

# **Climatic Conditions and Its Effect on World Dynamics: A Burning Question**

**Paridhi Dave**

Institute of Law, Nirma University,  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat  
daveparidhi07@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

World dynamics appear to be in a perpetual state of crisis, in and out. There exists an increasing risk of a catastrophic war at an international level with each passing day, amongst these tensions, the most defining threat of the century is climate change. The drastic variations in the climatic conditions have the potential to affect the geopolitical situation of the world. Climate change is real and its effects will not only test the international system but also trigger social and economic upheaval. Threats at the global level, call for cooperation at the global level. The developments in the climatic conditions will inevitably lead to structural transformation in the domain of global politics, predominantly impacting the poorer countries. The alterations in the climatic conditions will not only lead to the creation of new crises but also largely exacerbate the pre-existing ones. In light of these unpropitious circumstances, state responses to climatic phenomena are more of a determining factor than the effects themselves. It is well established that resources are scarce and as a result, debates between countries will intensify due to the ever-increasing climate fears; humankind has proven itself to be highly adaptable, but the combined effects of climatic conditions on cities, food production and water supplies pose an imminent and enormous danger to Mother Earth. It is quintessential for the human race to confront the question of climate change with a sense of achieving a common goal. This paper aims to analyse the impending doom posed by climate change, and its effects on global economy, the issue of climate refugees and international relations in the contemporary era.

**Keywords:** International Relation, Global Issues, Earth and Ecology, Climate Change

## **1. Introduction**

We have entered into the epoch of Anthropocene, the concept that the Earth has

moved into an era characterized by human domination of the planetary system.<sup>1</sup> The Earth is currently experiencing the phenomena of climate change, a ubiquitous threat beyond borders that endangers social, economic and political security.<sup>2</sup> In light of the same, due to the ever-increasing danger of nuclear war and climate change, the Doomsday Clock which intends to caution how close humanity is to catastrophic destruction has been moved to 100 seconds before midnight by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists recently.<sup>3</sup>

We are aware climate change is happening, but with each passing day, we make an active choice to sweep it under the rug. The concept of climate change has faced more rejection than acceptance in the contemporary era. The humankind has collectively failed to acknowledge the presence of climate change to such an extent, which has resulted in a climate crisis. A 'crisis' signifies an urgent need to mend our existing ways, to make our Earth sustainable for the present generation, let alone for the future generations.

Climate change is faster than we are. The dire consequences of the global climate crisis have already had observable effects on the environment. For instance, the recent Australian bush fires, Indian floods, European heatwave, Typhoon Hagibis in Japan, California Wildfires, Argentina and Uruguay Floods and many such natural disasters are a result of global climate change. The above events depict that extreme weather, fuelled by the rages of climate change struck every corner of the globe in 2019-20. It shows that absolutely no continent is immune from global warming, overall climate change and its perilous repercussions.

The greatest tragedy of climate change is that it intensifies the suffering of the poorest and the most vulnerable, despite them doing the least to cause it.<sup>4</sup> Across the globe, the poorest pay the heaviest price for the consequences of climate change. These poorer nations have to suffer harsher effects in part because they are concentrated in already hotter parts of the world, such as Africa, South Asia and Central America. In these places, a minimal rise in temperatures could quickly cut labour productivity and agricultural yields.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Yadvinder Malhi, *The Concept of the Anthropocene*, Annual Review of Environment and Resources, Aug. 2017, at 25.1, 25.2.

<sup>2</sup> Ellie Stanton, *Climate Change and Geopolitics*, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO (May. 02, 2019), <https://www.colorado.edu/polisci/2019/05/02/climate-change-and-geopolitics>.

<sup>3</sup> John Mecklin, *Closer than ever: It is 100 seconds to midnight*, BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS (Jan. 23, 2020), <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/>.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Mack, *In 2019 Climate Change Made These 15 Natural Disasters Even Worse*, FORBES (Dec. 27, 2019, 02:40 PM), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericmack/2019/12/27/climate-change-drove-the-price-tag-for-15-disasters-over-a-billion-dollars-each/#4cc446778441>.

<sup>5</sup> James Temple, *Climate change has already made poor countries poorer and rich countries richer*, MIT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (Apr. 2019), <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/613386/climate-change-has-already-made-poor-countries-poorer-and-rich-countries-richer/>.

Further, environmental degradation and natural disasters lead to the significant problem of climate refugees. The climate change – migration nexus is real; these people are forcibly displaced from their homes due to the adverse effects of climate change and have to necessarily re-locate to survive.<sup>6</sup> Restraint and civility tend to perish quickly when confronted with imperious necessity.<sup>7</sup> Numerous cases of ethnic and religious violence, banditry, looting have been reported during times of disasters. There already exists scarcity in resources because of the irreversible damages caused due to man-made emissions and in such circumstances, the diasporas of climate refugees may spark international conflicts. This global challenge has continued to create a multitude of critical issues that the international community must collectively confront. The scope and scale of human migration due to climate change has the potential to continue to test the limits of national as well as international cooperation and governance.<sup>8</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that upon taking the range of published evidence as a whole, it indicates that the net damage costs of climate change are likely to be significant and to increase over time.<sup>9</sup> At this juncture, even a slight rise in the temperature is sufficient to lead to a dramatic transformation of our planet.

Climate change not only poses a risk to the humankind but also the flora and fauna across the world. The wildlife across the globe has been severely affected due to the onset of these drastic changes. Some species have entered the endangered zone, whereas others are on the verge of extinction; species such as bumblebees, whales, giraffes, sharks, polar bears, koalas, coral reefs, penguins, turtles, are some of the highly affected. The change in ecosystems and loss of habitat due to natural disasters has led to an alteration in the breeding and feeding patterns of the animal species, for them to sustain themselves. The widespread and consequential harm<sup>10</sup> caused due to climate change has therefore severely affected all life-forms. Therefore, addressing the threats of habitat destruction and over-exploitation has become vital in the present time.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Climate change and disaster displacement*, UNHCR INDIA, <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html>.

<sup>7</sup> J.R. MCNEILL, *THE AGE OF CONSEQUENCES: THE FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE* 23 (2007).

<sup>8</sup> John Podesta, *The climate crisis, migration, and refugees*, BROOKINGS (Jul. 25, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-climate-crisis-migration-and-refugees/>.

<sup>9</sup> *The Effects of Climate Change*, NASA, <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Dell'Amore, *7 Species Hit Hard by Climate Change—Including One That's Already Extinct*, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (Apr. 2, 2014), <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/4/140331-global-warming-climate-change-ipcc-animals-science-environment/>.

## 2. Conventions And Programs For Climate Change At The International Level

It has been rightly said by Antonio Guterres that each day that we fail to act is a day that we step a little closer towards a fate that none of us wants. With each passing day, further evidence of the mounting existential threat of climate change is brought forward.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, to battle this inevitable issue, it becomes crucial for state actors to take an active initiative. In furtherance of the same, many conventions and treaties have been signed by countries across the world.

In 1992, the first step towards addressing the problem of climate change was taken by the United Nations in its Earth Summit. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was produced, which was ratified by 197 countries; it aims at the prevention of dangerous human interference with the climate system.<sup>12</sup> Five years later, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted by 192 countries, as a step towards strengthening global response towards climate change. It aims at legally binding the developed country Parties to emission reduction targets.<sup>13</sup> The most recent agreement signed in 2015 which is the Paris Agreement, serves the twin purpose of combating climate change and accelerating investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. Its principal aim is to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels this century. Apart from these conventions, in 2019 a Climate Summit was convened in New York to focus on sectors where even a small action could make the most difference.<sup>14</sup>

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is presently the world's leading institution devoted to the problem of global warming and climate change. The formal reports presented by IPCC represent the consensus among the world's leading climate scientists regarding the factors behind global warming.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from these, there are many initiatives and partnerships undertaken by the UN some of which are, Absorb, Anticipate, Reshape(A2R), Green Climate Fund, UN Environment Finance Initiative and Global Environment Facility.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, to battle the sword of Damocles these are some of the significant initiatives taken at the international level.

## 3. Geopolitics of Climate Change

The role of climate change in the domain of geopolitics has vastly changed over the decades. Climate has shifted its position from being taker of the geopolitical winds to

---

<sup>11</sup> U.N. Secretary-General, Remarks at High-Level Event on Climate Change, 26 September 2018 <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2018-09-26/remarks-high-level-event-climate-change>.

<sup>12</sup> *What is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?*, UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>.

<sup>13</sup> *What is Kyoto Protocol?*, UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE, [https://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol](https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol).

<sup>14</sup> *Climate Change*, UNITED NATIONS, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/>.

<sup>15</sup> Dino Klanic, *The Impacts of Climate Change on the World's Economic, Political, and Demographic Structures*, 14 Washington University in St. Louis, ASTD, 1, 2 (2014).

<sup>16</sup> UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/climate-change/about-climate-change/climate-change-initiatives-and-partnerships>.

become a shaper of geopolitics.<sup>17</sup> The term ‘geopolitics’ refers to the rivalries of states, the role of geographical settings in human affairs especially in international affairs and policy formulation.<sup>18</sup> What makes climate change different from any other political topic is the mere fact that such a large-scale crisis cannot be solved by a single nation. The entire planet has to cope with the consequences; therefore, the required measures can only be achieved via a global approach.<sup>19</sup>

This issue has become institutionalised in global affairs and its impact is substantially negative in the area of global politics. There is a rise in tensions among the countries owing to ‘environmental scarcity’, which refers to the declining availability of renewable natural resources. Although a direct nexus between environmental scarcity and civil violence is absent, the former often acts as an aggravating or contributing factor. Resultantly, if tensions in the global society are high, subsequent migration and relative deprivation owing to the above factor can be a volatile mix.<sup>20</sup> To add fuel to the fire, there exists a perpetual tussle between the developing countries and the developed countries. Even though the current industrial activity in major developing countries is adding incrementally to global warming, there is a historical responsibility of the developed countries in causing global warming. To ensure a sustainable and effective climate change regime, the inequity between these two categories of countries has to be removed. Hence, the developed countries must make a cut in their emissions to accommodate the development needs of the developing countries.

The pertinent issue which has arisen at this juncture is that the climate negotiations have increasingly become less about combating a challenge to human survival and more about protecting narrowly conceived self-interests of nations. This mindset particularly acts as an obstacle in the way of maximal outcome.<sup>21</sup> Cooperation is difficult because serious responses could reach into the heart of countries’ political and economic structures. Therefore, in the light of these multifarious problems, it becomes difficult for the states to make decisions and respond because domestic as well as international politics are involved.<sup>22</sup> The major problem that arises at the international level is the division of responsibilities among the states. The distribution is dependent on several bases such as past emissions, projected future emissions, current per capita emissions of overall greenhouse gases and the fossil fuel carbon dioxide component of it. In addition to these, there is a variation in the capacity of the states concerning the ease with which they can reduce emissions, technological and financial capacity, access to non-renewable sources

---

<sup>17</sup> Shane Tomlinson, *The Geopolitics of Climate Change*, E3G (Sept. 20, 2019), <https://www.e3g.org/library/the-geopolitics-of-climate-change-UNSG-climate-action-summit>.

<sup>18</sup> JOHN AGNEW, *GEOPOLITICS: RE-VISIONING WORLD POLITICS*, 11-12 (2 Ed. 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Holger Haibach & Kathrin Schneider, *Climate Change: International Law and Global Governance*, 363 (2013) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941vsk.18>.

<sup>20</sup> *Environmental Scarcity and the Outbreak of Conflict*, POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU (Jan. 2001), <https://www.prb.org/environmentalscarcityandtheoutbreakofconflict/>.

<sup>21</sup> Shyam Saran, *Paris Climate Talks: Developed Countries must do more than reduce emissions*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 2015, 10:35 GMT), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/23/paris-climate-talks-developed-countries-must-do-more-than-reduce-emissions>.

<sup>22</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *The Global Politics of Climate Change: Challenge for Political Science*, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, <https://depts.washington.edu/envirpol/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Keohane2015.pdf>.

among other factors.<sup>23</sup>

In the presence of such dilemmas, the 'response' to the problem by the states affects more than the problem itself. The greatest variation among state actors is in the priority they attribute to climate change in their political priorities. The US-China trade tensions, uncertainty surrounding Brexit, Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Treaty will highly impact the cause of climate change as due to the on-going political uncertainties, the issue of climate change will not get the attention it deserves. Thus, in such crucial times, diplomatic leadership plays a critical role in linking opportunities and possible outcomes.

The confluence of severe climate change impacts, huge environmental crisis and a web of conflicts is a cause of serious concern. The stewardship of natural resources should be treated as a shared responsibility. The way to international cooperation is by aiming for cooperation at the regional level, which is the need of the hour.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. The Issue of Climate Migrants or Climate Refugees?

At this juncture, we are at a strange moment in the trajectory of climate change awareness. Amongst this frenzy, there is an emerging category labelled as 'climate refugees.' The term 'climate refugees' is used by scholars Biermann and Boas to instil a sense of urgency in the minds of people and simultaneously gives legitimacy to the problem.<sup>25</sup> Currently, these people lack any formal definition, recognition or protection under international law. These people have no legal recourse even as the scope of their predicament becomes clearer. It is more accurate to refer to these people as 'persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change' rather than climate refugees since the words we choose have a great influence on the actions we are inspired to take in response.

It has been acknowledged by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that the impact of climate change has forced people to leave their homes in search of new lives in new places. In terms of displacement, the issue of climate change Environmental migration falls into two categories, it's either the slow onset or rapid onset. Factors such as hurricanes, cyclones, and landslides influence rapid-onset environmental displacement whereas factors such as soil erosion, drought, rise in sea levels lead to slow-onset displacement. This displacement gives rise to not only international but also internal displacement.

It has also expressed its concern over human rights issues concerning climate change. Attempts to recognize and attribute legal status to all sorts of refugees have traditionally been channelled through the refugee convention, which accords a fairly narrow legal interpretation, therefore the environmentally displaced persons (EDPs) are not covered by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and resultantly cannot be protected by the UNHCR's Charter.

The issue of climate-induced displacement is on the rise and communities situated in arid and semi-arid lands; flood-prone areas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. More often than not, the world's most vulnerable population is exposed to such

---

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Paterson & Michael Grubb, *The International Politics of Climate Change*, 68 IA 293, 294-295 (1992).

<sup>24</sup> Johan Schaar, *The Geopolitical Impact of Climate Change in the Mediterranean Region*, STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE, [https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2018/Climate\\_impact\\_Johan\\_Schaar\\_Medyearbook2018.pdf](https://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2018/Climate_impact_Johan_Schaar_Medyearbook2018.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Frank Biermann & Ingrid Boas, *Preparing for a Warmer World: Towards a Global Governance System to Protect Climate Refugees*, 10 MIT PRESS 60, 72-74 (2010).



extremities and they are ill-equipped to deal with the consequences.<sup>26</sup> There is a high risk of people being forced to leave their homes as a result of rising sea levels and desertification among other extreme weather conditions. It has to be considered that the fragile states are not the only ones at the losing end, the states where people will migrate to will have to bear the brunt equally.

According to estimates, since 2008, an average of 24 million people have been displaced due to catastrophic weather disasters every year.<sup>27</sup> A World Bank Report largely focusing on the three regions – Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, has made projections that approximately 143 million people could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the impact of climate change.<sup>28</sup> Particularly, the places across the world which are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are Haiti, Lagos in Nigeria, Yemen, Manila in the Philippines, Kiribati and UAE.<sup>29</sup> Further, cities like Osaka, Alexandria, Rio De Janeiro, Shanghai, Miami will also be highly affected due to weather extremes and overall climate.<sup>30</sup> Close home, cities like Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and Surat will face extremities due to the rising sea levels.

The threads between climate change and human rights are difficult to weave since they are deep and complex but climate change has already been undermining the realisation of a broad range of internationally protected human rights, which includes right to health and life, rights to food, water and shelter, rights associated with livelihood and culture and in events of conflict, right to personal security. Climate change was initially treated as a challenge for scientists and policymakers, it was later realized that it has impacted the social and economic spheres severely, which in turn affected the enjoyment of human rights.

The problem of climate-induced migration does not stop at this, this further reveals a layer of complexity in the area of gender, as women and girls are more susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change. To support this claim, in times of climate change disasters like droughts, girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school<sup>31</sup> as the task of water, the collection is usually allotted to the females. According to estimates, approximately 17 million women and girls collect water every day in Africa alone.<sup>32</sup> To add to this, cases of sexual and gender-based violence increase by manifolds both during and after a crisis. Besides, women in rural areas tend to function based on social patterns and migration may

---

<sup>26</sup> Maram Ahmed, *How climate change exacerbates the refugee crisis – and what can be done about it*, WEF (Jun. 2019), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/06/how-climate-change-exacerbates-the-refugee-crisis-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/>.

<sup>27</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>.

<sup>28</sup> Kanta Kumari, *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*, WORLD BANK (2018) <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/29461>.

<sup>29</sup> Tara Law, *The Climate Crisis is Global, but These 6 Places Face the Most Severe Consequences*, TIME (Sept. 2019), <https://time.com/5687470/cities-countries-most-affected-by-climate-change/>.

<sup>30</sup> Josh Holder & Jonathan Watts, *The three-degree world: the cities that will be drowned by global warming*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2017/nov/03/three-degree-world-cities-drowned-global-warming>.

<sup>31</sup> *Global Humanitarian Review*, UNITED NATIONS (2019).

<sup>32</sup> Lin Taylor, *Over 17 million women and girls collect water in Africa, at risk of rape and disease*, THOMSON REUTERS (Jun. 2016, 10:56 PM), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-women-water/over-17-million-women-and-girls-collect-water-in-africa-at-risk-of-rape-and-disease-idUSKCN0YN5GO>.

deprive them of their social support.<sup>33</sup> In places where the governments are poorly resourced, the influence of climate-induced harms will be uneven and unequal on the populations. This trouble is further magnified due to the difference in the private capacity of individuals to resist and adapt.

The consequences of migration are complex in their orientation, thereby affecting both the economic and social systems of both areas of origin and destination. We are stuck in a tricky position because climate change cannot be isolated as the sole cause behind migration; there are several other factors involved. The impact is also difficult to calculate since different regions have variations in coping capacities of the local social, political and economic structures. There exists a vicious cycle of precarious access to natural resources, poor physical infrastructure, weak rights protections, and vulnerability to climate change-related harms.<sup>34</sup> Allowing the tragedy to continue would make us all equally guilty in violating the human rights of the poor and future generations in a systematic manner. To deal with this looming crisis, the existing governance mechanisms are not sufficient and require new governance and diplomatic leadership.

Among all these negative aspects, the United Nations has passed a landmark judgment that it is unlawful for governments to return people to countries where their lives might be threatened by the climate crisis. This ruling is one of its kind and represents a legal ‘tipping point’ for future protection claims.<sup>35</sup>

In light of these circumstances, a question more important than defining the status of these people as migrants or refugees is that of finding potential solutions to expected future displacements and how to accommodate these people within existing economies.

## 5. Climate Change and Its Effects On Global Economy

Assessing the impact of climate change is an extremely complex and tumultuous exercise combined with uncertainty about future global warming as well as the subsequent impact on global activity. Climate change calls for a collective effort from governments, firms, shareholders and individuals to adapt as well as implement measures to mitigate its effects.<sup>36</sup> The overall aggregate effect of climate change on economic growth will be leaning towards the negative side in the long run. Since there is an increasing awareness of the issue, the shareholders are either concerned about how the companies they own impact the environment or worried about the impact of climate change on the companies or perhaps, a combination of both.

As the temperatures continue to rise, the damages will become increasingly permanent. The greatest threat that climate change poses to long term economic growth is from immediate

---

<sup>33</sup> Paramjit S. Jaswal & Stellina Jolly, *Climate Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities for International Law*, JILI 45, 47-49 (2013). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43953626>

<sup>34</sup> *Climate Change and Human Rights: A Rough Guide*, INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY (2008).

<sup>35</sup> Kate Lyons, *Climate refugees can't be returned home, says landmark UN human rights ruling*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/20/climate-refugees-cant-be-returned-home-says-landmark-un-human-rights-ruling>.

<sup>36</sup> Keith Wade & Marcus Jennings, *Climate Change and the global economy: policy responses*, SCHRODERS (Jul. 2015), <https://www.schroders.com/en/us/private-investor/insights/economic-views/climate-change-and-the-global-economy-policy-responses/>.



and inefficient short-sighted mitigation policies.<sup>37</sup> Climate change will primarily influence economic growth through these four factors – loss in productivity, mass migration, security threats and damage to property and infrastructure.<sup>38</sup>

To begin with, the capital stock and productivity across the global economy are expected to be affected severely due to the rise in global warming. Less availability of capital stock may not be the sole factor behind affecting low productivity levels; rather, it is combined with factors such as food security and the spread of infectious diseases. Apart from this, global warming poses possible inflationary effects on the global economy. There exists a vicious cycle of extreme weather conditions, decrease in agricultural yield and consequently, reduction in the income of consumers. To elucidate, agricultural yields are sensitive to weather conditions, therefore droughts and floods will brutally impact the production of crops. Countries that derive a large proportion of GDP from agriculture could be most at risk.<sup>39</sup> For instance, there was a major spike in the price of onions due to flooding in onion-producing states in India. As a ripple effect, the prices increased throughout the country.<sup>40</sup> Higher food prices will in turn squeeze consumers' income, thereby affecting purchasing power parity. Thus, this will lead to a rise in inflationary tendencies.

Secondly, as the temperatures increase, so will the energy costs. To make our living and working environments cooler during the summer and heating them during harsh winters demands great energy. The demand-supply ratio may be disproportionate since the efficiency of existing power stations is compromised due to higher temperatures.

Thirdly, the industry which has to bear the brunt of climate change is the insurance industry. The costs of global warming could be felt earlier, in the form of higher premiums as the industry has been at the forefront of assessing climate risk. Since these companies have to pay out to cover the costs of extreme weather-related damage to properties, it has led to an increase in climate litigation.<sup>41</sup>

Other industries that may fall prey to climate change are forestry, fisheries and tourism. Fisheries and aquaculture play a key role in the provision of food security and livelihoods to numerous people across the world. Fishing and aquaculture dependent people are often located in places prone to extreme events. Therefore, climate change is expected to have economic consequences which may influence food security, trade, production and consumption due to rising sea levels and destruction of the habitat of aquatic species.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Robert Mendelsohn, *Climate Change and Economic Growth*, WORLD BANK (2009), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28000>.

<sup>38</sup> Keith Wade & Marcus Jennings, *Climate Change and the global economy: growth and inflation*, SCHRODERS (Jul. 2015), <https://www.schroders.com/en/us/private-investor/insights/economic-views/climate-change-and-the-global-economy-growth-and-inflation/>.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Franck, *Climate change to slow global economic growth, a new study finds*, CNBC (Aug. 2019), <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/20/climate-change-to-slow-global-economic-growth-new-study-finds.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Jayashree Bhosale, *Flooding in major onion producing states leads to spike in prices*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Nov. 2019), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/flooding-in-major-onion-producing-states-has-led-to-spike-in-prices/articleshow/71975921.cms>.

<sup>41</sup> Don Jergler, *Climate Change and the Reinsurance Implications*, INSURANCE JOURNAL (Jun. 2019), <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2019/06/13/529201.htm>.

<sup>42</sup> Vannuccini et al., *Understanding the impacts of climate change for fisheries and aquaculture: global and regional supply and demand trends and prospects*, FAO 1, 41-43 (2018).

The tourism industry can be affected due to reducing in snow cover, prolonged heat waves or change in the patterns of annual rainfall; which can further affect the revenue-generation capacity of the nation. For instance, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia has experienced mass bleaching which has caused extensive damage to the coral. Due to global warming, baby coral in the Reef has declined by 89%, which is an alarming rate.<sup>43</sup> Resultantly, the lure of the Great Barrier Reef has fallen dramatically thereby affecting tourism.<sup>44</sup> These are some of the instances of how climate change will affect the economy at an international level. The human civilization has taken steps for short-term gains which have resulted in huge long-term losses. It is high time for people to perform acts which are not beneficial directly on the surface but will reap benefits when examined thoroughly.

## 6. Conclusion

As humanity steps forward each day, it will gradually realize why it has arrived at this civilizational crossroads, and what potential lessons could be learned from it. The world is in a crisis at this point and there is no escape. The planet is warming with each passing day and we are actively failing by not making the required efforts to save it. The collective goal should be to create a future where humans live in harmony with nature, unlike the parasitic relationship that we currently have. Conventions and treaties made under international climate policy should be legally binding on the countries that ratify it so that they can be held accountable for their acts and omissions.

To achieve this, individuals need to consider the implications of climate change when they choose how and where to spend and invest their money, businesses need to scrutinize their operations extremely carefully, banks need to analyse where their investments are and see if they are vulnerable to change in the climate. The governments need to step up and think proactively about the potential risks that their communities could face before disaster strikes; the focus has to be placed on improving infrastructure, water resources, health care services, etc.<sup>45</sup>

The issue of climate change throws up crucial questions of justice and distribution that do not fit easily into the existing human rights framework. It then becomes significant how negotiators and policy-makers overcome old habits of thought and reach for new solutions. At this juncture, there has arisen an acute need for intelligent collective action. The special responsibility of wealthy states to mitigate the effects of climate change remains widely accepted. The principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” has to be put into practice.

Other simple measures that could be followed to contribute our bit to save the environment include planting trees, becoming carbon neutral, following a plant-based diet, reducing food waste, cutting fossil fuel use and holding the government accountable for both its actions and inactions.

---

<sup>43</sup> Sophie Lewis, *Climate Change has caused an 89% decrease in new coral in the Great Barrier Reef, study finds*, CBS NEWS (Apr. 2019), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/great-barrier-reef-dying-climate-change-caused-decrease-in-new-coral-study-says/>.

<sup>44</sup> Ben Smee, *Domestic Tourism to Great Barrier Reef falls in wake of coral bleaching*, THE GUARDIAN (Jun. 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/08/domestic-tourism-to-great-barrier-reef-falls-in-wake-of-coral-bleaching>.

<sup>45</sup> Renee Cho, *How Climate Change Impacts the Economy*, STATE OF THE PLANET, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (Jun. 2019), <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2019/06/20/climate-change-economy-impacts/>.

7. We as the torch-bearers of the society must act judiciously because we are answerable not only to ourselves but also the next generation. The measure of humankind as a successful race will be based on how sustainable the Earth is twenty years later. The humans, being the most intelligent species are responsible for what happens to the other species as well. view, 49-62, 101-106.