022: Trends, Policies and Good Practices Regarding Older Persons and Population Ageing," n.d. https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/asia-pacific-report-population-ageing-2022-trends-policies-and-good-practices-regarding.

"Information and Communication Technology in Asia: ADB's Take." Asian Development Bank, December 19, 2017. https://www.adb.org/features/connecting-asia-bit-bit-adbs-take.