

BLUE BELLS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE, 2022



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

**AGENDA: DISCUSSION OVER ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES IN LIEU OF MARINE
DEBRIS AND FOREST FIRED**

BACKGROUND GUIDE

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Blue Bell Model United Nations Conference 2022. The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at BBMUN in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write press release, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the documentation process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the BBMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics

Happy researching and Godspeed!

Mudit Marwah
(Chairperson)

Priyanka Sharma
(Vice Chairperson)

Priyansh Singh
(Rapporteur)

About the Committee

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was founded in June 1972 as a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. The UNEP is the coordinating body for the United Nations' environmental activities. It has played a significant role in identifying and analyzing global environmental problems, developing regional and international environmental programs and conventions, and promoting environmental science and information. Among its most important tasks is assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices. Since 1997, in response to the environmental requirements of Agenda 21, UNEP has also published its Global Environment Outlook (GEO), a comprehensive report on global state of the environment. Its headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya.

TOPIC 1: ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES AND MARINE DEBRIS

Introduction

Throughout the world's oceans lurks a silent killer. We are treating the ocean like our own garbage bins. Surprisingly, around 80% of the oceans litter originates on land and most of it is plastic. This means that every year around 8 million metric tons of plastic trash flows into the sea, most of which are plastic bottles, bags, containers and packaging. We are in a crisis. As manufacturing

continues to grow and our litter continues to invade the ocean, plastic pollution remains one of the most serious threats to our planet.

Unlike naturally based paper or glass, plastic is non-degradable and just breaks down into smaller pieces. That means it never truly goes away unless it's burned (which is terrible for the environment). So every piece of plastic used up to today is probably still around today. How did we get here and why did we lose control? The short answer is: we're recklessly addicted to convenience, and like most addictions, we're not willing to give it up easily.

Why is this a problem? Well, plastic that pollutes our oceans and waterways has severe impacts on our environment and our economy. Seabirds, whales, sea turtles and other marine life are eating, choking or dying from plastic pollution. Toxic pollutants from the plastic consumed by fish and other marine life may have potential effects on human health.

Definition of Key Terms

Marine Debris

As defined by the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Marine Debris is “any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.”

Pollution

Defined by the Dictionary to be “the introduction of harmful substances or products into the environment.” Pollution occurs when pollutants contaminate the natural surroundings; which brings about change to the marine lifestyle and human lifestyle.

Bio plastic

A type of biodegradable plastic derived from biological substances rather than from petroleum.

Biodegradable

Capable of being broken down (decomposed) rapidly by the action of microorganisms. Biodegradable substances include food scraps, cotton, wool, wood, human and animal waste, manufactured products based on natural materials such as paper and vegetable-oil based soaps.

Background Information

The Plastic Problem

We're encompassed by plastic. Consider each piece you touch in a solitary day: basic need packs, nourishment compartments, espresso mug covers, drink bottles, straws for juice boxes — the rundown continues forever. Plastic might be advantageous, yet its prosperity conveys a lofty cost. In the principal decade of this century, we made more plastic than all the plastic in history up to the year 2000. Furthermore, consistently, billions of pounds of plastic wind up on the planet's seas. Most sea contamination begins ashore and is conveyed by wind and rain to the ocean. Once in the water, there is a close consistent stockpile of waste. Plastic is durable to the point that the EPA (Environmental

Protection Agency) reports, "all of plastic ever constructed still exists." The North Pacific Gyre, otherwise called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, is double the measure of Texas (and developing) and comprises for the most part of little plastic particles suspended at, or just underneath, the surface, where fish and different creatures confuse the particles for food. The Garbage Patch is one and only of five such merging zones, which altogether cover 40 percent of the sea.

A heavy toll on wildlife

Fish in the North Pacific ingest 12,000 to 24,000 tons of plastic every year, which can bring about intestinal damage and passing and exchanges plastic up the natural way of life to greater fish and marine warm blooded creatures. Ocean turtles additionally mix up skimming plastic trash for nourishment. While plastic packs are the most ordinarily ingested thing, loggerhead ocean turtles have been found with delicate plastic, ropes, Styrofoam, and monofilament lines in their stomachs. Ingestion of plastic can prompt blockage in the gut, ulceration, interior aperture and passing; regardless of the possibility that their organs stay in place, turtles might experience the ill effects of bogus impressions of satiation and moderate or stop generation. A huge number of seabirds ingest plastic consistently. Plastic ingestion lessens the capacity volume of the stomach, making feathered creatures devour less nourishment and eventually starve. In view of the measure of plastic found in seabird stomachs, the measure of trash in our seas has quickly expanded in the previous 40 years. Marine well-evolved creatures ingest and get tangled in plastic.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

1. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)

The Environmental Protection Agency operates in the United States of America and aims to protect human health and the environment. Its purpose is to ensure that all American are protected from pollution in their environment and workplace. The EPA also aims to effectively enforce and implement federal laws to protect the environment and human health. This organization represents America and plays a big role in working with other nations to protect the global environment.

2. NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

The NOAA plays several specific roles in society, the benefits of which extend beyond the U.S. economy and into the larger global community. The National Ocean Service (NOS) focuses on ensuring that ocean and coastal areas are safe, healthy, and productive. NOS scientists, natural resource managers, and specialists serve America by ensuring safe and efficient marine transportation, promoting innovative solutions to protect coastal communities, and conserving marine and coastal places.

3. NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a New York city-based, non-profit international environmental advocacy group. NRDC is working on three key strategies to curb plastic waster pollution in the U.S. and beyond: Holding plastic producers accountable, leading international action and reducing plastic pollution.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
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1959	First warning labels printed on plastic bags after the deaths of 80 babies and toddlers, suffocated by plastic dry-cleaning bags
1961	Industry shifts responsibility to the consumer
January 1990	Maine bans single-use plastic bags at retail checkout
1997	Great Pacific Garbage Patch: Algalita Marine Research Foundation begins to document what it refers to as the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch"
2009	Wal-Mart starts to ban the bag: The retail giant tests consumer reaction to a phase out of single-use plastic bags in a handful of California stores.
2011	Civic response: In the first quarter of 2011, six more communities in the United States approve bans on single-use plastic bags.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Marine Plastic Debris and micro plastics, 27th of June 2014 (**Resolution 1/6**)

In the Rio+20 outcome document, marine litter/debris is considered as one of the major concerns as it negatively affects the health of oceans and marine biodiversity, therefore it calls for actions to achieve significant reductions in marine debris by 2025 to prevent harm to the coastal and

marine environment. Recalling the concern reflected in “The future we want”, the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP at its first session adopted on 27 June 2014 the resolution 1/6 on Marine plastic debris and micro plastics.

- Oceans and the law of the sea, 2005 **(S/60/L.22)**
- Sustainable fisheries, 2005 **(A/60/L.31)**

Sustainable fisheries, including through the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and related instruments

Possible Solutions

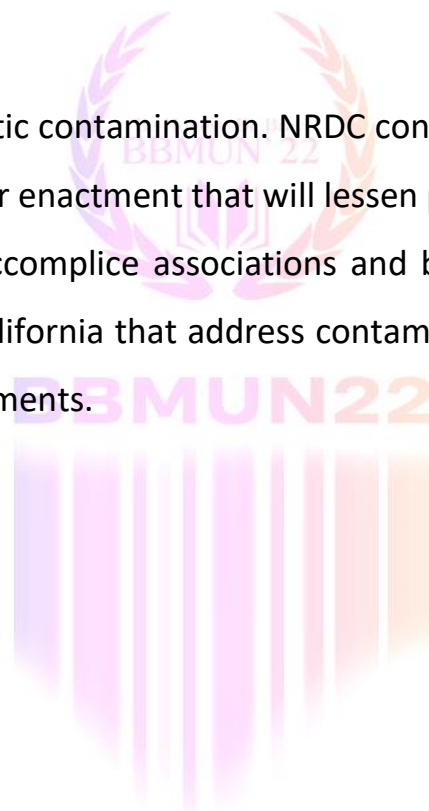
The best approach to stop plastic contamination in our seas is to ensure it never achieves the water in any case. We all need to do what's coming to us to stop plastic contamination: people need to reuse and never litter, yet makers of single use plastic bundling need to accomplish all the more as well. We require makers to outline bundling with the goal that it is completely recyclable, thus there is less waste. We additionally require producers to take care of the expenses of keeping their items out of the sea.

1. Holding plastic makers responsible. Numerous states hold producers of materials such as paint and cover in charge of recuperating and reusing their item after it is utilized. Producers of plastic packaging ought to be required to discover inventive approaches to outline better packaging that can be all the

more completely recuperated for reusing or reuse, and they ought to take care of the costs required to keep plastic out of the earth.

2. Driving global activity. NRDC's seas and waste specialists are working specifically with universal pioneers and associations, for example, the UN Environment Program to set up global rules for controlling plastic contamination. We're additionally bringing government offices and associations together at the worldwide level to showcase arrangements.

3. Decreasing plastic contamination. NRDC controls the measure of litter in our seas by pushing for enactment that will lessen plastic contamination. We offer key direction to accomplice associations and bolster approaches at the state and city level in California that address contamination from plastic packs and froth to-go compartments.



TOPIC 2: ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES AND FOREST FIRES

What is Global Warming

It is the phenomenon of increasing average air temperatures near the surface of Earth over the past one to two centuries. Climate scientists have since the mid-20th century gathered detailed observations of various weather phenomena (such as temperatures, precipitation, and storms) and of related influences on climate (such as ocean currents and the atmosphere's chemical composition). These data indicate that Earth's climate has changed over almost every conceivable timescale since the beginning of geologic time and that the influence of human activities since at least the beginning of the industrial revolution has been deeply woven into the very fabric of climate change.

Global warming has presented another issue called climate change. Sometimes these phrases are used interchangeably, however, they are different. Climate change refers to changes in weather patterns and growing seasons around the world. It also refers to sea level rise caused by the expansion of warmer seas and melting ice sheets and glaciers. Global warming causes climate change, which poses a serious threat to life on earth in the forms of widespread flooding and extreme weather. Scientists continue to study global warming and its impact on Earth.

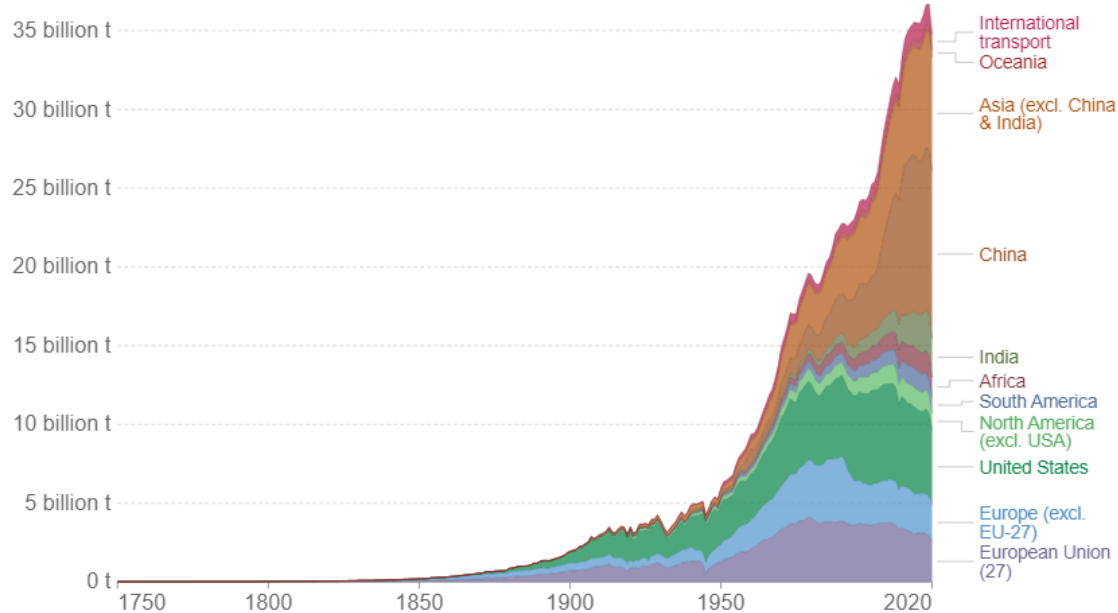
Climate Change

Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.

The Human Fingerprint on Greenhouse Gases

Greenhouse gases occur naturally and are essential to the survival of humans and millions of other living things, by keeping some of the sun's warmth from reflecting back into space and making Earth livable. But after more than a century and a half of industrialization, deforestation, and large scale agriculture, quantities of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have risen to record levels not seen in three million years. As populations, economies and standards of living grow, so does the cumulative level of greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions.

Annual CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels, by world region



Source: Global Carbon Project

OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions • CC BY

Note: This measures CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels and cement production only – land use change is not included. 'Statistical differences' (included in the GCP dataset) are not included here.

Causes of Climate Change

Scientists attribute the global warming trend observed since the mid-20th century to the human expansion of the "greenhouse effect" — warming that results when the atmosphere traps heat radiating from Earth toward space.

Certain gases in the atmosphere block heat from escaping. Long-lived gases that remain semi-permanently in the atmosphere and do not respond physically or chemically to changes in temperature are described as "forcing" climate change. Gases, such as water vapor, which respond physically or chemically to changes in temperature are seen as "feedbacks."

Gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect include:

- Water vapor. The most abundant greenhouse gas, but importantly, it acts as a feedback to the climate. Water vapor increases as the Earth's atmosphere

warms, but so does the possibility of clouds and precipitation, making these some of the most important feedback mechanisms to the greenhouse effect.

- Carbon dioxide (CO₂). It is released through natural processes such as respiration and volcano eruptions and through human activities such as deforestation, land use changes, and burning fossil fuels. Humans have increased atmospheric CO₂ concentration by more than a third since the Industrial Revolution began. This is the most important long-lived "forcing" of climate change.
- Methane. A hydrocarbon gas produced both through natural sources and human activities, including the decomposition of wastes in landfills, agriculture, and especially rice cultivation, as well as ruminant digestion and manure management associated with domestic livestock. On a molecule-for-molecule basis, methane is a far more active greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, but also one which is much less abundant in the atmosphere.
- Nitrous oxide. A powerful greenhouse gas produced by soil cultivation practices, especially the use of commercial and organic fertilizers, fossil fuel combustion, nitric acid production, and biomass burning.
- Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Synthetic compounds entirely of industrial origin used in a number of applications, but now largely regulated in production and release to the atmosphere by international agreement for their ability to contribute to destruction of the ozone layer. They are also greenhouse gases.

On Earth, human activities are changing the natural greenhouse. Over the last century the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂). This happens because the coal or oil burning process combines carbon with oxygen in the air to make CO₂.

The consequences of changing the natural atmospheric greenhouse are difficult to predict, but certain effects seem likely:

- On average, Earth will become warmer. Some regions may welcome warmer temperatures, but others may not.
- Warmer conditions will probably lead to more evaporation and precipitation overall, but individual regions will vary, some becoming wetter and others dryer.
- A stronger greenhouse effect will warm the oceans and partially melt glaciers and other ice, increasing sea level. Ocean water also will expand if it warms, contributing further to sea level rise.



The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was set up by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment to provide an objective source of scientific information. In 2013 the IPCC provided more clarity about the role of human activities in climate change when it released its Fifth Assessment Report.

Fifth Assessment Report

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of sea level rise, and its causes, over the past few decades. It also estimates cumulative CO₂ emissions since pre-industrial times and provides a CO₂ budget for future emissions to limit warming to less than 2°C. About half of this maximum amount was already emitted by 2011. The report found that:

- From 1880 to 2012, the average global temperature increased by 0.85°C.
- Oceans have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished and the sea level has risen. From 1901 to 2010, the global average sea level rose by 19 cm as oceans expanded due to warming and ice melted. The sea ice extent in the Arctic has shrunk in every successive decade since 1979, with 1.07×10^6 km² of ice loss per decade.
- Given current concentrations and ongoing emissions of greenhouse gases, it is likely that by the end of this century global mean temperature will continue to rise above the pre-industrial level. The world's oceans will warm and ice melt will continue. Average sea level rise is predicted to be 24–30 cm by 2065 and 40–63 cm by 2100 relative to the reference period of 1986–2005. Most aspects of climate change will persist for many centuries, even if emissions are stopped.

United Nations Legal Frameworks

Kyoto Protocol

By 1995, countries launched negotiations to strengthen the global response to climate change, and, two years later, adopted the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol legally binds developed country Parties to emission reduction targets. The Protocol's first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012. The

second commitment period began on 1 January 2013 and will end in 2020. There are now 197 Parties to the Convention and 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

Paris Agreement

At the 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris in 2015, Parties to the UNFCCC reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. The Paris Agreement builds upon the Convention and – for the first time – brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort.

The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

On Earth Day, 22 April 2016, 175 world leaders signed the Paris Agreement at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This was by far the largest number of countries ever to sign an international agreement on a single day. There are now 186 countries that have ratified the Paris Agreement.

The Way Ahead

The Climate Action Summit set a clear direction of travel for climate action. But it also highlighted where much more action is needed to secure our footing on a path towards 1.50C by the end of the century. This will require renewed leadership at all levels and across all sectors of society.

The United Nations Environment Program's 2019 Emissions Gap Report showed that "there is no sign of GHG emissions peaking in the next few years". Every year of postponed peaking means that deeper and faster cuts will be required to get on a least-cost pathway to achieving the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement and that global GHG emissions must fall 7.6 per cent each year from 2020 to 2030. Even if all current unconditional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement are fully implemented, the carbon budget for the 1.50C goal will be exhausted before 2030. While many countries committed to more ambitious NDCs, the world's major emitters are yet to step up their ambition with concrete commitments. These main emitters are the 20 countries responsible for approximately 80% of global GHG emissions. G20 countries together need to cut their GHG emissions by at least 45% in 2030 (below 2010 levels) and reach net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 at the latest to be in line with the IPCC 1.50C report. According to recent reports, none of the G20 countries are in line with limiting warming to 1.50C. About half of the G20 countries are however projected to meet or overachieve their NDCs, which suggest plenty of room for increasing ambition in the 2020 NDC update (if we exclude Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry - LULUCF- emissions²). Moreover, considering the "fair share" benchmark, developed G20 countries have to reduce their emissions relatively more compared to the rest of the world.

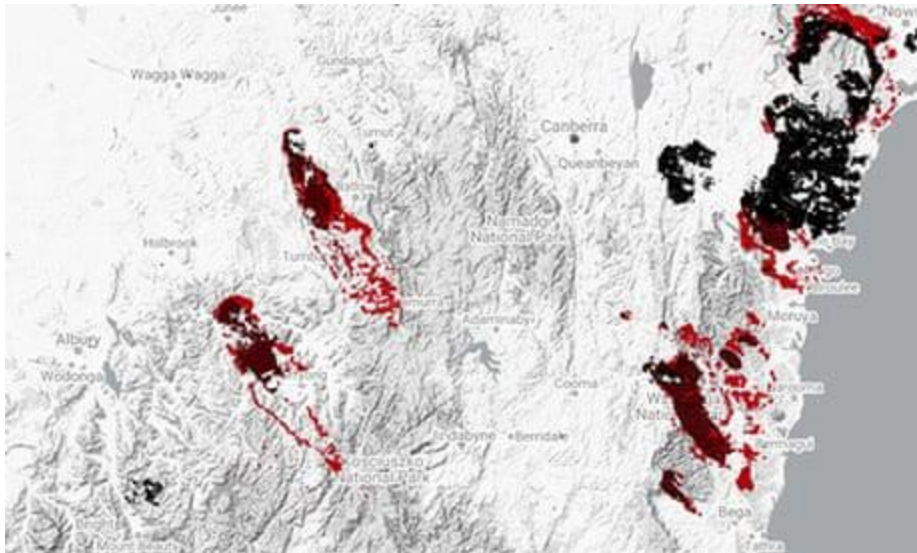
Case Studies

Australia Wildfires

Australia has suffered a devastating early bushfire season with fires across several states burning through hundreds of thousands of hectares and destroying hundreds of properties with the loss of six lives.

New South Wales has been the most severely hit, with more than 1.65m hectares razed, an area significantly larger than suburban Sydney. All six deaths occurred in there and more than 600 homes were destroyed. At one point firefighters were battling a fire front about 6,000km long, equivalent to a return trip between Sydney and Perth.

Seven districts in South Australia were rated as being at catastrophic risk of fire on Wednesday as temperatures soared into the 40s. A blaze on the Yorke peninsula burned through about 5,000ha, damaging at least 11 properties and injuring 33 people. Western Australia has also experienced early bushfires in several regions, with fears of much worse to come over summer, and there were minor bushfires this week in Tasmania



Proposed Action Plan by the Secretary General

BBMUN22

Priority areas for action in 2020

- Securing commitments of the main emitters to increase ambition of their NDCs by 2020 with the view of cutting CO₂ emissions by at least 45 percent by 2030 in line with the global objective of net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Reaching net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. At the Summit more than 75 countries committed to coming forward in 2020 with 2050 net zero emissions strategies or pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 or before. Such plans are critical for setting the context for short- and medium-term action consistent with the 1.5°C goal and provide an opportunity to maximize the synergies with other SDGs. All countries should come forward with them next year.

- Deepening the ambition of NDCs with sectors that were not fully part of the picture in 2015 such as NatureBased Solutions, cutting hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) emissions (cooling); and sub-national action. Initiatives and new type of collaboration triggered by the Summit offer a tool box for countries to enhance their ambition through concrete objectives and measures. Countries should therefore feel encouraged to include actions in the above-mentioned sectors in their NDC if they have not done so already.

- Curtailing current coal capacity and ensuring no more new coal power plants are built after 2020. The use of coal is the single largest barrier to limiting global temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C and is a central issue to the necessary decarbonization of economies and ensuring peoples' health. It will be important to organize a collective support system to help developing countries to find viable alternatives to coal..

- Accelerating the shift of the financial flows, keep pushing on carbon pricing and ensure access to sustainable finance. The financing of the transition to net zero GHG climate resilient economies is still too limited and unfit for purpose. Further work will need to be done over the coming months to improve accessibility as well as the overall quantum of public and private finance, to ensure that financial flows are aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement and make sure that fossil fuels, not people, are taxed.

- Stepping-up support for people affected by climate change and making the shift towards a resilient future. The Summit highlighted strong initiatives that will make billions of people safer and support more resilient investment. They are examples to guide the way for a climate resilient future that puts adaptation and sustainability at the center of decision-making and take immediate action now to protect people, economies and the environment.

- Delivering on commitments made at the Summit to SIDS and LDCs. For AOSIS, this means receiving the support needed to produce new more ambitious NDCs by 2020 and have access to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and find a resolution to the issue of debt swaps. For LDCs, this entails to have access to finance for investments in infrastructure and the necessary support to produce plans to 2050 net zero strategies.
- Implementing the Summit’s initiatives aiming at the deep decarbonization of key economic sectors. This includes those focusing on: shipping and port cities; housing and transportation; steel and cement industries. These will need to be followed-up to ensure they provide support to countries to help them to transition to net zero emissions and full resilience.

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