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NCYMUN 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Study guide

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INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

"All victims of human rights abuses should be able to look to the Human Rights Council as a forum and a springboard for action." - Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, 2007

The Human Rights Council is a body of the United Nations. Its purpose is to ensure and promote the protection of the world's population and their rights. It was founded on the 13th of March 2006 and replaced the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). Its headquarters is located in Geneva in Switzerland and its president is Coly Seck. In total, there are 47 elected members.

The Council had major achievements such as:
- The UNHR announced that six generals of Myanmar should be sued for the genocide of the Rohingya Muslims.
- The UNHR delivered a statement for Israel to stop its military operations in Gaza and to open the frontiers to let food, fuel, and medicine enter the Strip.

The mandates of Human rights are to promote assistance to protect human rights, to prevent human-rights infractions, and to obtain respect for all human rights. The Council has no executive power whatsoever.

Reminders:
- Only the Security Council can approve the use of **FORCE**.
- Some of the Human Rights are Women's Rights, LGBTQ+ Rights, freedom of expression, the rights of racial and ethnic minorities, and freedom of belief and religion.

This year, the key issues are:
- Ensuring the protection of the population in case of natural hazards caused by climate change.
- Ensuring decent living conditions for everyone in a time of rapid and chaotic urbanization.

THE CHAIRS

This year, you are very lucky because you have the best chairs ever. Source: Believe me. We are 3 chairs: Boryana and Nelly, who are students in the Lycée Jeanne D'Arc and Anouk who is from the Lycée des Pontonniers in Strasbourg. We all have one or two years' experience in the MUN and are very pleased to chair you. Our mission is to guide and help you through this Model United Nations (MUN). We will also ensure that the rules are followed because it is also meaningful in this experience. We hope you will have a lot of fun!

Ensuring the protection of the population in case of natural hazard caused by climate change

"A world of unchecked climate change is a graveyard for entire ecosystems, is also a graveyard for entire peoples and entire ways of living. Such is the magnitude of the impact some of us have upon this planet, others of us are suffering the most profound consequences." Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner UN Human Rights

Climate change is a central issue for the present and coming generations. It is one of the main sustainable development goals of the United Nations Organization to "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts". Following a UN report made in 2019, "climate-related and geophysical disasters claimed an estimated 1, 3 million lives between 1998 and 2017". This huge number of casualties will probably increase in a near future (believing the World Health Organization (WHO), climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year between 2030 and 2050). If no global effort to change all aspects of society in order to stop global warming at 1, 5°C and to ensure the protection of the population in vulnerable zones (people living in coastal regions, developing countries, megacities, small island states, mountainous and polar regions) is made. It is our mission today to think about solutions to ensure people's protection in case of natural hazard caused by climate change.

I. Definitions

The definitions given here are not exhaustive and are meant to help the delegates to a better understanding of the situation and to have a common basis to discuss.

1. **Climate Change**

"Climate change is the long-term alteration of temperature and normal weather patterns in a place. This could refer to a particular location or the planet as a whole. Climate change is currently occurring throughout the world as a result of global warming." (National Geographic)

2. **Global warming**

"Global Warming a gradual increase in world temperatures caused by gases such as carbon dioxide that are collecting in the air around the earth and stopping heat escaping into space." (Cambridge dictionary). The UN goal is to limit global warming at 1.5°C.

3. **Mitigation**

Here the reduction of greenhouse effect gases such as Carbon dioxide (CO_2); Methane (CH_4) Nitrous oxide (N_2O), water vapor, etc.)
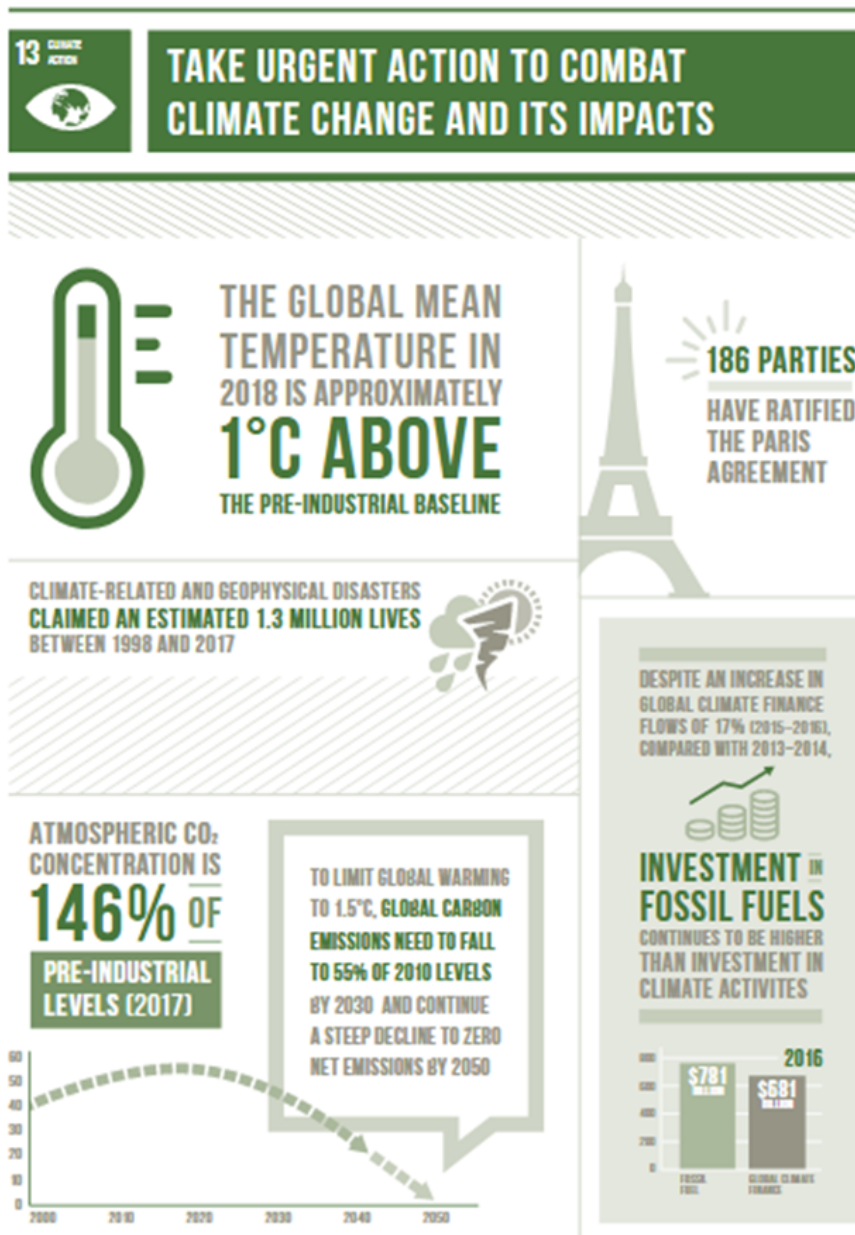
4. **Greenhouse effect**

"The greenhouse effect is a natural process that warms the Earth's surface. When the Sun's energy reaches the Earth's atmosphere, some of it is reflected back to space and the rest is absorbed and re-radiated by greenhouse gases."(Australian Gov., Environment and energy). The greenhouse process is amplified by the gases produced by human activity (agriculture, industrial farming, industrial production, transports...)

   5. **Natural hazard due to climate change**

Here natural hazards caused by climate change are for example floods, droughts, increasingly variable rainfall patterns, increasingly violent storms and hurricanes caused by climate change.

II. Climate Change, a UN Sustainable Development Goal

The following documents are produced by the UNO and explain the issue of climate action, providing relevant scientific facts and evidences which can be used if necessary by the delegates.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019   15

13 CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE ACTION:
WHY IT MATTERS

What's the goal here?

Taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its impacts.

Why?

As greenhouse gas levels continue to climb, climate change is occurring at much higher rates than anticipated, and its effects are evident worldwide. By addressing climate change, we can build a sustainable world for everyone. But we need to act now.

Are people's lives really being affected by climate change?

Yes. Severe weather and rising sea levels are affecting people and their property in developed and developing countries. From a small farmer in the Philippines to a businessman in London, climate change is affecting everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable, as well as marginalized groups like women, children, and the elderly.

To limit global warming to 1.5°C, global carbon emissions need to fall by a staggering 45 per cent by 2030 from 2010 levels

What happens if we don't take action?

What happens if we don't take action? If left unchecked, climate change will cause average global temperatures to increase beyond 3°C, and will adversely affect every ecosystem. Already, we are seeing how climate change can exacerbate storms and disasters, and threats such as food and water scarcity, which can lead to conflict. Doing nothing will end up costing us a lot more than if we take action now. We have an opportunity to take actions that will lead to more jobs, great prosperity, and better lives for all while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience.

Can we solve this problem or is it too late to act?

To address climate change, we have to vastly increase our efforts. Much is happening around the world – investments in renewable energy have soared. But so much more needs to be done. The world must transform its energy, industry, transport, food, agriculture and forestry systems to ensure that we can limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, maybe even 1.5°C. In December 2015, the world took a significant first step by adopting the Paris Agreement, in which all countries committed to take action to address climate change. Many businesses and investors are also committing themselves to lower their emissions, not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it makes economic and business sense as well.

How much would it cost to solve this problem?

In total, public and private sector investment in clean energy needs to reach at least US$1 trillion per year by 2030, and more to build climate resilience. This sounds like a lot, but consider that of the US$1.7 trillion invested in the global energy supply in 2016, nearly 70% was related to fossil fuels. But more and more, governments and businesses are finding that investments in renewable energy and sustainability are paying off.

What's more is that the estimated costs of mitigation do not account for the benefits of reduced climate change. These include cleaner air, greater food security, more liveable cities, and better health. Investments of only $6 billion for disaster risk reduction over the next 15 years would result in total benefits of $360 billion in terms of avoided losses over the lifetime of the investment.

What can I do to help achieve this goal?

There are many things that each of us can do as individuals. To find out what you can do, go to:

https://www.un.org/en/actnow

To read more about the UN's efforts on climate change:

https://www.un.org/en/climatechange

To find out more about Goal #13 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment

III. Historical context

1. First calculations of human-induced climate change

In 1896, a scientist named Svante Arrhenius found out that a cooler atmosphere would hold less water vapor (greenhouse gas) and calculated the additional cooling effect. This led him to the conclusion that dividing CO_2 contained in the atmosphere by two would produce an ice age, while doubling it would lead to a warming of 5-6°C.

In 1955, Hans Suess demonstrated that CO_2 released from fossil fuels was not totally absorbed by the oceans. This was confirmed two years later by Roger Revelle, who predicted a raise of the CO_2 level. Charles David Keeling demonstrated in 1960 that the CO_2 level was in fact rising, and raised people's concern with his CO_2- Curve ("Keeling-curve") which showed an impressing rising of the CO_2 level.

During the 1960's, aerosol pollution in cities ("smog") had become a serious problem, especially in big cities, and scientists began to suspect human activity to be responsible of the warming effect and human emissions to be a worrying issue in the 21st century or even sooner.

In 1975, two scientists, Manabe and Wetherald, developed a three-dimensional climate model and found out that doubling the atmospheric CO_2 increased the temperature by 2°C, a result that was confirmed later on by various computer programs.

A World Climate Conference was hold in February 1979 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and reckoned "it appears plausible that an increased amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can contribute to a gradual warming of the lower atmosphere, especially at higher latitudes [...] It is possible that some effects on a regional and global scale may be detectable before the end of this century and become significant before the middle of the next century."

2. The creation of the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change)

The IPCC (based in Geneva) was established in 1988 by the UN Environment Program and the WMO to provide scientific information about the state of knowledge of the climate science, the influence of climate change on various aspects of society, such as economy, health, and infrastructure and to propose possible response to it. The assessment reports of the IPCC are very important to tackle the issue of climate change on a global scale, because they provide neutral and scientific information. The scientific development is summarized every five or six years in "assessment reports". The IPCC has currently published five assessment reports and many special reports. The first was made in 1990 and pointed out the importance of global cooperation in the challenge of climate change. The most recent one (fifth assessment, AR5), was finalized in 2013-2014 and provided scientific information for the Paris agreement.

3. The Kyoto protocol

The Kyoto protocol was ratified in Kyoto, Japan on December 5th 1997 and entered in force in February 2005. There are currently 192 parties to the protocol (Canada withdrew in 2012 and Afghanistan, Sudan & the U.S.A. have not ratified the treaty).

The protocol sets a maximum amount of greenhouse effect gases and is based on common but differentiated responsibility. In fact, this means that each country has to do what its capabilities allow in order to combat climate change by reducing CO_2 and greenhouse gases. Therefore, the protocol takes into account the differences in terms of economy and infrastructure to set the emission goals.

4. The Paris Agreement

The Paris agreement was adopted by 195 countries after the Paris climate Conference (COP21) in December 2015 and is the first legally-binding global climate deal ever. It aims at keeping the temperature rise during this century below 2°C and to strengthen the countries' ability to deal with the consequences of climate change, by endorsing and supporting economic development of developing countries and setting ambitious goals.

The main points of the agreement are **mitigation** (reduction of greenhouse gases), the **transparency and global stock take** (the governments agreed to come together every five years to set ambitious targets, and to communicate their progress in archiving their goals), **adaptation** (helps countries to deal with the impacts of climate change), the support (EU and developed countries will endorse climate action and provide support for developing countries), and **loss and damage** (the agreement recognized the importance of averting and preventing population, and of minimalizing and addressing loss and damages which occurred because of climate change.)

The United States of America withdrew from the agreement on June 1st 2017.

IV. The effects of climate change

1. The long-term effects of climate change

The long-term effects of climate change will affect the climate and meteorology on the whole planet. First of all, global warming, if not stopped at 1.5 °C, will induce ice melting in the Arctic Ocean and the glaciers, which will lead to a raise of the sea levels. It is said in the Fifth Assessment Report (2013) of the IPCC that from 1990 to 2010, the sea level rose by 19 cm, due to ice melting and global warming, endangering especially the population living in coastal cities. On the one hand, the precipitation will increase in many countries, leading to floods, threating especially people in developing countries. On the other hand, the World Health Organization (WHO) raises awareness about the increasing heatwaves and the decreasing water resources in semi-arid regions, which may cause droughts in a near future.

The WHO report shows that climate change is global and affects the five continents. Those are the projections of the effects of climate change made by the WHO for each continent:

"**North America**: Decreasing snowpack in the western mountains; 5-20 percent increase in yields of rain-fed agriculture in some regions; increased frequency, intensity and duration of heat waves in cities that currently experience them.

Latin America: Gradual replacement of tropical forest by savannah in eastern Amazonia; risk of significant biodiversity loss through species extinction in many tropical areas; significant changes in water availability for human consumption, agriculture and energy generation.

Europe: Increased risk of inland flash floods; more frequent coastal flooding and increased erosion from storms and sea level rise; glacial retreat in mountainous areas; reduced snow cover and winter tourism; extensive species losses; reductions of crop productivity in southern Europe.

Africa: By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress; yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent in some regions by 2020; agricultural production, including access to food, may be severely compromised.

7

2. How climate change affects natural hazards

It is scientific evidence that climate change affects natural disasters in a significant way. The increasing surface temperatures will probably lead to more droughts, and the intensity of storms is likely to increase (the atmosphere contains an increasing level of water vapor which helps powerful storms to develop.) Besides, the growing temperature at the ocean surface will give more wind speed and power to tropical storms. The NGO (Non-governmental Organization) Oxfam provided some numbers concerning the hazards induced by climate change:

- Since June 2017, about 41 million people have been affected by flooding.
- There are more than 150 million people living on land that will be beyond sea or flood levels by the end of the century.
- Currently, we see an average 400 "extreme weather events" every year. (2)

3. How climate change affects human lives and society

The WHO worries about the effects of climate change on population and stresses action to protect people, especially in developed countries. In order to raise awareness, the WHO gave some facts and numbers about the impact of climate change on human lives:

"Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress.

The direct damage costs to health (i.e. excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation), is estimated to be between USD 2-4 billion/year by 2030.

More than half of the world's population lives within 60 km of the sea. People may be forced to move, which in turn heightens the risk of a range of health effects, from mental disorders to communicable diseases." (3)

The increasing numbers of floods will be a problem too because floods contaminate fresh water supplies, creates breeding ground for disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes, and may cause several physical injuries, drownings, damage infrastructure and houses and shorten food and water supplies.

4. Some natural hazards which occurred in the past decade
- **The Hurricane Irma (2017):** The most powerful hurricane in the Atlantic observed since 2005 caused several damage in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and other Caribbean islands.
- **The South Asian Floods (2017):** the floods due to an average monsoon rain affected Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India caused about 1300 deaths and affected 41 million people
- **The heat Wave in India and Pakistan (2015**): This extreme heat wave (up to 47°C) killed at least 2,300 people (believing the EM-DAT, the International Disaster Database, this heat wave is the fifth deadliest in world history). (4)

5. Human rights and Climate change

The Human Rights Council devoted many sessions and therefore many resolutions to the topic of Human rights and Climate change, which is a crucial issue for the present and coming years. It is important for the delegates to know what was already done in order to discuss properly and be able to tackle the subject in a new light. For more information, please read the cited resolutions and consult the Human Rights Council homepage.

- **Resolution of July, 15th 2014** (reference: A/HRC/RES/26/27) concerning the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.(5)
- **Resolution of 2nd 2015** (reference: A/HRC/RES/29/15 for more details) concerning the importance of guaranteeing human rights in case of natural disasters caused by climate change and requests the WHO and IPCC to conduct scientific analysis to provide facts about climate change and its impacts. (6)
- **Resolution of July, 15th 2018** (reference: HRC/RES/38/4), which is the most recent one, calling the States to consider human rights within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and to adopt a comprehensive, integrated and gender-responsive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies.(7)

V. Discussion of the topic

. "I. Persons affected by natural disasters should enjoy the same rights and freedoms under human rights law as others in their country and not be discriminated against. Targeted measures to address assistance and protection needs of specific categories of affected populations do not constitute discrimination if, and to the extent that, they are based on differing needs.

II. States have the primary duty and responsibility to provide assistance to persons affected by natural disasters and to protect their human rights."(IASSC operational guidelines on human rights and natural disasters) (8)

This quote is taken from a theoretical guide and is meant to give guidelines to the states and the NGOs in order to protect human rights in case of natural disasters. But here the divergence lays on what supply the States are able to give and how different actors such as NGOs, the governments, the UN committees, and the civilian party.

Here it is important to know some of the actors and their role.

- The NGOs (Non-governmental Organizations): They provide help or raise awareness about alarming situations, acting directly in the field and/or doing fundraising in oher countries). **Oxfam international**, for example, provided help and live saving supplies such as fresh water and food to Gentivo, Mozambique, devastated after the Cyclone Idai (March 2019).

MSF (Médecins sans frontières, doctors without borders) is a medical humanitarian organization providing medical assistance to people in countries affected by diseases, natural disasters or poverty. The NGO recently wrote a report about health in natural disasters caused by climate change. (9) This report is alarming because it shows how climate change and the natural disasters will induce increasingly need for humanitarian aid (for

example medical care or fresh water supply after floods), especially in developing countries.

☐ The government's role is to protect its population. In this case, this should be done by informing the population of the risks and the measures to take. But to be able to do this, there must be a communication effort, which means media to spread the information (this induces the necessary technology) and people able to receive it. This is a problem I developing countries, where people are often cut off the world and suffer from a lack of information. Besides, it is the role of the States to guarantee people's security in case of natural disasters, for example by supporting adapted architecture, providing health infrastructure and supplies if necessary or at least let the NGOs provide it. Here too, developing countries and war zones are particularly concerned because of the lack of infrastructure (due to war destruction or a lack of money or resources), the high level of poverty and sometimes the refusal of the governments to let NGOs provide help.

The topic which has to be discussed in this Council is how people in this particularly vulnerable zones can be protected and how the States can work together to ensure people's rights and security. All of the countries are affected by climate change but some, such as Brazil are particularly vulnerable.

VI. Bloc positions

This is just meant the delegates to understand the position of their country, but it does not replace the position papers.

☐ **USA**: The United States are heavily concerned by this topic as they were hit by a heat wave this year and there were many wildfires, especially in California. But American president Donald Trump doesn't believe in climate change and its threats, saying "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive."(Nov, 6th 2016 on Twitter)(10) As he thinks climate change doesn't exist, he is persuaded the increasing number of natural disasters have no link with it.

☐ **Russia:** The Russian position to climate change and its risks has evolved recently. Yet until recently, reducing greenhouse gases was not a priority for the Russian government, (Russian economy depends heavily on pumping oil and gas from the soil). Even now that president Putin said:" The quality of life of all people on this planet depends on… our ability to resolve the problem of climate."(Speech made at the Paris conference, 2015), Russia seems quite reluctant on this question and shows no real willingness to address this issue, even though there were big wildfires in Siberia this year. (11)

☐ **Saudi Arabia**: Saudi Arabia doesn't have any law concerning climate change even though the country ratified the Paris agreement in 2016. As for Russia, a big part of the Saudi economy depends on the oil extraction. Saudi Arabia and Russia coordinate their oil extractions and have good diplomatic relations.

☐ **Australia** has currently a conservative government, but has published a climate solutions package, which means this issue is tackled.

☐ **Yemen:** Yemen has not ratified the Paris agreement, which means climate change is not perceived as a major issue by the authorities. Besides, Yemen is going to be concerned by water shortness, and has a lack of economic, a growing gender inequality and there is an ongoing armed conflict since 2014. This means Yemen will soon need some humanitarian supply from the international community.

- **Brazil:** Brazil's current president Jair Bolsonaro wants to develop agriculture and for this is ready to deforest a part of the Amazonas rainforest. This will shorten dioxygen supplies for the whole earth and lead to desertification.
- **Venezuela:** In addition to the political crisis the country is going through, the drought has increased and Venezuela is very vulnerable to natural hazards and will need help in the future.
- **Chad:** Chad is very exposed to the possible hazards due to climate change. The country created an emergency organization plan in case this happens. But Chad does not have sufficient money to do this so it will need financial and humanitarian help. Chad rather tries to act against climate change.
- Bulgaria: Bulgaria is active in preserving forests and trying to reduce greenhouse gases .
- Norway: The government is tackling directly the issue of climate change by endorsing the production of renewable energy but is Europe's biggest oil exporter.
- New Zealand: Shows great concern about climate changes, willing to reduce gas emissions in order to reach the UN 2030 sustainable goal.
- China: The country is the world's biggest greenhouse polluter, and relies mostly on coal to provide energy, but has set up a plan to fight against climate change, but the effect are not very convincing by now as China seems rather to be concerned by its economic growth.
- Iran: might suffer soon from a lack of drink water and has set up a program for the mitigation of the effects of climate change on the nature and the population.

Human Rights and Natural Disasters

The International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction estimates **that 200 million people have been affected by natural disasters every year for the past two decades.**[3] In the course of the past year, **over 400 natural disasters took 16,000 lives**, affected close to 250 million people and displaced many millions.

Most people who are displaced by natural disasters remain within the borders of their country. They are internally displaced persons (IDPs) as defined in the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and thus entitled to the full range of rights and responsibilities included therein. As with people displaced by conflict, it is their national governments who are responsible for protecting and assisting them and with facilitating durable solutions for their displacement.

We know that **poverty and marginalization makes things worse for victims of natural disasters**. **Natural disasters in poorer countries have higher casualties than disasters of similar magnitude in wealthier countries.** Within countries, it is often the marginalized groups who suffer disproportionately. In Colombia and the Philippines, for example, it is usually poorer, marginalized groups who live on the slopes of volcanoes. People with more resources choose to live elsewhere. And so, when the volcanoes erupt, it is the poor who suffer disproportionately. In Central America and Brazil, it is the poor who live in shantytowns on the hills surrounding major cities – hills which are susceptible to mudslides at times of heavy rain. **We know that women are more likely to die in**

floods by a factor of 3 or 4 to 1 than men. Children, the elderly, the disabled and the sick are also more likely to suffer as a result of natural disasters.

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, there was recognition that disaster response involves more than delivery of humanitarian assistance. Growing recognition of the need to respect, uphold, and promote the human rights of those affected by natural disasters, whether displaced or not, was the driving force between efforts by the RSG to develop Operational Guidelines for Human Rights and Natural Disaster. These guidelines, which were formally adopted by the InterAgency Standing Committee in June 2006, are presently being used to train disaster responders on ways of ensuring that human rights are protected in the midst of disaster.[4]

The problems that are often encountered by persons affected by the consequences of natural disasters include: **unequal access to assistance; discrimination in aid provision; enforced relocation; sexual and gender-based violence; loss of documentation; recruitment of children into fighting forces; unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement; and issues of property restitution.**[5]

The Guidelines suggest a human rights approach to planning both the initial emergency and longer-term response. **People do not lose their basic human rights as a result of a natural disaster or their displacement**. Rather all of those affected by natural disasters, including those who are displaced, are entitled to the protection of all relevant human rights guarantees. As residents, and usually citizens of the country in which they are living, they are entitled to the protections afforded to all residents and citizens even though they may have particular needs related to the disaster and thus **require specific assistance and protection measures.**

As with all situations of internal displacement, the primary duty and responsibility to provide such protection and assistance lies with the national authorities of the affected countries. Those affected by natural disasters have the right to request and receive such protection and assistance from their governments.

The Operational Guidelines stress that human rights encompass not only civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights. However, in the midst of a disaster, it is often difficult to simultaneously promote all rights for all of those affected. Thus for practical reasons, the Operational Guidelines divide human rights into four groups, namely:

1. **rights related to physical security and integrity (e.g. protection of the right to life and the right to be free of assault, rape, arbitrary detention, kidnapping, and threats to these rights);**
2. **rights related to basic necessities of life (e.g. the rights to food, drinking water, shelter, adequate clothing, adequate health services, and sanitation);**
3. **rights related to other economic, social and cultural protection needs (e.g. the rights to be provided with or have access to education, to receive restitution or compensation for lost property, and to work); and**

4. **rights related to other civil and political protection needs (e.g. the rights to religious freedom and freedom of speech, personal documentation, political participation, access to courts, and freedom from discrimination).**

The Operational Guidelines suggest that **the first two groups of rights may be the most relevant during the emergency, life-saving phase**. Thus in the initial disaster response, it is usually more important to ensure adequate access to water than to provide replacement identity cards to those who have been displaced. However, the guidelines insist that **only the full respect of all four groups of rights can ensure adequate protection of the human rights of those affected by natural disasters, including of those who are displaced.**[6]

The guidelines go on to state that *"in all cases States have an obligation to respect, protect and to fulfill the human rights of their citizens and of any other persons in their territory or under their jurisdiction."*[7] **States thus have a responsibility: to prevent violations of these rights from occurring or reoccurring; to stop them when they do occur, and to ensure reparation and full rehabilitation if a violation has happened.**

When governments are unwilling or unable to fulfill these responsibilities, the international community needs to support and supplement the efforts of the government and local authorities. And these organizations as well – UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, civil society, and IDP communities themselves – have a responsibility to ensure that their approaches and programs incorporate a human rights focus.

In fact, most often, rights are violated not because of conscious intention but because of the lack of awareness or planning based on a rights-based approach. Thus in the United States, the evacuation plans for New Orleans in 2005 were based on private vehicles – even though there were racial and class differences in vehicle ownership. While most middle class white people had access to private cars, many poor and African-American residents did not.[8] More recently, in the evacuation of New Orleans prior to Hurricane Gustav in August 2008, it was clear that officials had still not heeded the lessons learned from Katrina. While evacuation plans provided bus transportation for those without cars, displaced New Orleans residents were taken by bus to large communal shelters while those who evacuated by car were directed to churches, private homes and hotels.[9]

Experience has shown while patterns of discrimination emerge during the initial emergency response phase, the longer that displacement lasts, the greater the risk of human rights violations. The Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement developed a manual on the Operational Guidelines to provide more concrete guidance to disaster responders and this manual is currently being revised in light of experiences in the field. **Presently both Brookings and the Protection Cluster Working Group are organizing training sessions for government officials responsible for disaster response as well as non-governmental organizations. Such training is necessary in order to ensure that a rights-based approach to disaster response is incorporated into all phases of operations.**

Sources :

https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/natural-disasters-human-rights-and-the-role-of-national-human-rights-institutions/

[3] http://www.unisdr.org/
[4] IASC, *Operational Guidelines, op.cit.*
[5] *IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters*, Washington: Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, June 2006, p. 8.
[6] IASC, *Operational Guidelines, op.cit.* pg. 7.
[7] IASC, *Operational Guidelines, op.cit.* pg. 9
[8] Chris Kromm and Sue Sturgis, "Hurricane Katrina and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", Institute for Southern Studies, January, 2008. pg. 13
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[9] "'Never again,' again," *New York Times* editorial, 20 September 2008,
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Ensuring decent living conditions for everyone in a time of rapid and chaotic urbanization.

Human rights and urbanisation

Urbanization can only be a force for positive transformation if it respects and promotes human rights.

Urbanization is one of the most important global trends of the 21st century. Today more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and by 2030 this is expected to rise to 60 percent. In the same period 90 percent of the world's population growth will take place in cities, particularly in Africa and Asia.

In many places this trend towards rapid urbanization goes hand in hand with the creation of more slums, more people in inadequate living conditions and lacking secure tenure of their housing and land, and greater disparities, inequalities and discrimination.

Yet urbanization processes wherein human rights are respected and promoted have the potential to transform this phenomenon from one in which people's rights are too often ignored or denied into a force that contributes positively to the lives of the majority of the world's population.

This is the vision captured in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which governments commit to 'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' (Goal 11). They further commit to leave no-one behind, envisaging "a world of universal respect for equality and non-discrimination", including gender equality, and reaffirm the responsibilities of all States to "respect, protect and promote human rights, without discrimination or distinction of any kind".

Sustainable and fair urbanization models consistent with this vision would be guided by human rights principles, ensuring:

- The free, active and meaningful participation of all inhabitants, in particular the most marginalized. Urban and spatial development should be done *with* and *for* all of a city's inhabitants, with the priority being to protect and improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable.
- That duty-bearers are accountable for respecting and promoting the rights of all inhabitants. Decisions and processes in cities that could affect people's rights - such as the right to adequate housing and the right to an adequate standard of living - need to be transparent, subject to public scrutiny, and must include free and fair dispute and complaint mechanisms.
- That the root causes of violations of the principles of non-discrimination and equality are addressed - not only on the basis of gender and geography, but also on the basis of race, culture, religion, age, disability and social and economic status. Too often the voices of the poor, people living in slums and informal settlements, women, children, minorities, migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, older persons and others, are not heard in

15

urban development processes, resulting in development that further marginalizes and discriminates against those most in need.

- That all urban development activities embrace strategies for the political, social and economic empowerment of people. In practice this requires upholding fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular freedom of speech and assembly, the right to information, consultation and participation in decision-making processes, and the right to vote, among others.

Human rights are key to advancing and developing an urbanization that is sustainable and socially inclusive, that promotes equality, combats discrimination in all its forms and empowers individuals and communities. A human rights approach is vital to make cities work for people as places of equal opportunity for all, where people can live in security, peace and dignity.

I.   Definitions

Urbanisation : the process by which more and more people leave the countryside to live in cities

Sustainable development : development that meets the needs of the   present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
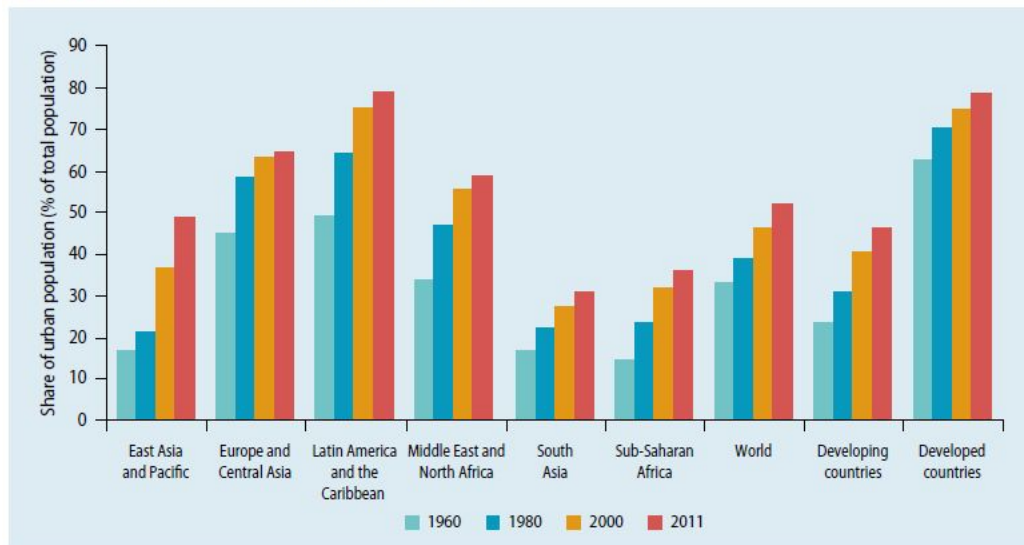
Living conditions : the conditions in which someone lives, seen in terms of their sanitary value, social status etc.

Urban renewal : The process where an urban neighborhood or area is improved and rehabilitated. The renewal process can include demolishing old or run-down buildings, constructing new, up-to-date housing, or adding in features like a theater or stadium. Urban renewal is usually undergone for the purposes of persuading wealthier individuals to come live in that area. Urban renewal is often part of the gentrification process.

II.   Urbanization in the world

Urbanization around the world

The Americas are the most urbanized regions in the world today.

82%   74%   50%
81%   43%   68%

World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision
Access the report: bit.ly/wup2018   •   #UNPopulation

UN DESA

FIGURE 2.1   The world is becoming more urban

Threats

- Intensive urban growth can lead to greater poverty, with local governments unable to provide services for all people.

17

- Concentrated energy use leads to greater air pollution with significant impact on human health.
- Automobile exhaust produces elevated lead levels in urban air.
- Large volumes of uncollected waste create multiple health hazards.
- Urban development can magnify the risk of environmental hazards such as flash flooding.
- Pollution and physical barriers to root growth promote loss of urban tree cover.
- Animal populations are inhibited by toxic substances, vehicles, and the loss of habitat and food sources.

III. Historical context

By the early 1900s both Great Britain and the United States had become predominantly urbanized nations; since that time, urbanization has been occurring around the globe at a rapid rate. Today, as many as 50 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas, compared to only a few percent just 200 years ago.

Sociologists studying urbanization trends note three distinct historical stages in the development of cities: *preindustrial, industrial,* and *metropolitan‑megalopolitan* stages.

a) Preindustrial cities

For the vast majority of human history, as far as anyone knows, people roamed about in search of sustenance. While they gathered edible plants, fished, and hunted, our ancestors could never find enough food in one area to sustain themselves for an extended period of time. Consequently, they had to keep moving until they could find another place in which to settle temporarily.

Eventual technological improvements—such as simple tools and information on how to farm and raise animals—allowed people to settle in one place. They built villages, with perhaps only a few hundred people living in each, and, for the following 5,000 years, produced just enough food for themselves—with nothing more in reserve.

About 5,000 years ago, however, humans developed such innovations as irrigation, metallurgy, and animal-drawn plows. These developments allowed farmers to produce an excess of food beyond their immediate needs. The resulting surplus of food led some people to make their living in other ways: for instance, by making pottery, weaving, and engaging in other non agricultural activities that they could sell or exchange with others for the surplus food. As a result, people moved off the farms, commerce developed, and cities began to form.

Preindustrial cities, which first arose on fertile lands along rivers in the Middle East, Egypt, and China—were quite small compared to today's cities. Most preindustrial cities housed fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Others, like Rome, may have contained as many as several hundred thousand people.

Preindustrial cities differed significantly from today's cities. The residential and commercial districts were not as sharply separated as they are today. Most traders and artisans worked at home, although people with the same trades tended to live in the same areas of town. People in cities also segregated themselves from one another according to class, ethnicity, and religion—with little or no chance for social mobility or interaction with other groups.

b) Industrial cities

Between 1700 and 1900, increasing numbers of people moved into cities, resulting in an urban revolution. For example, in 1700 less than 2 percent of British people lived in cities, but by 1900 the majority of them did so. The United States and other European countries soon attained similar levels of urbanization, driven by the *Industrial Revolution*.
Industrialization produced the mechanization of agriculture, which, in turn, limited the amount of work available on farms. This lack of employment forced farm

laborers to move to cities to find work. This migration of workers from rural to urban areas then gave rise to the industrial city.

The industrial city was larger, more densely populated, and more diverse than its preindustrial counterpart. It contained many people of varying backgrounds, interests, and skills who lived and worked together in a defined amount of space. The industrial city also served as a commercial center, supporting many businesses and factories. The latter attracted large numbers of immigrants from other countries hoping to better themselves by securing stable work and finding a "fresh start."

c) **Metropolis and megalopolis cities**

As larger and larger industrial cities spread outward in the early 1900s, they formed metropolises (large cities that include surrounding *suburbs,* which are lands outside the city limits, usually with separate governance). While some suburbs become distinct cities in and of themselves, they retain strong geographic, economic, and cultural ties to their "parent" city. Many metropolitan areas house a million or more residents.

The upper and middle classes ultimately brought about the so-called flight to the suburbs. As economic woes increasingly plagued cities in the latter half of the 1900s, many families decided to move out of their inner-city neighborhoods and into the suburbs. The ability to afford an automobile also influenced this migration. Beginning in the 1970s, most suburbs were largely "bedroom communities," which means that suburban residents commuted into the city to work and shop, and then returned to the suburb at night. Commuting presented a downside, but most people felt that escaping "urban ghettoization," or the tendency for the quality of life in inner cities to decline, was well worth any hassles, given the fact that suburbs tended to offer nicer and larger homes, better schools, less crime, and less pollution than cities provided.

Today, suburbs continue to grow and develop. Many have become economic centers in their own right. Offices, hospitals, and factories coexist with shopping malls, sports complexes, and housing subdivisions. In this way, many suburbs have essentially become small (and, in some cases, not so small) cities. Demographically, suburbs tend to attract "whiter" and more affluent residents

than do cities. Yet not all suburbs and *suburbanites* are alike. Even within a suburb, families of varying ethnic and religious backgrounds exist.

Because of all this growth, many suburbs have developed "urban" problems, such as air and water pollution, traffic congestion, and gangs. To escape these problems, some people have chosen to move to rural areas. Others have chosen to return to and revive their cities by renovating and remodeling buildings and neighborhoods. Such an interest in urban renewal (also called *gentrification*) has turned some slums into decent areas in which to live, work, and raise a family.

The vast urban complex known as a megalopolis was created as suburbs continued to grow and merge with other suburbs and metropolitan areas. That is, some suburbs and cities have grown so large that they end up merging with other suburbs and cities, forming a virtually continuous region. One example of a megalopolis is the hundreds of miles of almost uninterrupted urbanization from Boston to Washington, D.C. The typical megalopolis consists of literally millions of people.

IV. UN goals on urbanization

GOAL 11 TARGETS

- By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

- By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

- By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

- Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

- By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

- By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

- By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

- Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

- By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

- Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials
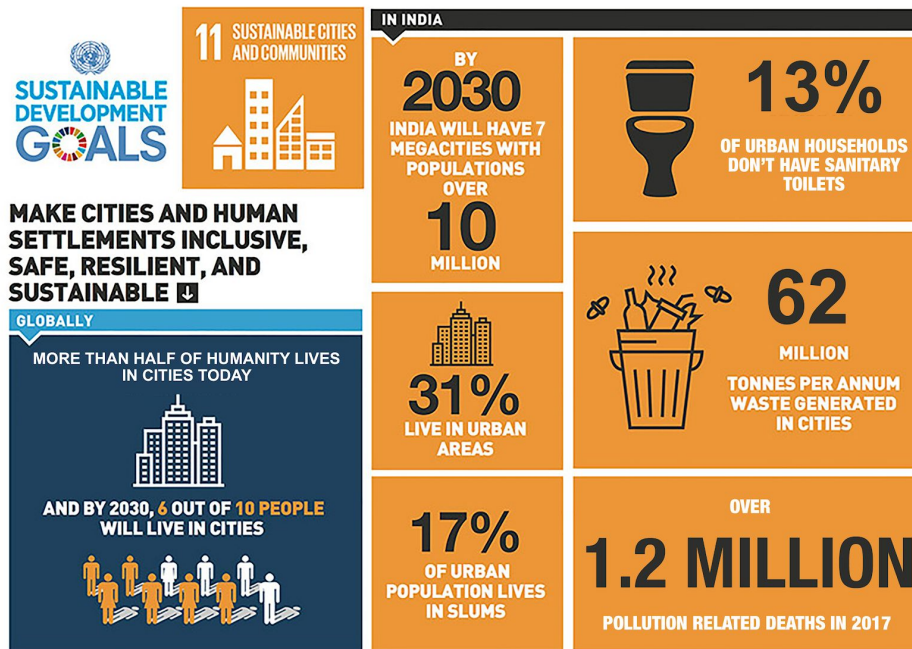
PROGRESS OF GOAL 11 IN 2019

Substantial progress has been made in reducing the proportion of the global urban population living in slums, though more than 1 billion people continue to live in such situations. Urgent action is needed to reverse the current situation, which sees the vast majority of urban residents breathing poor-quality air and having limited access to transport and open public spaces. With the areas occupied by cities growing faster than their populations, there are profound repercussions for sustainability.

- Between 1990 and 2016, the proportion of the global urban population living in slums fell from 46 to 23 per cent. This progress was largely offset by internal population growth and rural-urban migration. In 2016, just over 1 billion people lived in slums or informal settlements, with over half (589 million) living in East, South-East, Central and South Asia.
- The proportion of urban residents who have convenient access to public transport (defined as living within 500 m walking distance of a bus stop and within 1,000 m of a railway and/or ferry terminal) remains low, particularly in developing countries. Based on data from 227 cities from 78 countries in 2018, on average, 53 per cent of urban residents in all regions had convenient access to public transport, from a low of 18 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to a high of 75 per cent in Australia and New Zealand.

In some regions that have low access to public transport, informal transport modes are highly prevalent and in many cases provide reliable transport for the majority of urban populations.

- Globally, urban areas are expanding at a faster rate than their populations. Between 2000 and 2014, areas occupied by cities grew 1.28 times faster than their populations. Closely related to this trend is that the urban densities of cities have been declining, creating profound repercussions for environmental sustainability at the local, regional and global scale. Better management of urban growth will be crucial in order to guarantee sustainable urbanization.

- Globally, 2 billion people do not have access to waste collection services and 3 billion people lack access to controlled waste disposal facilities. With increasing urban populations and the existence of consumer-oriented economies amid rising income levels and rapid urbanization, it is estimated that the total waste generated in the world will double from nearly 2 billion tons in 2016 to about 4 billion tons by 2050. While from 2010 to 2018 the proportion of solid waste collected was about 81 per cent globally, in sub-Saharan Africa it was only 52 per cent.

- In 2016, 9 in 10 people living in urban areas still breathed air that did not meet the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines value for particulate matter – that particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in size (PM2.5) not exceed an annual mean of 10 micrograms per m3 or a daily mean of 25 micrograms per m3 – and more than half of the world population experienced an increase in PM2.5 from 2010 to 2016.

- Most cities have struggled to ensure that their populations have convenient access to open public spaces (defined as spaces within 400 m walking distance of their residence). Based on data from 220 cities in 77 countries in 2018, only 21 per cent of the population had convenient access to open public spaces. However, these results do not necessarily mean that there is an inadequate share of land dedicated to open public spaces in these cities, but rather that their distribution across urban areas is uneven.

- National urban policies are policy strategies that specifically respond to the urbanization challenges of today. As of the beginning of 2019, 150 countries had developed such policies, and almost half are already implementing them.

V. Discuss the topic

Discuss the negative impacts of Urbanisation

Many small town dwellers and villagers had left their hometown for the cities in search of higher standard of living. This movement from rural areas to big cities is called urbanization. Thus, urbanization is the process by which there is an increase in the number and the proportion of people living in the urban settlements and the amount of industrialization of the settlement. It also refers to the increase in the size of land area occupied by urban settlements such as towns and cities.

Although urbanization has brought about numerous positive impacts, it also has its share of disadvantages as well. The nature and scale of impact, be it positive or negative, will vary depending on the level of development of the country. The negative impacts of urbanization shall be discuss via the economic , environmental, social and cultural aspect.

The main negative economic impact of urbanization is unemployment. With massive migration from rural areas, jobs in the urban area may not be created fast enough to meet the needs. Therefore, the first problem faced by newly arrived migrant in the urban area is finding a job. While it is true that opportunities exist in cities, it is also true that the competition for these opportunities is fierce as there are more demands for jobs than are available. This is made even more difficult because these migrant are mostly farmers, non-skilled and illiterate rural people. Very few people make their fortunes, some end up as illegal street sellers, cleaners, waste collectors, domestic servants or odd jobs laborers while the rest must still find ways to eat and sleep while waiting for their chance. With unemployment and poverty, it leads to one of the most obvious effects of urbanization, that is, the growth of slum. and its associate problems.

For example, multi-national companies tend to set up labour intensive industries in the less developing countries to take advantage of cheap labour cost. Country such as India has a large pool of unskilled and less-educated labour. They will be attracted to go to the cities to look for comparatively better paid job offered by these multi-national companies. When these people flock from the rural areas to the cities, the cities will have a population explosion. However, there might not be enough jobs to cater to these large group of people, resulting in high unemployment. As this point, it may not be flexible for them to go back to their hometown, as they might have migrated the whole family to the city. Without a job but having family to take care, these people might resort to commit crime such as robberies and drug trafficking for survival.

Some quotes that can be used in Group Discussions on Urbanisation:

"Urbanization in India is a slow but sure death for her villages and villagers."

- Mahatma Gandhi

"The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights."

- David Harvey

"Human civilization has been changing the Earths environment for millennia, often to our detriment. Dams, deforestation and urbanization can alter water cycles and wind patterns, occasionally triggering droughts or even creating deserts."

- Jamais Cascio

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