



Delegate Guide: United Nations Development Program

(UNDP)

Chair: Madison Swanson



Letter From the Chair

What is the UNDP?

The United Nations Development Program was formed in 1965 with the goal of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable human development. This tactic of development emphasizes improving the quality of life for all citizens while protecting the environment for future generations. In addition to sustainable development, UNDP aid programs focus on building democratic governance and peacebuilding and climate and disaster relief¹. 36 UN member states, both developed and developing, sit on the UNDP on a rotating basis and their work is entirely funded by voluntary member state donations.



The UNDP administers aid through five year Country Programs that focus on achieving their three main goals of sustainable human development, democratic governance, and disaster resilience. They currently have ongoing programs in about 170 countries and territories, where they tackle issues such as inequality, exclusion of minority groups, poverty, and the development of individuals to provide for a sustainable future and better quality of life². The Strategic Plan that currently guides the Country Programs (2018-2021) are aimed at “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations, and building resilience to shocks and crises.” To achieve these goals, the Strategic Plan has a set of signature solutions that target poverty, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.³

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Development-Programme>

² <https://open.undp.org/about-us/open>

³ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us.html>

In addition to the Country Programs, UNDP releases an annual human development report that tracks a number of human development indicators to illustrate the quality of life and economic state and trajectory of the world. The reports highlight key areas that countries should focus on improving in order to create a better world and eradicate poverty.⁴

⁴ <https://open.undp.org/projects/00033274>

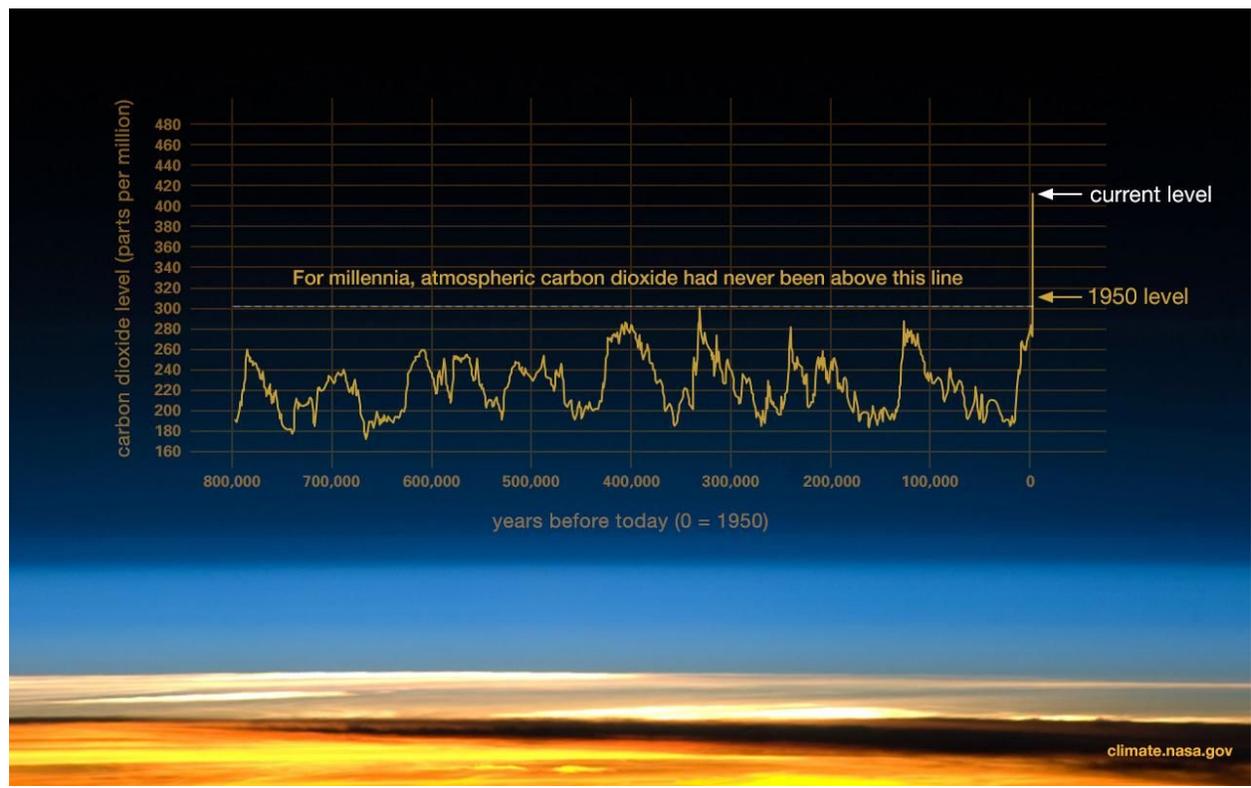
Topic 1: Fighting Climate Change through Development

UNDP released a 2030 Agenda for Sustainable to Development to guide their work until 2030. It recognizes poverty as the greatest threat to peace, stability, and prosperity in the world and therefore discusses strategies to eradicate it in all its forms. The Agenda rests on five pillars: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. The agenda works in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the UNDP believes that eradicating poverty will help to accomplish many of those goals.

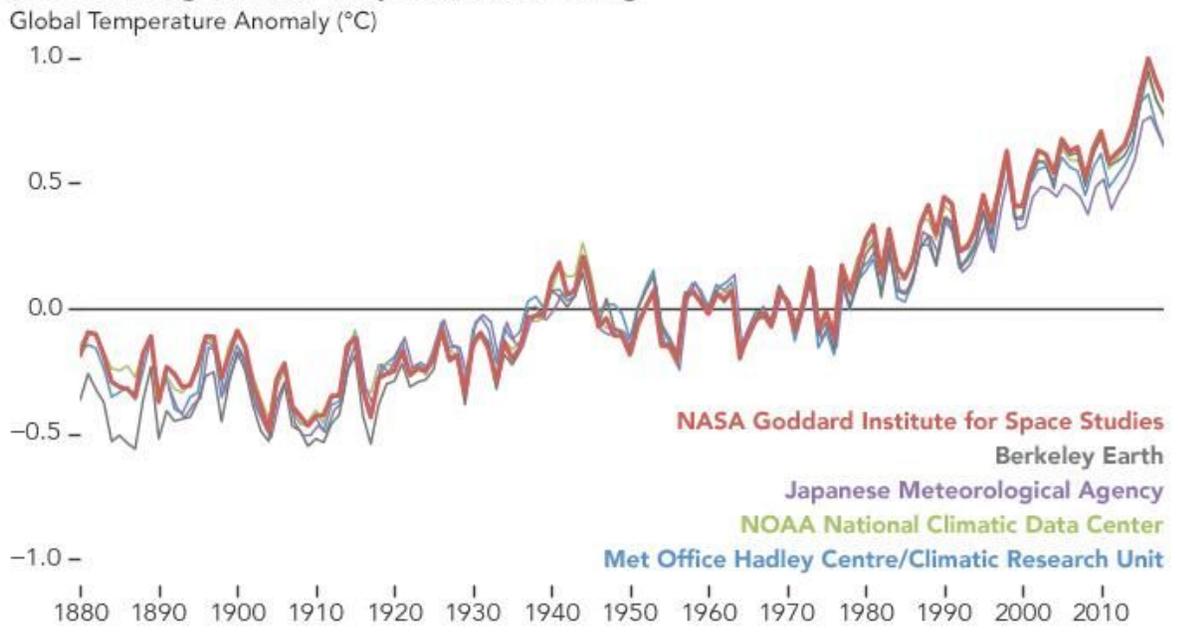
One of the focuses of the 2030 Agenda is “Planet.” .“We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.” Climate change may be the biggest threat to our generation, and yet many nations and individuals are still dragging their feet on making changes to combat this crisis. SDG 13 focuses on climate initiatives, and aims to collect US\$100 billion annually by 2020 to fight the environmental crisis and keep the global temperature rise under 2°C. In 2018, the world raised \$10.2 billion.⁵ That same year, the United States pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement, a global partnership committed to keeping the global temperature rise between 1.5°C and 2°C. The graphics below, from climate.nasa.gov, helps to illustrate some of

⁵ <https://sdg-tracker.org/climate-change#targets>

the shocking realities of what human activity has done to our planet.



A World of Agreement: Temperatures are Rising



Arctic sea ice is declining at a rate of 12.8% per decade.⁶ 18 of the 19 warmest years on record have all occurred since 2001.⁷ Carbon in the atmosphere is at its highest level ever, and still rising.⁸ Sea levels are rising 3.3 millimeters per year.⁹ 11% of the earth's population, or 800 million people, are currently vulnerable to climate change-related disasters such as droughts, floods, heat, and rising sea levels.¹⁰ To combat these changes, it is estimated that it would cost US\$140 billion to effectively assess all the damage humans have caused and reverse our course to preserve the planet for future generations. That's less than 0.1% of global GDP.¹¹ Yet, one year out from the target of \$100 billion per year, we have collected less than 10% of what is needed.

Even though UNDP is working to incorporate green growth into its development projects, there are many critics who argue that, in the face of extreme poverty, environmental considerations should not be paramount. What people need is access to food, water, housing, and economic stability now, not a complicated, expensive, long-term plan to ensure sustainable development. This narrative is difficult, yet necessary, to combat. As the numbers above show, without sustainable development, we may very well be looking at a future where any development at all is stagnated thanks to unlivable environments in many parts of the world.

Another challenge to incorporating sustainability into development is the price tag. The countries that UNDP operates in are not wealthy countries. They are underdeveloped and struggling to meet the needs of their people. Green technologies which would be needed to

⁶ <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/arctic-sea-ice/>

⁷ <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature/>

⁸ <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/>

⁹ <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/sea-level/>

¹⁰ <https://www.conservation.org/stories/11-climate-change-facts-you-need-to-know>

¹¹ Ibid.

ensure sustainable human development are very expensive, above and beyond what many target countries could afford. Yet, green tech is essential to ensuring a healthy living environment for future generations.

In 1992, the UN's Earth Summit produced the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a first step to preventing irreversible damage. It has nearly universal participation, with 197 countries having ratified it. The main goal of the UNFCCC was to prevent "dangerous" human interference with the climate. Unfortunately, according to many scientists, that dangerous interference occurred. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1995 as a legally binding target for reduction of emissions for developed countries. We are currently in the second commitment period of the Protocol, which began in January 2013 and will end in January 2020. The EU, several other European countries, and Australia signed on to this second commitment period and the EU, along with Iceland, committed to a 20% reduction of emissions by 2020. So far they are on track to achieve this. In 2015, the Paris Agreement was created, whose main goal is to keep the global temperature rise between 1.5°C and 2°C. While this was a huge step and a major instance of the global community coming together and making serious commitments to fight climate change, the withdrawal of the US was a major blow to the agreement.

This September, Secretary General António Guterres will convene a climate summit which will bring world leaders, the private sector, and prominent figures of civil society together. He is hoping that this summit will spark massive political and economic momentum that will see countries competing in a "race to the top" for implementing the goals of the Paris Agreement and

Sustainable Development Goals.¹² A big challenge for this summit, and for all of you as members of the UNDP to consider, is how to ensure that this momentum is not fleeting and will result in substantive policies that bring about real change.

Developing nations are in a unique position that could prove essential in the fight against climate change. In them, there is the opportunity to build from the ground up nations that consider the wellbeing of the environment in all they do. Doing so will provide a better life for all the earth's people, both those here today and future generations. As a delegate of UNDP, you must consider not only what strategies should be implemented to ensure sustainable human development is achieved, but also how to convince nations that this is an issue worth spending time and money on. The clock is ticking, and we must act now before it is too late.

¹² <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>

Topic 2: Protecting Vulnerable Groups in Times of Crisis

In the UNDP's 2030 Strategic Agenda, a key pillar is building resilience to shocks and crises. These crises take many forms: from human disasters such as civil war or political unrest to natural phenomenon caused by climate change, one in seven of the world's population currently lives in a fragile or conflict zone.¹³ Additionally, 1.7 billion people have been affected by natural disasters over the course of the last decade.¹⁴ The average amount of time an individual lives in displacement is 17 years, and the average conflict lasts seven years.¹⁵ UNDP has deployed 1,800 experts to countries in crisis since 2009, but in many cases, it has not been enough.¹⁶

UNDP's primary method for handling post-disaster and post-conflict situations is deploying a crisis response toolbox. This includes fast deployment of first responders and planning teams, and needs assessment, and fast-track procedures for procurement and operational support. The goals of the tailored crisis response packages are to restore core government functions, stabilize livelihoods, manage debris and rebuild infrastructure, and make a recovery plan, all as quickly as possible.¹⁷ UNDP spent \$1 billion to strengthen disaster resilience in developing nations across the world in 2018. This year, the UNDP budget dedicated to disaster resilience and prevention \$300.56 million. UNDP's 318 projects in 91 countries focused on this solution spend half their budget on building resilience, a quarter on

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<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/climate-and-people/world-improving-one-seven-live-conflict-zones-left-behind/>

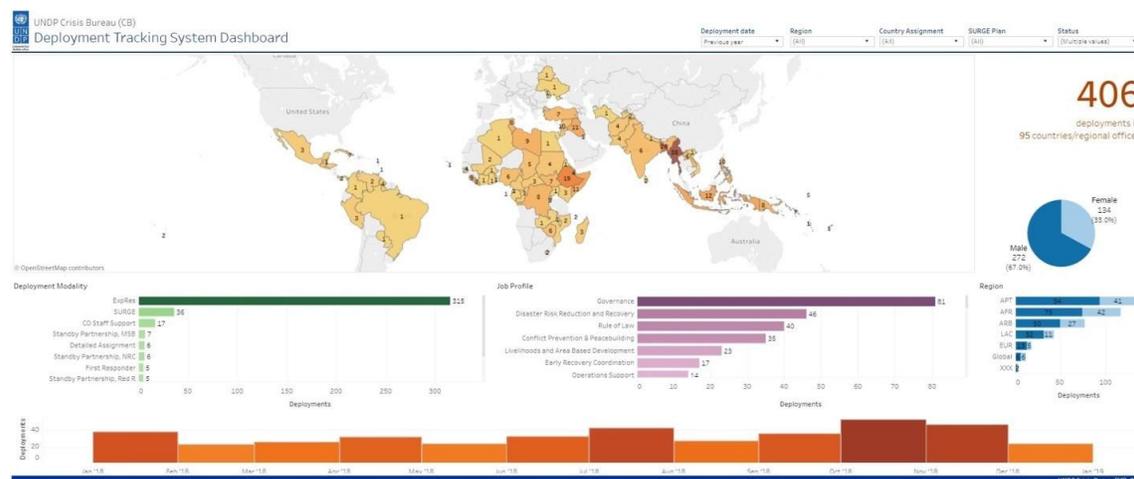
¹⁴ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/crisis-response.html>

¹⁵ Ibid,

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/crisis-response/how-we-do-it.html>

accelerating structural reforms, and the last quarter on eradicating poverty.¹⁸ This last task is important to our discussion because the poor are some of the most vulnerable in times of crisis, so UNDP is working to even the playing field. Below is a graphic that shows the deployment of UNDP officers around the world (click the link to enlarge).



<https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/img/crisis-response/deployment-mechanism/Overview%202018.jpg>

In times of crisis, not all groups are affected in the same way. Vulnerable groups in crisis include the poor, women, the disabled, the elderly, and certain social or ethnic minorities. They may have been vulnerable before the crisis, such as the impoverished, or become more so afterwards, such as the elderly. Either way, these groups require special attention because they are at risk of socio-economic exclusion, violence, poverty, and more.

To illustrate how various groups are affected differently by disasters, we will look at a familiar example. Hurricane Ike wreaked havoc on Cuba and the south eastern United States, particularly Texas and the Gulf of Mexico region, in the early fall of 2008. The United States is

in no way a developing country. However, a study found that there were huge differences in the post-disaster experiences between Whites, African Americans, and Latin Americans. In this instance, African Americans and Latin Americans, two minority groups that have historically experienced exclusion in the United States, were considered to be the vulnerable groups. The study found that African Americans and Latinos reported a greater impact of loss of services than did Whites, and they were considered to be in a position of insecurity far longer than Whites. This means that even though all groups reported similar property damage directly resulting from the hurricane, minority groups were less able to receive reimbursement or rebuild their lost or damaged assets. In addition, African Americans and Latinos reported much higher levels of depression and PTSD following the disaster, two disabilities whose effects will last much longer than the damage done by any storm.¹⁹

This example of Hurricane Ike did not happen in a developing country, but in a developed nation largely considered one of the richest and free nations in the world. If inequality is happening on such a huge scale in a nation such as the US, you can imagine the disparate effects of crisis on vulnerable groups in the developing world. Your task, as delegates of UNDP, is to not only create viable solutions for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups after disasters, but how to bolster these groups so that they are no longer vulnerable should a crisis hit.

¹⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4386718/>