

## Global Trends: Climate Change

Climate change is a concerning global trend that has been getting worse in recent years and is continuing in that direction. The earth's surface temperature has been steadily increasing in recent years and is quickly accelerating as 2022 was the sixth warmest year ever recorded. The top 10 warmest years have all occurred since 2010.<sup>1</sup> It is predicted that the same level of emissions will cause the global temperature to continue to rise, and even with a decrease or stagnant level of emissions, there will still be an increase in the predicted future.<sup>1</sup> Climate change can lead to various global disasters, and it has been shown that an increase in global temperature leads to an increase in the number and severity of these disasters.<sup>2</sup> A few disasters include droughts, sea level rise, infectious diseases, wildfires, cyclones, and more.<sup>2</sup> This represents the severity of this global trend as it can lead to many disasters of different types that will decrease habitable areas on earth, increase poverty and hunger, displacement, and ultimately increase inequalities across the globe.<sup>3</sup> These disasters will likely impact everyone on earth in some way or another but are said to disproportionately impact vulnerable populations such as those in lower or middle-income countries and rural areas.<sup>2</sup> This is why I have it ranked as having the most significant importance, as it destroys our earth and can trigger many disasters affecting the population.

The United Nations has clearly described this issue in its sustainable development goals, with goal number thirteen focusing on climate change.<sup>3</sup> Current plans and advisement from the UN and Paris Agreement state that the emissions need to peak in 2025 and then decrease by 2030 and should be at a net zero by 2050, but many countries are not meeting current policies and goals.<sup>3</sup> One of the most prominent issues with climate change is that most developed countries often release the most considerable amount of emissions. Still, lower-income, developing countries pay the price. This is why developed countries must commit to reducing their emissions significantly to meet the standards set out by the UN, Paris Agreement and COP meetings.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, developed countries should be committing to putting money towards helping developing countries create systems and improve infrastructure so they can decrease emissions and have better preparedness for disastrous events that will inevitably hit them.<sup>3</sup> Climate change will only be reduced with the cooperation of the world in meeting targets, which has not shown to be successful in the past. Although there have been efforts to decrease emissions and improve preparedness, the current targets will not be met unless more drastic measures are taken, which will require much sacrifice. While this does not seem likely, it also is not impossible as 2016 was the hottest year on record, and although years since then have been warmer than the previous decade, the world has not reached that temperature, which shows small steps toward a better future.

## References

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3. United Nations. (2015). Sustainable development goals: Goal 13: take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/>.