

Crisis Topic: Back to the Future (Climate Change Edition)

Crisis Description:

On February 11, 2022, delegates from 193 United Nations member states gathered at the New York UN HQ to discuss some of the most pressing issues of their time. Among these included the Afghanistan conflict and vaccine equity. Little did these delegates know, they were undergoing a momentous event—humanity's first instance of time traveling. Now, the fantasies of all Dr. Who fans would now become a reality. However, the delegates are transported to the year 2050, and the world they witness is a lot less whimsical. Due to a strong lightning storm, delegates and materials within the conference are propelled almost thirty years into the future.

World leaders from the year 2022 searched for solutions to prevent climate change, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, banning single-use plastics, and protecting endangered species. These preventative measures may have worked back in 2022 with proper vision and determination. However, from 2022 to 2050, world leaders failed to accomplish agreement after agreement until the world looked significantly different than it did thirty years before. What can the United Nations do to help remedy some of the effects of climate change that the world is facing in 2050? There's no turning the clock back. You have permanently transported to the year 2050 to deal with the consequences of climate change. No long-term reduction in carbon dioxide emissions or plastic straw ban will help now.

The climate crisis (as of 2050) encompasses the following problems:

- **Global sea level rise** - The worst case scenario for climate change results in a global sea level rise of around 2 feet. While this figure seems small, the consequences of such an increase are enormous because most of the world's population is concentrated on coastal areas. By 2050, current flood protection systems in areas like New Orleans and Amsterdam will need massive upgrades to keep up with rising oceans. Many low-lying piazzas in Venice stay underwater year-round, and more than half of the Maldives are beneath the Indian Ocean. While most major cities stay largely intact, they are left vulnerable to hurricanes, tides, and flooding. Periodic flooding in neighborhoods of Shanghai becomes an annual occurrence. Other cities are not as lucky: millions of people around the globe from cities like Mumbai and Bangkok flee inland. With no one to buy their flooded homes and insurance companies unwilling to compensate for flood damage, many are rendered impoverished.
- **Lethal temperatures** - Globally, 55% of Earth's population are subject to more than 20 days of lethal heat per year, making some days of the year uninhabitable by humans. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arabian Peninsula look for innovative solutions to combat the oppressive heat and encroachment of nearby deserts. However, other countries, such as Russia and Kazakhstan, may reap the benefits of agricultural land

that was previously tundra and permafrost. Heat waves and heat exhaustion impact virtually every region outside of the polar circles at some point in the year.

- **Natural collapse** - The Earth suffers from a massive loss in biodiversity. By 2050, one in ten animal and plant species are extinct. Heat-tolerant plants and, surprisingly, koalas may fare the best during the climate crisis. However, the rapid scale of climate change does not give species enough time to evolutionarily adapt over generations. So, many species are left vulnerable. Is it humanity's responsibility to care for other species amid the climate crisis?
- **Poverty and food scarcity**- Around 600 million more people have dropped into extreme food scarcity, poverty, and homelessness due to damaged coasts, forced migrations, and the inability to produce adequate food sources. As cities become more crowded, supply chains become strained and the Earth's natural resources struggle to keep up with humanity's rising demands.
- **Natural disasters** - Historic earthquakes, flooding, and wildfires are occurring almost monthly, leading to mass panic and destruction around the world. Encompassed with them is Hurricane Bob: a massive superstorm that bounces around the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans almost indefinitely causing mass destruction and panic in its wake.
- **New pandemics** - Tremendous increases in water and food-borne illnesses will begin to occur in 2040. These epidemics continue into the next decade due to increasing population density. The COVID-19 pandemic is only the start in a long list of new deadly diseases that will be introduced to the world. As the ice caps melt, ancient viruses and bacteria are released back into the public, causing mass hospitalizations and a rotating array of omnipresent pandemics.

With all of these issues plaguing the world, the (time-traveled) United Nations has a big responsibility: fixing the ongoing climate disaster. What problems are now affecting your country? How has it changed over the 30 years that you have been gone? What can your country do to begin fixing the climate crisis that is now upon us? Who is most vulnerable in your country? How are coastal populations relocated? What is the biodiversity like in your country? How is your country feeding its people? Does your country have a responsibility to help other countries?

FAQ:

What kind of technology do we have access to?

- *You have the same technology available as you did in 2022. As 2022 UN members, much of the futuristic technology in 2050 is beyond your comprehension and would take years for you to understand. So, you can only work with 2022 technology. No fusion reactors or light-speed spacecraft just yet.*

Do the same countries exist thirty years later?

- *Yes, by some miracle, international boundaries have remained the same.*

Who is in charge of my country?

- *Your country still has the same form of government in charge (democracy/republic/dictatorship/etc.). You can assume that the political environment of your country is the same as well.*

Is my country's population the same as in 2022?

- *No, research your country's projected population in 2050 if necessary.*

Can we address topics outside of those listed?

- *Please limit resolutions to the issues addressed in this document.*

What policies have already been introduced to stop the climate crisis?

- *Any policies that were enacted by individual governments or by the UN failed to combat the crisis due to various problems. None of them were sufficient to make a dent in the progress of climate change.*

Was everyone and everything transported with us?

- *Yes, all delegates and their materials were transported with them during the time jump. However, the UN Presiding Officers were left behind and did not travel with the delegates. They have been on Earth during the time when you were gone, so they know everything about what has happened.*

Links/Sources:

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Full_Report.pdf

<https://climate.nasa.gov/>

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<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/05/climate-change-apocalypse-could-start-2050-if-we-do-noting/1356865001/>

<https://interestingengineering.com/life-in-2050-what-will-the-environment-look-like-where-you-live-in-20-years>

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