

The background of the page is a photograph of a young girl standing in a rural, possibly rural, setting. She is wearing a yellow shirt and blue shorts. Behind her is a red pickup truck and some trees. The right side of the image is overlaid with a large red diagonal shape.

# Futuristic COP35

# Table of Contents

Letter from Your Chair	2
Introduction and Role of Committee	3
Historical Background	4
Current Situation and Topic	7
Questions to Consider	9
References	10

## Letter from the Chair

Esteemed delegates, welcome to ClarkMUN XII. It is my honor to be your Chair for ClarkMUN this year; I am looking forward to meeting you all in person soon! My name is Cate Brown and I am a senior in my last semester of undergraduate studies, majoring in Environmental Science on the Earth Systems Science track, and minoring in Political Science. Through my studies I have conducted carbon sequestration research in the New England region, interned as a Marine Education Specialist at the Center for Coastal Studies, and am excited to be working on a research project this semester with downscaled data from General Circulation Models to project future climate risk in Hawaii and the East Coast.

Outside of academics I tend to keep busy. When I am not competing with Clark's Model UN team, I run the club as the Senior Co-President. I also am one of the Captains of Clark's Varsity Rowing team and will be having my first spring race the weekend after this conference! Currently I am spending a lot of my time tracking my steps on my new FitBit, and reigniting my passion for Super Smash Bros on the Switch. On campus I work as an Admissions Ambassador for Undergraduate Admissions, an Assistant in the Luxembourg Study Abroad Office (feel free to ask me questions about study abroad during breaks in the conference!), and I dabble in different clubs and organizations if my schedule allows me to. Some of my favorites are the Latin American Student Organization, NARAL, and the Student Sustainability Fund.

This is my fourth and final ClarkMUN conference as an undergraduate, and I am incredibly excited to be working with all of you! If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please email me at [cop35clarkmunxii@gmail.com](mailto:cop35clarkmunxii@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Cate Brown

# Introduction and Role of the Committee

The Conference of Parties (COP) meetings have been conducted since the inaugural conference in Berlin, Germany, in March of 1995.<sup>1</sup> These gatherings occur every year, and rotate host countries from across the world to bring together leaders whose goal is to advance climate legislation, policy, and projects. COP meetings historically have either been ineffective or fall short of reaching the limits researchers suggest, and despite three decades of negotiations there has been little progress on the grand scale to change this.<sup>2</sup> During the multi-day conference, a variety of regional bodies, subcommittees, and specialized topic meetings will occur. Delegates should come prepared with research surrounding the impact of the climate crisis in Latin America and Caribbean states. As this is a futuristic committee, delegates should also have gathered some knowledge describing how these effects will be exacerbated in the years to come.

The role of the committee is to address future climate change in the region of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. The primary focus will be on adaptation efforts and mitigation strategies to lower the impact the climate crisis will have on local communities. Through research, delegates will come to committee with knowledge of past projects that have succeeded, and have failed, in order to produce resilient adaptation strategies. Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean states, have a surplus of natural mitigation solutions due to the varying ecosystems and biomes the region covers. Figuring out which of these solutions is best fit for the future is of the utmost importance.

This meeting – a subcommittee of COP35 – will take place in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the year 2030. Delegates from Latin America and Caribbean States, as well as some organizations, will come together to produce a regionalized plan approach to the climate crisis. There are two main components to consider that were alluded to previously: mitigation and adaptation strategies. Both are important to limiting what is already unfolding based off of climate projections from the year 2022, only 8 years ago.

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<sup>1</sup> “Conference of the Parties (COP).” *UNFCCC*

<sup>2</sup> Harvey, Fiona. “Climate Crisis: What Is Cop and Can It Save the World?”

# Historical Background

This section will cover a brief synopsis of important past COP meetings in order to highlight the variety of effectiveness these meetings have had.

Legislation in the first half of the twentieth century rarely had any mentions of the environment, or the ways in which humans were becoming a detrimental aspect of the system. The United Nations Scientific Conference finally mentioned depleting natural resources and overuse in 1949, which was followed almost twenty years later by the introduction of the issue to the United Nations Economic and Social Council during the creation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.<sup>3</sup> This conference was eventually held in the city of Stockholm, Sweden, in June of 1972.<sup>4</sup>

The first major conference, called the Montreal Protocol, sent shockwaves around the world prior to the creation of COP meetings and was adopted in September of 1987. The Protocol is the only UN treaty ratified by every member of the United Nations.<sup>5</sup> The focus was on Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) which are able to break down stratospheric ozone and increase levels of harmful ultraviolet radiation that reaches the Earth's surface. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) which were used as a coolant in refrigerators, and other aerosols that were in products like hairspray, were to be phased out. The entire list of ODS targeted in this treaty were CFCs, halons, fully halogenated CFCs, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, HCFCs, methyl bromide, and HFCs.<sup>6</sup>

Following the Montreal Protocol, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – nicknamed the Earth Summit – was held in June of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.<sup>7</sup> This was a historical moment at the time due to the record-breaking number of countries represented at the talks; with one-hundred-seventy-eight nations in attendance, and one-hundred-seventeen heads of states partaking in the conference.<sup>8</sup> Some of the legislation to come out of the conference was the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and the creation of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC).<sup>9</sup> The UNFCCC was initially a binding treaty focused on decreasing atmospheric carbon, and other pollutants, that fell short of making the goals binding. Since then, the goals of the UNFCCC attempt to be advanced every Conference of Parties meeting.

The Kyoto Protocol is also a well known result of the COP 3 meeting in December, 1997, in Kyoto, Japan, which guided industrialized nations to limit and reduce greenhouse gases

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<sup>3</sup> Jackson, Peter. "From Stockholm to Kyoto: A Brief History of Climate Change."

<sup>4</sup> "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference)." *United Nations*

<sup>5</sup> "About Montreal Protocol." *UN Environment Programme*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.", Brian Duignan

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

(GHG) in the atmosphere and introduced emissions cap and trading.<sup>10</sup> This alongside the Marrakesh Accords – which focused on increasing transparency and making public the system of accounting, reporting, and reviewing data used at these meetings – strengthened commitment by the nations who adopted the treaty and required them to provide update information surrounding their progress towards reaching the climate goals.<sup>11</sup>

The COP15 meeting is an infamous example of how ineffective climate talks can be. In December of 2009, nation leaders met in Copenhagen, Denmark, in what was believed to be a monumental COP meeting where binding goals would be instituted, and true progress would be made. This meeting was where the goal of capping atmospheric warming to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-Industrial levels, ideally stopping at 1.5 was first discussed – but created no pathway to make it possible.<sup>12</sup> Eventually, the US and China forced their way past smaller nations, the EU members and G77 members to create a resolution at the last minute so COP15 did not look like a failure.<sup>13</sup> Despite this effort, the writing is still on the wall showing the true failure of the meeting.

One of the most iconic COP meetings in the past decade was the COP21 meeting in Paris, France, during the month of December, 2015. The meeting created a legally binding treaty, known as the Paris Agreement, to limit increasing atmospheric temperatures to below 2, ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius through social and economic advancements and development.<sup>14</sup> According to the treaty, every five years there will be an increase in the extremity of the goals in hopes of pushing nations further towards ‘going green.’ At the time, 196 member states signed onto the legally binding agreement, with only two nations – Syria and Nicaragua – not joining the majority.<sup>15</sup> Nicaragua later joined the Agreement in October of 2017, and Syria also signed on in November of the same year.<sup>16</sup> Some nations took longer to ratify the agreement, and some have yet to do so, while the United States showed the fragility of the treaty by pulling out under former President Trump – only to be rejoined by President Biden during his first month in office.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the ability for nations to leave the Paris Agreement, the unique binding nature of the treaty has kept states more accountable. The most recent COP meeting in 2021, COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, was the (delayed) 5 year cycle of updating climate goals and progress from those who signed onto the Agreement. There was much criticism surrounding the lack of

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<sup>10</sup> “What Is the Kyoto Protocol?” *UNFCCC*

<sup>11</sup> “The Guidelines to Implement the Kyoto Protocol: the Marrakesh Accords and the 5, 7&8 Implications.” *UNFCCC*

<sup>12</sup> “Copenhagen Climate Change Conference - December 2009.” *UNFCCC*

<sup>13</sup> Schuchard, Ryan. “What Happened at COP15.”

<sup>14</sup> “The Paris Agreement.” *UNFCCC*

<sup>15</sup> Kaufman, Alexander C. “Only 2 Countries Aren't Part of the Paris Agreement. Will the U.S. Be the Third?”

<sup>16</sup> Friedman, Lisa. “Syria Joins Paris Climate Accord, Leaving Only U.S. Opposed.”

<sup>17</sup> Apparicio, Soila, and Natalie Sauer. “Which Countries Have Not Ratified the Paris Climate Agreement?”

prominent leaders attending the conference, and many described it as a meeting set to fail.<sup>18</sup> While there was multiple issues addressed and discussed in passed legislation, however with countries like China and India changing the main resolution language from 'phase down' instead of 'phase out' coal, left the organizers and members of the COP26 extremely disappointed in their shortcomings saying that "This deal does not bring hope to [their] hearts".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Nugent, Ciara. "Why Hopes Are Fading for Glasgow's U.N. Climate Summit."

<sup>19</sup> Quiñones, Laura. "COP26 Closes with 'Compromise' Deal on Climate, but It's Not Enough, Says UN Chief."



## Current Situation and Topic

Due to the lack of strong legislation in past international conferences, the year 2030 is already facing many aspects of the climate crisis that were predicted to occur at that severity not until 2050. Global trends have closely followed the Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5 as time continues. RCP models project the predicted radiative forcing ( $Wm^{-2}$ ) of the tropopause due to a changing external factor – such as increasing carbon dioxide levels – which means that the higher the radiative forcing, the greater in severity the climate crisis becomes.<sup>20</sup> Projections show a steady increase in overall temperature across the Latin American and Caribbean states when following SSP5-8.5 (worst case scenario for [CMIP6](#)) models between 2021 and 2040.<sup>21</sup>

In simple terms, this means that the year 2030 does not look good for the region. Temperatures are recorded as being higher than 4.5 degrees Celsius above pre-Industrial levels, which has led to an increase of 0.2-1.1mm in sea level from tropical storms alone.<sup>22</sup> Tropical glacial caps are melting at a rapid pace, decreasing the steady water source it once provided, and increasing river discharge.<sup>23</sup> There has also been widespread decreases of agricultural, livestock, and fishery yields across the region aside from the production of rice and catching of fish off the southernmost part of South America.<sup>24</sup> The region – which is home to sixty percent of global terrestrial biodiversity – has seen a detrimental decrease in the quality of rainforests, marine ecosystems, and mountainous ecosystems.<sup>25</sup> With the increase in human population, 2030 holds a lot of troubles for the people in the region that are now facing more negative environmental health effects, increase in social instability, and uneasy work conditions.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the severity of the situation, this committee needs to produce a resolution in which actual change is made. Due to this meeting being a part of the Conference of Parties 35, legislation created here will become binding. With that being said, each delegation must come up with a solution that caters to their individual environment, society, and economy. After communicating this to the other members of the committee, it is hoped that delegates will create a policy together that addresses those needs. In particular, as mentioned previously, there needs to be both mitigation strategies and adaptation plans.

Mitigation is described as action oriented towards reducing projected climate change, and the flow of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Adaptation, on the other hand, is the

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<sup>20</sup> “Definition of Terms Used within the DDC Pages.” *IPCC Data Distribution Centre*

<sup>21</sup> “IPCC AR6-WGI Atlas.” *IPCC WGI Interactive Atlas*

<sup>22</sup> Reyer, Christopher P.O., et al. “Climate Change Impacts in Latin America and the Caribbean and Their Implications for Development.”

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Hernández-Blanco, Marcello, et al. “Future Scenarios for the Value of Ecosystem Services in Latin America and the Caribbean to 2050.”

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*



adjustment of systems in response to climate change that is already happening. Both are important as they address different aspects of the climate crisis. In this committee, a solution that has stronger emission limits, while also providing projects to protect coastal communities from sea level rise, is an example of a plan that does both. The United Nations and the COP meetings have done a good job at addressing both in the past, and the hope is that through the regionalized focus of this group there will be more specific advancement of the projects. In past COPs, G7 members and other larger states have taken the reins of the legislation made – leaving nations that are on the frontline of the crisis vulnerable and without a voice. Without the G7 members, there is hope that this committee will finally provide smaller nations with a voice at the table.

Lastly, the climate crisis has changed from being a solely environmental concern to also an economic one. In order to ensure that projects developed in this committee can happen, multiple Nongovernmental Organizations and UN organizations will be present and partake in developing the resolution. This body, unlike many other subcommittee COP meetings, is set up with the tools for success. It is now up to the delegates to make it happen.

## Questions to Consider

1. When did your country ratify the Paris Agreement? How is their progress towards reaching those goals?
2. What did your delegation's participation in the COP26 meeting in Glasgow look like, was it productive?
3. What types of projects would best help your nation – where does the majority of your economic income come from (agriculture, fishing, etc)?
4. Where can jobs be created, and environmental stressors decrease, in your country?
5. At a regional scale, what are the biggest environmental issues currently (2022) and projected (2030)?
6. Because of its binding nature, what does this resolution allow delegates to advocate for in comparison to resolutions that are not binding?



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