4th Main Committee (Special Political and Decolonization)
4.1 Impact of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples

“Climate change” refers to the gradual warming of the earth’s temperature. Scientists around the world link this warming to the natural and anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gases. When emitted into the atmosphere, greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide trap the sun’s heat, increasing the earth’s temperature. Climate change has observable effects on indigenous peoples globally. The UN defines “indigenous peoples” as “those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived.” There are over 370 million indigenous people in the world today.

Although indigenous peoples arguably contribute the least to climate change, indigenous peoples are among the first to feel its impacts. Effects of climate change on indigenous peoples recognized by the UN Division for Social Policy and Development include: peoples forced to live near drilled boreholes for water in the Kalahari Desert; seasonal flooding in the Himalayas; deforestation and forest fragmentation in the Amazon; limited availability of game food sources in Finland, Norway, and Sweden; and weather ambiguity preventing migration ability in the Arctic. Efforts to mitigate climate change also often end up harming indigenous peoples. For example indigenous peoples in Malaysia and Indonesia were displaced as a result of palm oil farming for biofuel. Indigenous peoples typically lack the funding as well as the technological capacity required to adapt to climate change.

In 2008, the International Indigenous People’s Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) was established to work toward representation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP). The IIPFCC urges GA bodies to fund climate change adaptation efforts and advocates for greater indigenous representation in the United Nations.

The body is tasked with developing innovate strategies for indigenous inclusion and the mitigation of the effects of climate change on indigenous people.

Topics for Consideration:

How has your country addressed the effects of climate change on indigenous peoples?

Indigenous peoples do not have formal representation in this body separate from the country in which their territory is located. How should indigenous peoples be represented in the GA?

How should traditional indigenous knowledge contribute to GA resolutions regarding climate change mitigation?

Is relocation of indigenous peoples a viable and acceptable means of avoiding the impacts of climate change?

How can climate change mitigation strategies be more conscious of the concerns and interests of indigenous peoples?
Bibliography:


4th Main Committee (Special Political and Decolonization)
4.2 Committee on the Protection of Migrant Workers

Migration is a global phenomenon which affects almost every nation in the world. Reasons for migration can be political, social, environmental, or economic. These factors can also be interconnected. According to 2015 statistics from the International Labor Organization, there are 232 million international migrants. Migrant workers account for 150.3 million of the international migrants. The United Nations defines “migrant worker” as “a person who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national.”

Migrant workers can build a host state’s economy and bring new culture to an area, yet often lack the legal protections needed to thrive in their employment. States such as the United States and United Arab Emirates attract migrant workers through employment agencies occasionally known to make false promises regarding job expectations, resulting in exploitation of workers.


Recent United Nations actions include the introduction of the Committee of Migrant Workers (CMW). The CMW is a body of independent experts that monitor the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This Convention was adopted by the General Assembly in December of 1990. The Committee, which met for the first time in 2004, requires member states to issue reports to the committee in order to measure progress.

**Topics for Consideration:**

How should the body address short term labor migration?

How should the body address irregular migration?

Would an active governmental approach (as in the Convention of 1949) or more non-governmental initiatives more effectively address the inequality of migrant workers?

How should the body best address labor migration while complying with the Sustainable Development Goals 10, 16 and 17?

66.6 million migrant workers are women. How should the body address the concerns of interests of these migrant workers (for example, concerning domestic labor)?
Bibliography:


The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) has been beset by conflict for the last two decades. Porous borders make the DRC susceptible to uncontrolled immigration of refugees from conflicts in neighboring African states. Starting in 1994, a rebel group seized Rwanda, causing refugees to flee to the DRC to escape genocide. The Rwandan army then followed refugees into the DRC and, in coalition with Ugandan and Burundi minority groups, brought Laurent Kabila to power. Kabila’s lack of tolerance for the Rwandan military provoked frustration among Rwandans and uprisings among Congolese. The war in Rwanda ended in 2003, but violence was still occurring in the eastern DRC. In 2009, a peace deal was facilitated between Rwanda and the DRC. However, shortly thereafter a rebel group called M23 (allegedly backed by Rwanda and Uganda) began engaging in conflict with the DRC military. Refugees today are returning to the DRC but, with continued violence affecting their homes and families, their futures are uncertain.

In recent years, controversy has arisen over the presence of UN Peacekeepers in conflict areas. The UN Peacekeepers victim abuse scandal first arose 13 years ago, but reforms have not been successfully implemented. Those against the presence of peacekeepers in the DRC argue that they shouldn’t be trusted to protect some of the world’s most vulnerable victims. Those in support of continued peacekeeping operations in the DRC claim that it would be too difficult for the government alone to protect its citizens from dozens of armed rebel groups. Additionally, opponents fear that Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) use peacekeeping contributions as vehicles for foreign policy.

In 1999, following the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, the Security Council created the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) to protect civilians and support the stabilization of the DRC government. UN forces organized the first free and fair elections in 2006, resulting in the election of Joseph Kabila (the son of Laurent Kabila), who still holds office today. Additionally, in 2012 the African Union facilitated collaboration of 11 countries within the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC. Since 2010 the UN has sent 21,607 total Peacekeepers into DRC including troops, police, and civilian personnel, spending an approved budget of $1,141,848,100. MONUC, later renamed MONUSCO, was renewed in June 2017 for continued presence in the DRC. The continued presence of peacekeepers has led to civilian protest.

Nations most directly impacted by conflict in the DRC are regional African nations vulnerable to uncontrolled immigration and the potential threat of rebel groups. Nations who have faced similar conflicts might have expertise to share with the body.

Topics for Consideration:

How can Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) ensure the appropriate conduct of the personnel they send to the DRC?
Is UN Peacekeeping the most effective method to protect those affected by the crisis in the DRC?

How can long-term stability be achieved and enforced?

Are neighboring states obligated to aid the DRC? Would this a viable alternative to UN Peacekeeping?

Bibliography:


4th Main Committee (Special Political and Decolonization)
4.4 Preventing the Collapse of South Sudan

South Sudan became the world’s newest state on 9 July 2011 via referendum. Since independence, South Sudan has employed a military government and has faced difficulties with the division of Sudanese oil reserves, obtaining institutional support from its citizens, and ending interethnic warfare, which has contributed to the rise of child soldiers, thousands of deaths, and the burning of over 3,400 homes. In response to potential conflict, the international community instituted the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) as a peacekeeping operation.

South Sudan’s political instability and ethnic conflicts contributed to the outbreak of civil war in December 2013. Warring began when President Kiir suspected an unconfirmed coup by his former deputy, Riek Machar. Machar then formed a party in opposition to the reigning Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), named the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-in Opposition (SPLM-IO). Much of the fighting is along Dinka and Nuer ethnic lines, with the South Sudanese government representing the Dinka. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an eight-state African trade bloc, has mediated several ceasefires, but all were subsequently broken. The longest lasting peace occurred after the Security Council threatened sanctions for both sides in August 2015.

The international community’s response to the conflicts has largely been to increase the number of Peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel in South Sudan, but unfortunately the presence of the UN peacekeeping operation has not succeeded in protecting Sudanese civilians. More than 3.5 million Sudanese have been displaced, and some estimates report over 300,000 deaths. Additionally, agrarian areas have been destroyed through war, leading to famine and disarray.

UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng has reported that this situation could “evolve into genocide if something is not done now to stop it.” This body may review peacekeeping operations and respond to special political missions like this conflict. It is clear that political stability needs to be reintroduced into South Sudan in order to avoid more conflict.

Topics for Consideration:

How can this body ensure the safety of humanitarian aid workers and UN Peacekeepers?

What UN bodies or non-governmental organizations would best be able to stabilize the South Sudanese political situation?

What actions can this body take in order to assist the displaced South Sudanese people?

What actions can this body take in order to prevent genocide in South Sudan?

How can this body ensure that this conflict does not spread to the surrounding region?
Bibliography:


