



General Assembly Plenary Topic Background Guide

Topic 1: Adjusting to Climate Change¹

October 27, 2009

When UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took office in January 2007, he began to call attention to the implications of climate change. For example, in March 2007, he argued that climate change has the same importance as war:

Today, war continues to threaten countless men, women and children across the globe. It is the source of untold suffering and loss. And the majority of the UN's work still focuses on preventing and ending conflict. But the danger posed by war to all of humanity – and to our planet – is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming.

According to Secretary Ban, climate change is “likely to become a major driver of war and conflict” as natural disasters, rising ocean levels, droughts, land degradation and other effects of climate change lead to job loss, poverty, decreasing agricultural yields, the spread of disease, and mass migration.²

Since the release of the fourth assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2007, climate change has become more widely understood. Scientists worldwide agree that it is happening, that it is primarily anthropogenic (caused by humans), and that it is overwhelmingly the effect of greenhouse gas emissions, caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, petroleum, and natural gas. Moreover, there is a strong scientific consensus that the effects of climate change are already apparent in severe weather patterns and that the long-range effects climate change will include rising sea levels and increasing desertification.

Today, the question is, how will individuals, states, and international organizations adapt to climate change? Part of the challenge is to reduce GHG emissions. But that is not enough. Even if states curb their emissions, past emissions will continue to warm the earth for years. Thus states must start now to adapt to climate change. This will require unprecedented international cooperation and a rethinking of many aspects of social and economic life, including where people live and what they eat. In addition, it may require revisions to the Millennium Development Goals.

History and Current Events

Today's consensus about the phenomenon of climate change took over a century to form. In 1896, a scientist noted that carbon dioxide levels were increasing in the Earth's atmosphere.³ In 1931, an American physicist named E.O. Hulbert published a paper linking rising carbon dioxide levels with rising temperatures. According to Hulbert, when humans release carbon dioxide and other green house gases into the atmosphere, the Earth is warmed because the sun's rays are reflected back to Earth by the gases. In 1951, however, the American

¹ This document was written by Karen Adams, Faculty Advisor and Kedra Hildebrand, Teaching Assistant with contributions from David Knobel.

² UN News Centre, “Ban Ki-moon calls on new generation to take better care of Planet Earth than his own,” March 1, 2007, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21720&Cr=global&Cr1=warming>

³ Ginger L. Gist, “Global Climate Change: Components and Consequences,” *Journal of Environmental Health*, 61:5 (December 1999), p. 4.

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Meteorological Society's *Compendium of Meteorology* contended that an increase in carbon dioxide would not increase the Earth's temperature.⁴

Climate change did not receive sustained international attention until the 1980s.⁵ In 1988, in response to growing scientific evidence of global warming, the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) created the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In the early 1990s, the IPCC issued its first report, which demonstrated that the earth's temperature had risen 0.5 degrees Celsius in the previous half century.⁶

In its most recent report (2007), the IPCC presented evidence that climate change is primarily the result of human GHG emissions. According to the 2,000 scientists who contributed to the report, "since the start of the industrial era (about 1750), the overall effect of human activities on climate has been a warming influence. The human impact on climate during this era greatly exceeds that due to known changes in natural processes, such as solar changes and volcanic eruptions."⁷

Specifically, according to the IPCC, when fossil fuels are burned for energy, they release methane, nitrous oxide, and especially carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. This creates a "greenhouse effect" that increases temperatures, makes weather patterns more severe, and raises sea levels. According to the IPCC, "fossil fuel combustion (plus a smaller contribution from cement manufacture) is responsible for more than 75% of human-caused CO₂ emissions. Land use change (primarily deforestation) is responsible for the remainder."⁸ According to the US Department of Energy (DOE), coal and petroleum are each responsible for about 40 percent of CO₂ emissions, with natural gas responsible for another 20 percent.⁹

In its 2007 report, the IPCC documented the effects climate change has already had worldwide, including:

- warming lakes and rivers, which reduces water quality and increases the likelihood of floods
- reducing growing seasons in dry climates, such as the Sahelian region of Africa
- changing ranges of plant and animal species, which affects agricultural production¹⁰

⁴ Janet Conley, "Timeline: A Science is Born," *Daily Report*, September 17, 2007, available at http://www.dailyreportonline.com/Editorial/News/singleEdit.asp?individual_SQL=9/17/2007@16620_Public_.htm

⁵ Karen Mingst and Margaret Karns, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 3rd edition, (Boulder: Westview, 2007), p. 215.

⁶ Conley, "Timeline: A Science is Born." The full report is available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/assessments-reports.htm>

⁷ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "Frequently Asked Questions," *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2007, p. 100, available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-faqs.pdf>

⁸ IPCC, "Frequently Asked Questions," p. 115.

⁹ US Department of Energy, "Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emissions," *International Energy Outlook 2009*, DOE/EIA-0484, May 27, 2009, available at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/ieo/emissions.html>

¹⁰ IPCC, "Summary for Policy Makers," *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2007, pp. 8-10, available at http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_wg2_report_impacts_adaptation_and_vulnerability.htm/

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In addition, the IPCC discussed the likely future impacts of climate change, which include:

- increased glacial melting and run-off in high latitudes, which will reduce the availability of drinking water in parts of the world inhabited by one-sixth of the world's population
- increased incidence of drought and spread of desertification
- frequent heavy precipitation events, causing floods
- extinction of plant and animal species, with effects on human food supply
- rising sea levels, causing coastal erosion and necessitating resettlement of urban populations

All of the countries and regions of the world will be affected, both directly by the changes listed above and indirectly by the disruptions in other parts of the world. The industries, cities, and countries that will be most directly affected are

generally those in coastal and river flood plains, those whose economies are closely linked with climate-sensitive resources, and those in areas prone to extreme weather events, especially where rapid urbanisation is occurring. ... Poor communities can be especially vulnerable, in particular those concentrated in high-risk areas. They tend to have more limited adaptive capacities, and are more dependent on climate-sensitive resources such as local water and food supplies.¹¹

According to a recent study in *Environment and Urbanization*, two-thirds of the world's largest cities are in coastal areas. Moreover,

180 countries have populations in low-elevation coastal zones, and about 70 percent of those have urban areas of more than 5 million people that are under threat. Among them: Tokyo; New York; Mumbai, India; Shanghai, China; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Dhaka, Bangladesh.¹²

If the 634 million people who reside threatened coastal areas relocate, they will move to other parts of the world. Because many cities will be affected simultaneously, the disruption is likely to be far greater than the effects of a severe storm, such as Hurricane Katrina, in one city, such as New Orleans. Because coastal areas will be affected over some period of time, there will be opportunities to prepare for and carry out systematic resettlements that are impossible after sudden storms. But because of the number of affected areas, it will nevertheless be difficult to encourage people to move, provide them with shelter, provide them with services such as education and health care, and help them feel welcome in new places.

Ecological and economic interdependence will also magnify the effects of climate change in areas that are less directly affected. As the IPCC explains, "climate change impacts spread from directly impacted areas and sectors to other areas and sectors through extensive and complex linkages."¹³ Birds provide a good example of this; as populations fall off and migration patterns change, farmers in areas less directly affected by climate change will be indirectly affected by the loss of birds to pollinate their crops.

Health is another area of vulnerability and interdependence. According to the IPCC, climate change will affect the health of millions of people, especially those with low adaptive capabilities such as children, the elderly, and people living in less-developed countries. Among the anticipated effects are increased malnutrition, storm-related deaths (including deaths from heatwaves), diarrhea (due to water quality), asthma and other respiratory diseases (due to air quality), and changing patterns of infectious diseases such as influenza.¹⁴

¹¹ IPCC, "Summary for Policy Makers," *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, pp. 11-12.

¹² Thomas Wagner, "Cities at Risk of Rising Sea Levels," Associated Press, 27 March 2007, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/27/AR2007032701871.html>

¹³ IPCC, "Summary for Policy Makers," *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 12.

¹⁴ IPCC, "Summary for Policy Makers," *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 12.

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Given the already-occurring and likely effects of climate change -- as well as their possible political repercussions, such as war -- the IPCC and other international bodies have begun to consider what changes humans can make to (1) reduce GHG emissions to reduce climate change and avoid these effects and (2) adapt to climate change to reduce suffering, dislocation, and conflict as much as possible.

Reducing GHG Emissions

According to the IPCC, “past emissions are estimated to involve some unavoidable warming ...even if atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations remain at 2000 levels. [Thus t]here are some impacts for which adaptation is the only available and appropriate response.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, it would be helpful for future generations to reduce GHG emissions as much as possible. UN member states have been trying to do so since 1992 and are currently involved in talks on this issue.

In 1992, the General Assembly (GA) convened a World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the conference, known as the Earth Summit, 154 UN member states signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). Parties to the FCCC agreed to

[stabilize] greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic [man-made] interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.¹⁶

Specifically, FCCC signatories agreed to monitor and reduce their greenhouse emissions, and to cooperate to share information about and technology to address climate change. In addition, developed states pledged to “aim to” reduce their greenhouse emissions, especially carbon dioxide, “with the aim of returning individually jointly to their 1990 levels.” Furthermore, the most developed states agreed to provide financial assistance to help less developed states reduce their emissions.¹⁷

The rationale for expecting different levels of commitment from states at different levels of development was that, “economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first overriding priorities of the developing country Parties,” and therefore, they could not be expected to fulfill the FCCC requirements without help from developed countries.¹⁸ Moreover, historically the US and other developed countries have been the largest emitters of greenhouse gasses (GHG). In 2000, the US was responsible for 20 percent of all GHG emissions, while the 25 European Union states were responsible for 14 percent. China’s emissions have grown over the past decade, as it has developed and used more electricity, which it produces primarily by burning coal. In 2000, China contributed 15 percent of GHGs. The other top-five emitters were Russia and India, each with 6 percent of the world total. Together, just 25 countries accounted for 83 percent of global emissions.¹⁹

The FCCC entered into force on March 21, 1994. As of 2009, 194 countries, including the US, have ratified it.²⁰ But the nearly universal ratification is not a good indicator of state commitment to the FCCC, which is vague and non-binding.

¹⁵ IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 19.

¹⁶ “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” Article 2, available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

¹⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” Article 4.

¹⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” Article 4.

¹⁹ Kevin A. Baumert, et al., “Navigating the Numbers: Greenhouse Gas Data and International Climate Policy,” World Resources Institute, 2005, p. 10, available at http://pdf.wri.org/navigating_numbers.pdf

²⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Status of Ratification,” 16 October 2009, available at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/status_of_ratification/items/2631.php

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In 1997, some parties to the FCCC negotiated and signed a more binding agreement, known as the Kyoto Protocol to the FCCC. This is the most comprehensive agreement regarding greenhouse gas emissions to date. States that ratify the Protocol agreed to adopt specific national GHG emission targets. Specifically developed states promised to reduce emissions to 95 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.²¹ As of 2009, 184 states have ratified the Protocol. Among the states that have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol is the US, which has objected to its application to developed states only.²²

According to the IPCC, in some sectors and in certain countries, the FCCC and Kyoto Protocol have stimulated national policies that have been effective in reducing GHG emissions. But “the scale of such measures...has not yet been large enough to counteract the global growth in emissions.” As a result,

With current climate change mitigation policies and related sustainable development practices, global GHG emissions will continue to grow over the next few decades... CO₂ emissions between 2000 and 2030 from energy use are projected to grow 40 to 110 percent.²³

In December 2008, the GA sponsored a climate change conference in Poznan, Poland. The goal of the conference was to establish a protocol that would succeed the Kyoto Protocol (which expires in 2012) and would be more effective in reducing GHG emissions.²⁴ One of the most significant topics discussed at the conference was how to encourage GHG emission reduction in the developing world, for example by sharing technology. The conference did not achieve any concrete agreements, but most states agreed that more binding targets must be adopted soon.²⁵

With targets set by the Kyoto Protocol largely unmet and the Protocol’s end date fast approaching, states have been trying to hammer out a new protocol to the FCCC to be signed in Copenhagen in December 2009.²⁶ Despite the election of US President Barack Obama, however, the US has not been as flexible in the negotiations as many had hoped.²⁷ Moreover, developing countries have “made it clear that they will not sign a treaty unless they

²¹ “Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” 1998, Article 3 and Article 6, available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

²² George W. Bush, “Text of a Letter from the President to Senators Hagel, Helms, Craig, and Roberts,” White House News Release, March 13, 2001, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010314.html>

²³ IPCC, “Summary for Policymakers, *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2007, pp. 3, 4, 21, available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg3/ar4-wg3-spm.pdf>

²⁴ “The United Nations Climate Change Conference,” UN FCCC Website, 1-12 December 2008, available at http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php

²⁵ “The United Nations Climate Change Conference.”

²⁶ “Times Topic: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” *New York Times*, 15 October 2009, available at http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/united_nations_framework_convention_on_climate_change/index.html

²⁷ President Barack Obama, “UN General Assembly and Climate Change Speeches,” Now Public: Crowd Powered Media, September 23, 2009, available at <http://www.nowpublic.com/world/obama-s-un-general-assembly-and-climate-change-speech-transcripts>

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get money to help them adapt to a warmer planet.”²⁸ The cost of making needed changes is steep -- at least \$1 billion and as much as \$1 trillion per year.²⁹

Adapting to Climate Change

Since the planet will continue to warm even if GHG emissions talks and reductions are successful, it is vital for countries to begin now to prepare for the most significant effects of climate change. According to the IPCC, “adaptation alone is not expected to cope with all the projected effects of climate change, and especially not over the long term as most impacts increase in magnitude.”³⁰ Still, effective adaptation would reduce the effects as much as possible.

According to the IPCC, “the array of potential adaptive responses available to human societies is very large, ranging from purely technological (e.g., sea defences), through behavioural (e.g., altered food and recreational choices), to managerial (e.g., altered farm practices) and to policy (e.g., planning regulations).”³¹ Some states have already begun to adapt. Today,

climate change is considered in the design of infrastructure projects such as coastal defence in the Maldives and The Netherlands, and the Confederation Bridge in Canada. Other examples include prevention of glacial lake outburst flooding in Nepal, and policies and strategies such as water management in Australia and government responses to heatwaves in, for example, some European countries.³²

Denmark has become a leader in creating innovated climate change technology that reduces countries’ dependencies on fossil fuels.³³ Sweden has issued new dietary guidelines that consider both the nutrition content of food and its carbon footprint; according to Swedish researchers, “25 percent of the emissions produced by people in industrialized nations can be traced to the food they eat.”³⁴ The president of Kiribati said recently that within the next sixty years his country might no longer exist, “and that Kiribati’s population of 900,000 may have to move earlier than within the 60 year timeframe in order to survive.”³⁵

According to the IPCC, how countries adapt will depend on factors “that directly shape the health of populations such as education, health care, public health initiatives and infrastructure and economic development.” Thus less-developed countries will have the hardest time adapting and will, therefore, experience the most profound effects on human life and health. In fact, climate change is likely to delay or even reverse their development. According to the IPCC, “over the next half-century, climate change could impede achievement of the MDGs.”³⁶ This, in turn, would reduce less-developed countries’ ability to adapt to further climate change and increase the pressures on developed countries to help refugees and resolve resource conflicts.

²⁸ “Times Topic: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” *New York Times*.

²⁹ “Times Topic: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” *New York Times*.

³⁰ IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 19.

³¹ IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 19.

³² IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, p. 19.

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, “Danish Cleantech Solutions – driving export and attracting foreign investments,” available at <http://en.cop15.dk/denmark's+efforts/danish+cleantech+solutions>

³⁴ Elisabeth Rosenthal, “To Cut Global Warming, Swedes Study Their Plates,” *New York Times*, 22 October 2009, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/23/world/europe/23degrees.html>

³⁵ Henk Luf, “Global Warming- Small island nations to disappear within years,” *Cheers Magazine*, June 18, 2008.

³⁶ IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, pp. 12, 20.

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According to the IPCC, “there are formidable environmental, economic, informational, social, attitudinal and behavioural barriers to the implementation of adaptation.” These barriers are very similar to the barriers that have made it difficult to attain the MDGs. In addition, there is the problem of incorporating current scientific knowledge about climate change into existing ideas of sustainable development. According to the IPCC, “few plans for promoting sustainability have explicitly included either adapting to climate change impacts, or promoting adaptive capacity.”³⁷

Previous Committee Work on This Topic

Each year, the General Assembly holds a high-level plenary meeting attended by heads of state. In 2007, for the first time, the GA devoted a plenary session to climate change. Before the meeting, General Assembly President Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa said, “[w]e will need political action if we are to protect our environment, secure our planet and safeguard our future for our children and generations to come. This is one of the greatest challenges of our time.”³⁸ In accordance with the IPCC report, Al Khalifa called for climate change to no longer be considered strictly an environmental issue, but rather a matter of sustainable development.³⁹

The plenary session included speeches from 100 ambassadors and heads of state, as well as speeches from prominent scientists and business leaders. Although it was scheduled to last only two days, the debate carried into a third day to allow all states that wanted to speak the opportunity to describe their climate related problems. The day after the session ended, the UN launched a new website to detail its activities related to climate change.⁴⁰

In February 2008, the GA held a thematic debate entitled “Addressing Climate Change: the United Nations and the World at Work.” In his opening statement, GA President Miguel d’Escoto Brackmann said the GA had a unique role to play on “climate change due to its global composition and the broad range of social and economic issues it covered.” The President also emphasized that the GA needed to take responsibility for two key concerns: creating more partnerships and developing a global strategy. The debate that followed overwhelming supported the idea of partnerships in all areas including renewable energy, energy efficiency and technology transfer. The participants also reaffirmed the FCCC as the main treaty for addressing climate change.⁴¹

In July 2008, the GA held an informal meeting on “Climate Change and the Most Vulnerable Countries – the Imperative to Act.” At this meeting, President d’Escoto Brackmann, underscored that climate change is “inherently a sustainable development issue.”⁴² The President went on to stress that not enough is being done to assist the most vulnerable countries including the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island states (SIDS). Furthermore, he called on developing countries to do their part by implementing previously agreed upon limits to curb emissions, helping create effective mechanisms for technology transfers to the developing world, and providing sufficient resources for effective climate funding. Much of the discussion in the informal meeting called on developed countries to recognize and aid those countries most effected by climate change and least able to act.

³⁷ IPCC, “Summary for Policy Makers,” *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, pp. 19-20.

³⁸ UN News Centre, “In first plenary on climate change, General Assembly to seek speedy action,” 30 July 2007, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=23364&Cr=climate&Cr1=change>

³⁹ UN General Assembly, “Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at Work,” February 2008, p. 4, available at <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/statements/CCsummaryFINAL.pdf>

⁴⁰ UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, “NGLS Summary-GA Thematic Debate: Climate Change as a Global Challenge,” August 2, 2007, available at http://www.un-ngls.org/site/article.php3?id_article=323

⁴¹ UN General Assembly, “Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at Work,” pp. 4, 11-13.

⁴² UN General Assembly, “Climate Change and the Most Vulnerable Countries – the Imperative to Act: Summary,” 8 July 2008, available at <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/ccactssummary210708.pdf>

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In April 2009, the GA proclaimed April 22 Mother Earth Day. The resolution was brought to the Assembly by the Bolivian President Evo Morales Ayma, who applauded the members of the world body for taking a common stand for 'Mother Earth,' by acknowledging humanity's common interest in the protection of the planet and its environment."⁴³

In June 2009, the GA unanimously adopted a resolution on "Climate change and its possible security implications" (A/63/L.8/Rev.1). In the resolution, the GA expressed concern about the possible security implications of climate change, especially for the developing world, and asked Secretary-General Ban to submit to the upcoming session a comprehensive report on those implications. The GA also "invited the major organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, to intensify their efforts to address the challenge, as appropriate and within their respective mandates." The resolution was introduced on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States. According to the representative from Nauru,

rising oceans could, sooner than previously thought, leave little of that regional group's already tiny homelands above water unless urgent action was taken. Already, the impact of climate change included inundation of heavily populated coastal areas, loss of freshwater, failure of agriculture and other results of saltwater intrusion.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Today, the 2009 Copenhagen talks for a protocol to replace Kyoto have stalled. Moreover, the international economic crisis has made it difficult to achieve the MDGs by the target date of 2015 -- even before the full range of climate effects have been felt. What can the GA do to contribute to progress in reducing GHGs and helping states develop the capabilities they need to adapt to climate change?

In developing your country's position on this issue, consider the following questions:

- Is your state a developed country or a developing country?
- What are its current and historical greenhouse gas emissions?
- Has your state signed and ratified the FCCC Kyoto Protocol? Why or why not? If so, has it met its emission targets? Why or why not?
- Is your country suffering from problems related to climate change? How has it dealt with these problems? Has it received assistance? What are the likely long-term effects of climate change in your country?
- How can and should the General Assembly encourage states to adapt to climate change? What is the right mix of emissions reduction and adaptation? What kind of adaptation is most needed?
- Given the connection between level of development and ability to adapt, should the GA revise the MDGs to include climate goals? If so, which goals should be amended, and how?

⁴³ UN General Assembly, "General Assembly Proclaims 22 April, 'International Mother Earth Day,'" GA/10823, April 22, 2009, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10823.doc.htm>

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, "General Assembly, Expressing Deep Concern, Invites Major United Nations Organs to Intensify Efforts in Addressing Security Implications of Climate Change," GA/10830, June 3, 2009, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10830.doc.htm>

Recommended Reading

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). "IPCC Fourth Assessment Report 2007." 2007
Available at <http://www.ipcc.ch>

This is the most detailed, documented, and up-to-date statement of the climate change problem and possible policy responses. The "Summary for Policy Makers" (<http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-spm.pdf>) provides a concise statement of the challenges in each world region.

School of Geography and the Environment. "UNDP Climate Change Country Profiles." Available at <http://country-profiles.geog.ox.ac.uk/>

This website provides country-level climate data summaries on 52 developing countries. It was created to help bridge the information gap on climate change for developing countries.

United Nations. "Gateway to the UN System's Work on Climate Change: Examples of UN Projects." Available at <http://www.un.org/climatechange/projects.shtml>

This website provides country-specific examples of UN work on renewable energy projects.

United Nations. "Millennium Development Goals Report 2008." Available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>

This report uses graphs and photos to show the work that has been done to meet the MDGs in various countries and regions since 2000. It also provides suggestions for meeting the goals by 2015.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "Essential Background: The Convention and the Protocol." Available at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/items/2877.php

This website provides access to background information and the texts of the FCCC and Kyoto Protocol, as well as a list of states that have ratified each treaty. States that are party to Kyoto have to submit information on their GHG emissions. That information is also available on this site. See also "Countdown to Copenhagen" at <http://unfccc.int/2860.php#> which provides an overview of the current round of talks about reducing greenhouse emissions and includes information on country positions.

United Nations General Assembly. "Informal Thematic Debate: Climate Change as a Global Challenge." 61st Session. July 31-August 1, 2007. Available at <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/climatechange/programme.shtml>

This website provides information on the speeches and power point presentations from the first General Assembly Plenary meeting on climate change.