

# GRIFFMUN 2019

Novice: UNHCR

*Climate Change Refugees  
Biomedical Technology and Its Future*

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## **Committee Description:**

This committee will be a typical GA committee. We will begin in general debate before moving into substantive debate, where we will discuss possible solutions. Our dias kindly asks that delegates do not motion for any caucus during general debate; both unmoderated and moderated caucuses will be entertained during substantive debate. Please do not be afraid to get creative in your ideas; all possible and reasonable solutions will be entertained by this committee.

UNHCR, acronym for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, is the UN Refugee Agency. UNHCR's primary goal is to grant all peoples "the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to eventually return home, integrate or resettle." During emergencies, like the refugees being displaced by climate change, and addressing the future of the world through technology, the UNHCR works to provide basic necessities and shelter for displaced peoples. By sending aid, safeguarding individuals, and protection, the UNHCR hopes to help rebuild broken lives of refugees to live the lives they deserve.

## **Chair Introductions:**

### **Head Chair:**

Delegates! My name is Ashley Robinson, a senior here on the Losal MUN team! I am currently serving as the Undersecretary of Records for our club, and it's been a long but incredibly rewarding four years participating in this program. Outside of MUN, I'm a member of the Orange County chapter of Jr. Youth Buddhist Assoc., play basketball for SEYO, and serve as the president of Losal's National Honors Society. Whenever I'm not drowning in extracurriculars or AP studying, I spend an unhealthy amount of time on Snapchat and

Instagram, and love to hang out with my friends! MUN has taught me to break out of my comfort zone, become more politically informed, and has immensely improved both my speaking skills and my confidence; to this day it remains one of my favorite activities. A word of advice: be original! Bring your most wild ideas and solutions; no idea is a bad idea. Also, feel free to email us or talk to us during committee if you have any questions; I promise that we are all here to help. Best of luck in your research, and I cannot wait to meet you all! :-)

### **Co-Vice:**

Hi my name's Albert. I am a senior at Los Alamitos, and I'll be your *first* vice chair (because I'm the better one) (I'm also better than Ashley at basketball). Outside of MUN, I work at a cafe called Bobaloca, and I also play guitar in my free time. I love the beach and ice cream, and giraffes are my favorite animal. I like MUN because MUN allowed me to personally grow, meet more friends, and actually become aware of what's going on in the world. I hope committee is a lot of fun, and I'm excited to meet all of you guys!!

### **Co-Vice:**

Hello delegates! My name is Hannah Robinson, and I'm a junior at Los Alamitos. I will be your second vice chair (because the more the merrier)(also, I'm better than everyone at basketball). If you can't tell, my lovely sister is the head chair. Woohoo. Anyhow, I have been in MUN since freshman year, and I have learned a lot from the club. When I'm not cramming homework the night before it is due or contemplating the worth of college, I love to play basketball and draw and paint. I am a naturally shy person, so the thought of joining MUN seemed ridiculous to me. But over time, I learned to love the activity, and sometimes I even get excited about upcoming conferences. I truly realized that I was a nerd when I got excited over

being Canada... Even though conferences can seem boring at times, I encourage you all to immerse yourselves in the topic, and hopefully enjoy yourselves even a little bit. Thanks for coming, and I can't wait to meet you!

# Climate Change Refugees

## Background

Climate change refugees, or environmental refugees, are a category of displaced people who are not clearly defined as refugees because they do not fulfill the established requirements laid out by the 1951 Geneva Convention. International law has not given a determined status to these refugees, so they are often simply referred to as “displaced.” This term has not been defined because of the complexity of the issue and whether the migration is due to the changes in environment. For example, a farming family who wishes to move out of the country because they foresee a bad harvest due to drought is not considered the same as people who are experiencing a disaster. A universally accepted definition of climate change refugees is necessary in order to begin to implement legal protection.

Even though there is no true definition of the term, climate change refugees have become a more prominent issue due to the approximately 24 million people displaced every year. These environmental migrants usually move within their country or to surrounding countries after periodical environmental conditions such as typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, and sandstorms forced them to move. However, obvious catastrophes such as these are not the only cause of these displaced peoples. The acidification of soil, changes in sea level, and changes in temperature are also driving factors.

As of recently, the number of climate change refugees has been increasing, as seen with the likelihood of being displaced doubling as of 1970. Much of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that are the cause of climate change is because of industries. The cause of climate change must be addressed so that proper infrastructure to help others who are affected can be developed. .

## **U.N. Involvement**

The UNHCR has identified five environment scenarios that may indirectly cause displacement:

- Hydro-meteorological disasters (flooding, hurricanes/typhoons/cyclones, mudslides)
- Zones designated by Governments as being too high-risk and dangerous for human habitation
- Environmental degradation and slow onset disaster (e.g. reduction of water availability, desertification, recurrent flooding, salinization of coastal zones)
- The case of 'sinking' small island states
- Violent conflict triggered by a decrease in essential resources (e.g. water, land, food) due to climate change

Along with the UNHCR, organizations such as the IOM (International Organization for Migration) have studied environmental refugee migrations, and have advocated for other countries and other institutions to implement laws accordingly.

There have also been attempt by neighboring countries in order to establish a system of support for the displaced people. For example, the Nansen Initiative hosted by the UNHCR was launched by Norway and Switzerland in 2012 in order to come to a consensus on the protection necessary for those crossing the border due to environmental issues.

Many attempts to help the issue of these climate change refugees are starting with the formation of an agreement on what defines these refugees and the protection required. These items must be established before legislature can be put into place.

## **Bloc Positions**

- ***Middle East and African Bloc***

Most climate change refugees come from this bloc, and as a result, countries are unable to offer support and accept them. However, they hope that other countries are willing to provide support for their displaced citizens.

- ***Central and East Europe***

Leaders within this region are worried about their sovereignty due to the influx of climate change refugees. However, they are willing to offer help if their sovereignty remains unharmed.

- ***Latin America and Caribbean***

Most countries in these regions are environmentally progressive, except for large oil producing countries such as Brazil and Venezuela. As a result, most of these countries are willing to accept refugees.

- ***Western Europe and Developed Nations***

Countries within Western Europe will support climate change refugees as much as possible. However, some nations of the Developed Bloc are not as likely to be supportive due to their conservative positions.

- ***Asia-Pacific***

Similar to the Middle East and African Bloc, members of the Asia-Pacific Bloc are most affected by climate change. As a result, they are unable to support them and hopes that other countries are willing to do so.

## **Questions to Consider**

1. What defines a climate change refugee?
2. How should environmental and economical refugees be differentiated?
3. What systems can be implemented in order to track movements of displaced people?
4. Who should have priority for legal support?
5. What systems could be put into place in order to assist with climate change at its source?

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# Biomedical Technology and Its Future

## Background

Biomedical technology is the usage of engineering and technology to address medical issues. Since 1990, deaths caused by communicable diseases have decreased significantly due to the development of increasingly effective treatments and technologies. Recently, genomic technologies have improved the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of malaria and HIV/AIDS through research into parasitic relationships and virus infections. However, diseases in underdeveloped countries remain an issue because of a substantial gap in technology available to developed and developing countries, especially in tropical and subtropical areas. There is little access to hi-tech procedures, and these diseases continue to hurt efforts at peace and global initiatives in these countries.

However, biomedical technology has its limits. Non-communicable diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, pulmonary disease, and cancers, have become leading causes of death. Many of these diseases are also hereditary, further complicating their treatment and are expected to double in low and middle income countries. Furthermore, most of these countries' infrastructures are unlikely to adequately handle these issues in the future. Advances in biomedical technology have the potential to improve the treatment of both communicable and non-communicable diseases in the future. However, there is a lack of funding into research in these countries, and the "brain drain" of highly educated professionals to high-income countries has led to less research activity in less developed nations. These nations, in turn, are reliant on NGOs for advanced medical services, and vaccine development cannot occur in close proximity to high-risk underdeveloped countries.

## **U.N. Involvement**

The advancement of biomedical technology is incredibly important because of its implementations in modern society. Under the International Basic Sciences Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been recently focusing their efforts on the expansion of the scientific frontier to reach all walks of life. The United Nations has been working closely with many NGOs and intergovernmental organizations to encourage collaborative research and workshops to further advance biomedical technology. Currently, the UNESCO places most of its efforts in cell and molecular biology, neuroscience, microbiology and biotech in hopes that the future of biomedical technology can be advanced and aid many of the world's most significant crisis. Another body of the United Nations that focuses on biomedical technology is the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), a subdivision of ECOSOC. The Commission regularly provides both the General Assembly and ECOSOC with significant technological advancements, so that these can be used in future resolutions to fight many issues.

## **Bloc Positions**

- **Middle East and African Bloc**

Majority of the nations in this bloc are still underdeveloped. As a result, they lack access to most biomedical technology. However, they support it, due to its ability to improve living standards and national welfare.

- **Central and Eastern European Bloc**

Most of the policies in Central and Eastern Europe are not supportive of funding or promoting the advancement of biomedical technology. However, most of their current policies focus on current research and development.

- **Latin American and Caribbean Bloc**

This region is in a similar position to the Middle East and African bloc because of their lack of industrialization to the scale of Western developed countries. Although likely to be in support to better their society, they are not actively seeking to increase its use at the moment.

- **Western European and Developed Bloc**

This region supports and funds the advancement of biomedical technology. They are working to continuing this movement and maintain their position as the forefront of the movement.

- **Asia-Pacific bloc**

Similar to the Western European and Developed Bloc, countries are in support of the use of biomedical technology. However, most lack access, since they are developing nations.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. How can training be improved for using biomedical technology?
2. How can research be incentivized and new technology developed?
3. What are better ways to implement new technology?
4. How can resources be better allocated in times of need?
5. How can access to biomedical technology be increased in a way that is economically and realistically feasible?

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