

***King's Christian Collegiate Model United Nations***

***United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)***



***James Robinson***

***Mr. Oussoren***

***CGW4Ua***

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## **Letter From The Secretary General**

Dear King'sMUN 2024 delegates,

We are truly honored, as this year's Co-Secretary Generals of King'sMUN, to welcome you to our 10th annual conference. The Secretariat has been working hard throughout this school year to deliver you an incredible, in-person conference with a variety of creative committees, experienced chairs, and an overall successful day of debate.

Model United Nations, a reenactment of the function of the United Nations, is designed for students to come together to debate, discuss, and develop creative resolutions to some of the world's most pressing issues that plague our world today. In most committees, students take on the positions of various countries, characters, or political figures to create solutions for both real and fictional issues and crises. We also offer unique committees that explore historical, future, and fictional issues.

In our personal experience with MUN we have developed many valuable skills that we will take with us throughout our lives, such as confidence in public speaking, leadership, and creative problem-solving. Furthermore, MUN promotes lifelong connections, as we are constantly meeting delegates who share similar passions to us in committee sessions. We truly believe that your participation in MUN will guide you throughout your high school journey and beyond.

At King'sMUN, we provide a variety of committees to ensure that we have something of interest for everyone. From very current pressing issues (ie. UNSC and the African Union) and issues in sports (ie. International Cricket Council and WSF) to fictional, yet real, controversies (ie. Barbieland) and issues set in the past (ie. The Manhattan Project). We strive to ensure that there is appeal for a variety of delegates. Whether you have no experience or have been to a multitude of conferences, there is a place at King'sMUN for you!

Once again, we are thrilled to welcome all delegates, new or returning, back to King'sMUN. We hope that you engage in fruitful debate and have an amazing time at King'sMUN 2024.

Sincerely,

Serena Kalsi and Georgia Apostolopoulos

Co-Secretary Generals

King'sMUN 2024

### **History and Purpose of The UN**

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that was established directly after World War II on October 24th, 1945. It was the second of such organizations attempted in the 20th century, being the predecessor of the failed League of Nations that was created after World War I (1919-1946). However, unlike its predecessor which it adopted much of its structure and purpose from, the UN has found immense success in achieving its goals. Specifically, these goals are centered around maintaining peace and security, while developing friendly and productive relations between countries. The UN is headquartered in New York City, while also having regional offices in Geneva, Nairobi, and Vienna (Editors of Britannica). In total, there are 193 member states within the UN, who all meet together in the General Assembly where they have equal representation and discuss global issues. The UN General Assembly meets every September, though there are also occasional emergency meetings. In addition to the General Assembly, the UN is also made up of other bodies like the UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice, as well as many specialized agencies like the WHO and UNEP. These agencies operate autonomously, but are affiliated with the UN, and work to improve specific issues (Editors of Britannica).

### **The Background and Work of the UNEP**

This leads to the UNEP, which as mentioned is one of these affiliated groups. UNEP stands for United Nations Environment Programme, and as the name implies, it focuses on the world's environmental issues. Specifically, it was founded in 1972 at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Nairobi, Kenya. Since then, it has acted as the world's leading authority on the environment, working towards their mission of inspiring, informing, and enabling nations to better the environment. They operate in several different ways, with one of the main ones being their biennial meetings with all member states. Here, they work to provide policy guidance, review the organization's work so far, and look at future initiatives. In terms of carrying out their work, they operate out of their 12 regional offices that include their headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Through these offices, they work to maintain their relations with surrounding countries through supervising initiatives. Additionally, they also conduct research based out of these offices to assess environmental challenges that get brought to the biennial meetings and given further attention ("About the United Nations Environment Programme").

One of these environmental challenges that shows the positive effects that the UNEP and these meetings can have is the Montreal Protocol. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is a multilateral environmental agreement adopted in September 1987, that received universal ratification. It has been an immense success story and worked to limit the depletion of the ozone layer, which was a huge issue at the time. Generally, this agreement worked to gradually phase out ozone-depleting substances (ODS) that notably included a type of gas used in refrigeration called hydrochlorofluorocarbons. When released into the atmosphere, these ODSs damage the ozone layer, stopping it from being able to block the sun's ultraviolet rays. This lack of protection results in increased rates of skin cancers, sunburns, and other skin conditions, however this protocol significantly improved the situation. This can be in a large part thanks to the UNEP, who as mentioned, played a large role in implementing the protocol. Specifically, they conducted scientific assessments and concluded that there was significant ozone depletion, and that these ODSs were the cause. As a result, they advocated heavily for the implementation of international policies, and were a key facilitator during the negotiation process. Even past the initial implementation of the protocol, the UNEP has remained involved through regulating the efforts in different regions ("About Montreal Protocol"). These acts are a great example of the impact the UNEP and specifically these conferences can have.

### **Issue: Mitigating Increasing Extreme Weather Events**

Though extreme weather events have been an issue for as long as human civilization has existed, they have been increasing substantially in recent years. This is primarily a result of climate change, which has been one of the world's most prominent issues in recent years. Climate change has arisen as a huge problem over the last 100 years, and is primarily a result of human-caused emissions of greenhouse gasses. These include most notably carbon dioxide, but also a plethora of other gasses like methane which is found to be 28 times more potent. Looking more at these extreme weather events that are increasing from climate change, they include heat waves, hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, and much more. The links between climate change and these extreme weather events vary, but looking specifically at hurricanes, it is a result of the increased ocean temperatures. Broadly, the increased ocean temperatures lead to greater evaporation rates, which in turn results in greater moisture levels in the air that help fuel the

hurricane. Again, this is just one of many different links, but generally, as climate change increases, so do the rates of extreme weather events (“About disasters and conflicts”).

Now this is detrimental for obvious reasons, however, there are also many problems that arise from these disasters that do not come to mind. In terms of some of the more obvious ones, two that have a huge impact are the fatalities and how they ravage infrastructure. The latter results in many other issues, including the displacement of populations, and the loss of access to basic needs. This is because without the proper infrastructure, basic things like getting clean water, food, and getting to work become extremely hard. Though oftentimes the loss of infrastructure is not overly severe, in extreme cases vital pieces of infrastructure can be lost. An example of this is hurricane Maria, which hit Puerto Rico in 2017 and resulted in the loss of power across much of the island. It was not until months later that some residents regained power, with their access to many key things being impacted over this time. In terms of an issue that may not come to mind, natural disasters have also been seen to create instability and power struggles. This is a result of the loss of infrastructure, which often creates chaos for different groups to emerge out of. This was seen in Haiti where the loss of economic opportunity and housing following the earthquake in 2010 resulted in the rise of many gangs (“Why do disasters and conflicts matter?”). Finally, due to many of the world’s least economically developed countries (LEDCs) being found near the equator, and these extreme weather events occurring more frequently at warmer temperatures, these effects unfortunately disproportionately impact LEDCs. This often makes the disasters more deadly, as many of these countries lack access to the proper infrastructure to combat them and the instability that follows. Additionally, due to the economic impacts, it slows their development, keeping them behind other countries.

The UNEP understands this last point, and as a result, much of its work is focused on these LEDCs near the equator. They understand that MEDCs like the US have the proper funds to help mitigate the impacts, and therefore focus on countries like South Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, and Burkina Faso. Specifically, the UNEP’s aid generally falls within 3 categories. These are response and recovery activities, risk reduction activities, and post-crisis activities. Somewhere that has seen significant aid from the UNEP is Sudan, where risk reduction activities have taken place. Specifically, the UNEP has worked to stop erosion/the encroaching desert in North Darfur, which otherwise results in drought and heat waves. This has been done in partnership with the European Union and local governments, and has focused on bettering water management

infrastructure in the region. Additionally, the aid has also looked at educating farmers on how proper practices can limit erosion in their fields (“Sudan”). Another region that has seen significant UNEP activity is in the Sichuan province of China. This has been primarily post-crisis activities, as this region was struck by an 8.0 magnitude earthquake in May of 2008. Specifically, they worked to identify and control the contamination of soil and water sources as a result of chemicals and rubble from the disaster. In terms of extreme weather events, this contamination can impact soil quality and clean water supply, resulting in erosion and therefore extreme weather events like heat waves. They saw significant success in their actions, and are now no longer involved with the region (“China”). Overall, their actions are generally quite similar to these examples, however as mentioned previously, they also include seeking better policies and conducting research.

### **What Delegates are Trying to Solve**

Through this conference, delegates are trying to combat the issue of increasing extreme weather events. They are encouraged to come up with innovative solutions that attack not only the issue at the source, but also the many other problems that stem from it. As mentioned, these efforts can be separated into the three categories of response and recovery activities, risk reduction activities, and post-crisis activities. Some examples are implementing flood prevention infrastructure in places of high risk, providing aid to those hit by a hurricane, and reinstating damaged infrastructure post-disaster. Additionally, like how the UNEP operates, these efforts should be focused primarily on poorer regions where extreme weather events occur frequently. After presenting and discussing these proposed solutions, delegates will analyze the different options and create a plan for combating the issue.

### **Connections to The SDGs**

This issue of increasing extreme weather events connects to almost every sustainable development goal (SDG), but is closely linked to SDG 13 and 11. Looking more at **SDG 13: Climate Change**, it centers around taking action to stop both climate change and its various impacts. This connects directly to this issue, as the main efforts to combat extreme weather events by the UNEP look at attacking it at the source (climate change), or preventing/reducing the impacts of



the events. Looking at specific targets within SDG 13, one that stands out is target 13.1, which is about strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters. A specific indicator that ties in really well with the UNEP and this issue is indicator 13.1.3, which is the “proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies” (“Goal 13 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs”). In terms of **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**, it looks at minimizing the environmental impacts of cities, while also making them more resilient to things like extreme weather events. This connects to this issue of extreme weather events as making these cities more sustainable works to reduce their impact on climate change, and therefore extreme weather events. A specific target is 11.6 which looks at reducing the adverse per capita environmental impacts of cities with a focus on air pollution. This is measured through two indicators, with one of them being 11.6.2, which is “annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities” (“Goal 11 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs”). This indicator looks at air pollution in cities, which connects well to this issue as the emissions result in increased temperatures/heat waves. In addition to these SDGs, connections can also be made between this issue and SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12,14, and 15, which the delegate is encouraged in their research.

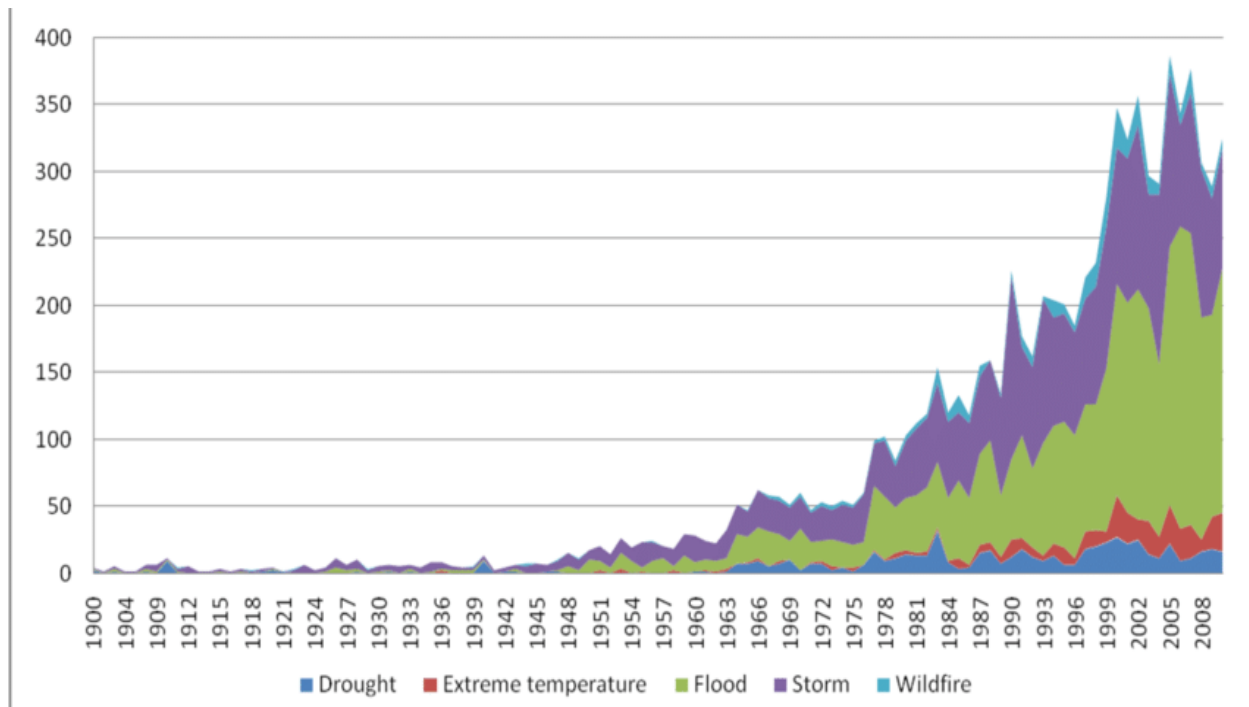


### **Questions To Consider**

- Which of the 3 categories of UNEP aid (response and recovery activities, risk reduction activities, and post-crisis activities) is most effective?
- What are some additional negative impacts of extreme weather events that have not been mentioned yet?
- Are there any positive impacts of extreme weather events? If so, what?
- What are some factors that make it more difficult for the UNEP to operate?
- How do government policies play a role in improving a population’s impact on an issue like this?
- To what extent is climate change the cause of these increasing weather events? Is it more effective to focus on these extreme weather events and their effects, or to tackle the problem at the source (climate change)

***Graphs and Data***

***Extreme Weather Events Annually from 1900-2008 (Simpson)***

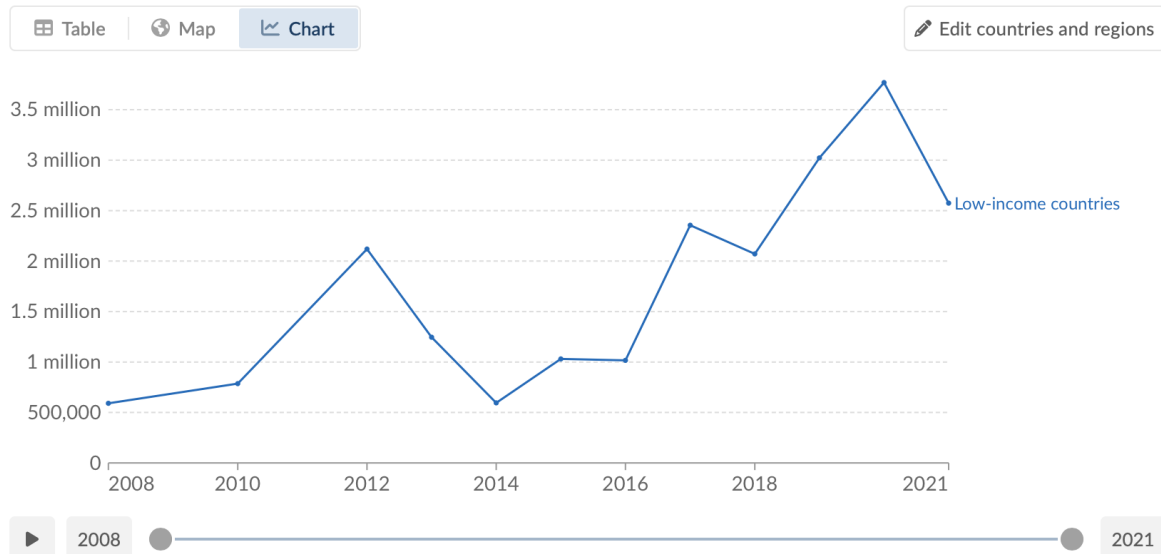


***Number of People in Low-income Countries Internally Displaced by Natural Disasters from 2008-2021 (Ritchie and Rosado)***

**People displaced internally by natural disasters, 2008 to 2021**

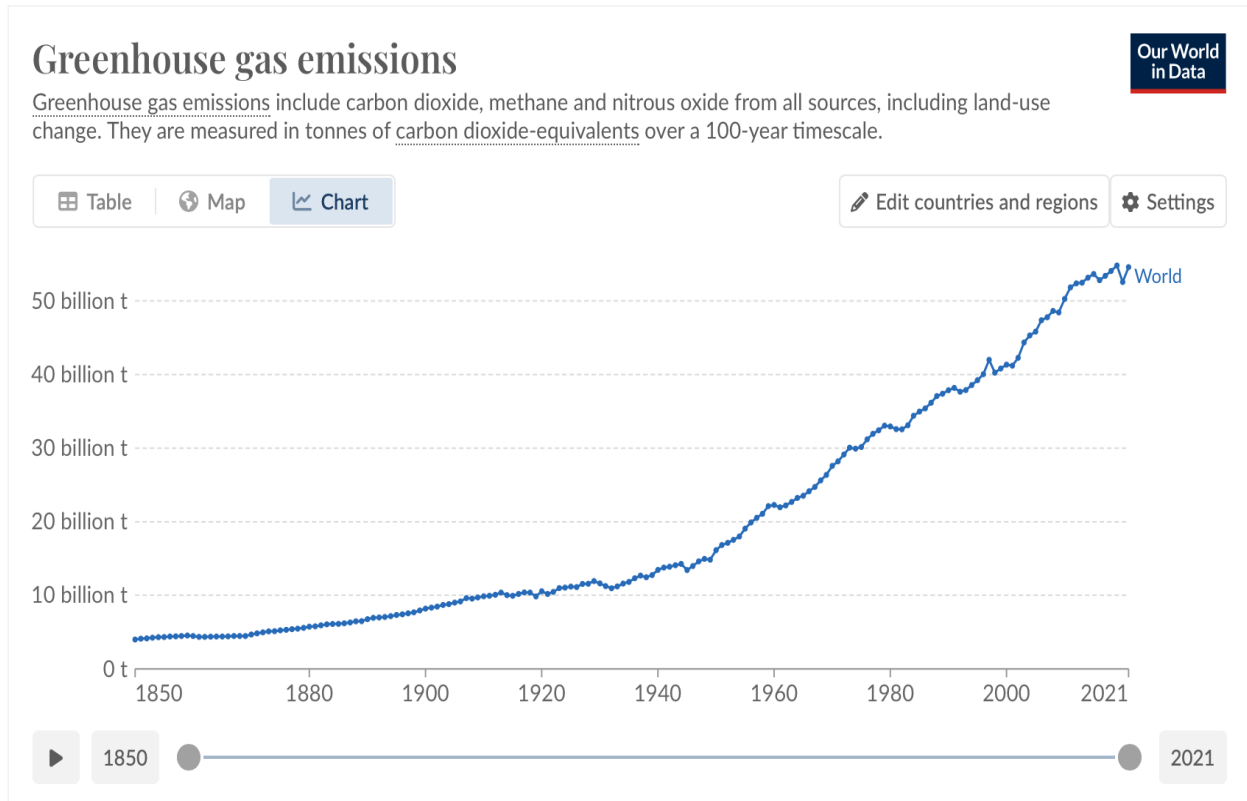


Internally-displaced persons are defined as people or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, as a result of natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an international border.

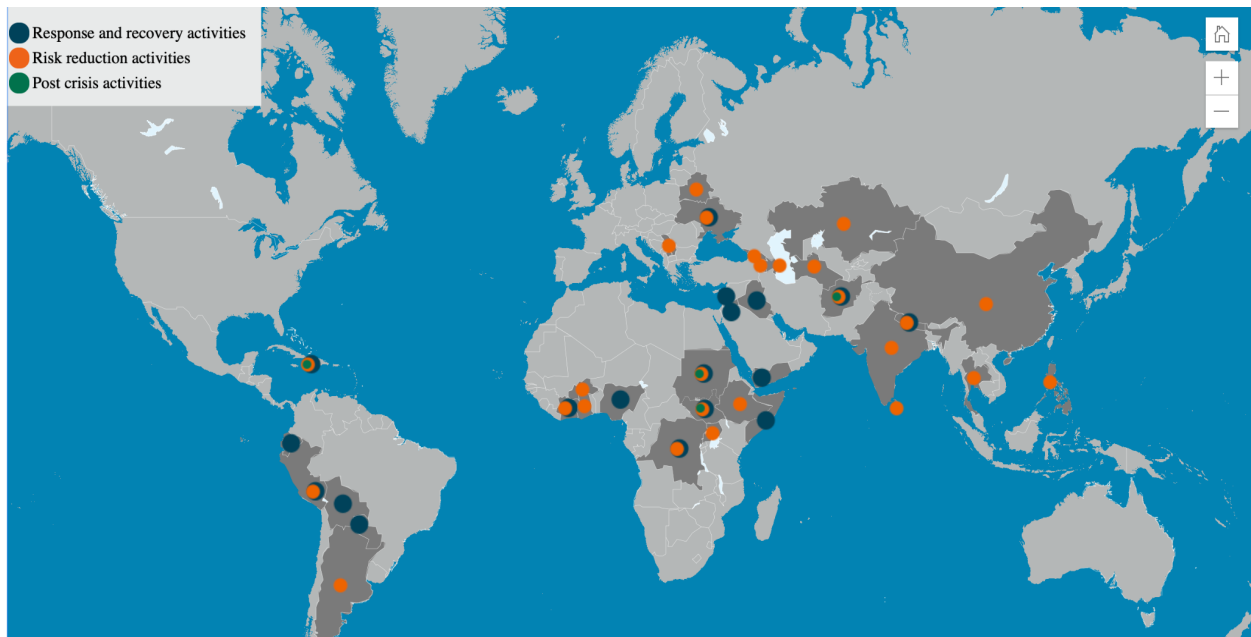




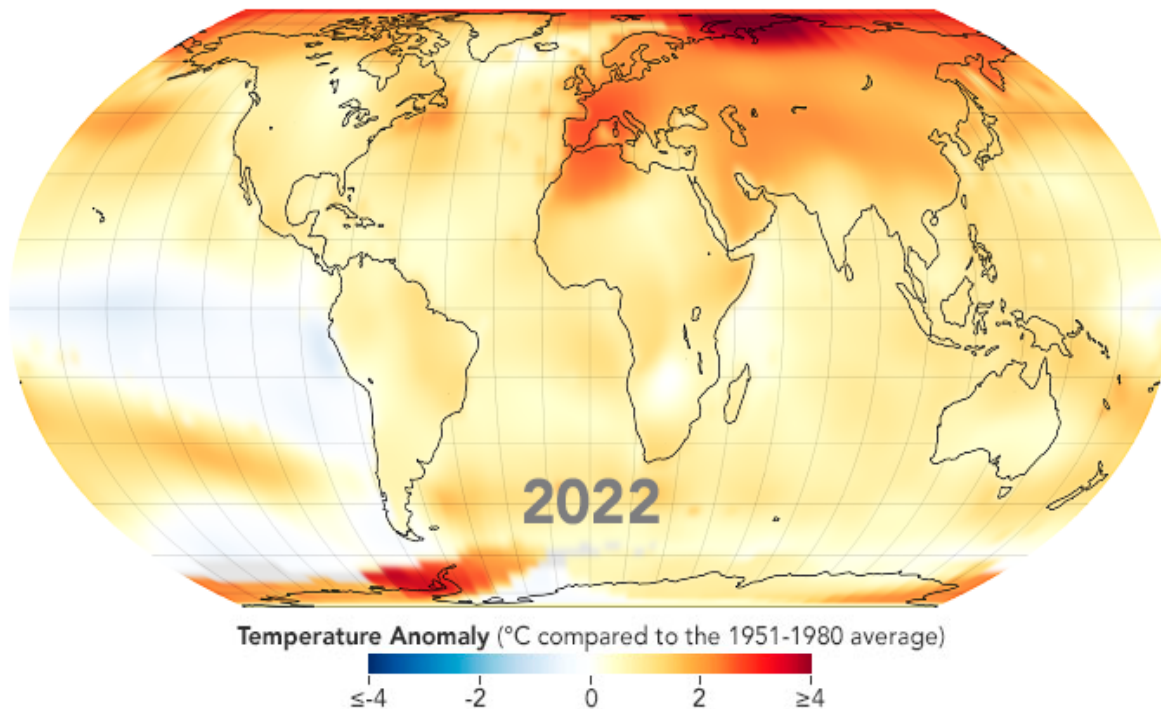
**Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions from 1850 - 2021 (Ritchie et al.)**



**Map of UNEP aid since 2000 (“About disasters and conflicts”)**



***Map of Global Temperatures in 2022 Compared to the 1951-1980 Average***  
**(“World of Change: Global Temperatures”)**



**List of Helpful Resources For Delegates**

- UN Sustainable Development Page: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- UNEP Home Page: <https://www.unep.org/who-we-are/about-us>.
- UNEP Page on Disasters and Conflicts: <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/about-disasters-conflicts#overview>.
- OurWorldInData for Helpful Statistics: <https://ourworldindata.org>
- Center for Climate and Energy Solutions for helpful info on climate change and extreme weather events: <https://www.c2es.org/content/extreme-weather-and-climate-change/>
- NASA Earth Observatory for Interesting Data on Climate Change: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/world-of-change/global-temperatures>.
- NASA Look at Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events: <https://climate.nasa.gov/extreme-weather/>

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