

Committee: United Nation General Assembly
Delegation: Republic of South Africa



permanent mission of
south africa
to the united nations

Topic: Addressing Climate Change and Protecting Persons
Displaced Due to Its Adverse Effects

The republic of South Africa is worried about climate change and how it is going to affect the population. Climate change causes problems such as droughts, floods and storms. All these issues force people to leave their homes. South Africa believes that helping these populations should be addressed as a human rights issue. Therefore we think the situation must be taken seriously. South Africa promotes cooperation between countries to fight climate change, it must be considered a global issue and not a local or state issue. Climate change also affects South Africa directly, the droughts in Cape Town¹ caused many problems to the population, another example is the 2022 floods in KwaZulu-Natal² that destroyed communities and forced people to move. During these floods, more than 40.000 people were displaced, 4.000 homes and businesses destroyed. South Africa is also vulnerable against Water shortages, Wildfires and with farming. These problems often force people to move, causing mass migration.

South Africa believes that displaced people need safety, shelters and basic services³. International support is fundamental to achieve this by helping countries like South Africa to manage displacements among different territories. The international community should recognise “climate refugees” and give them legal protection. Moreover, communities affected by displacement should receive education and basic life support.

South Africa is also proud to have chaired and hosted the G20 this year in Johannesburg. The theme of the G20 is Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability which are according to the Republic of South Africa fundamental to address climate change. It is a great honour and a unique opportunity to show leadership in

¹ Botai, J. O., et al. “Likelihood of Cape Town Water Crisis Tripled by Climate Change.” World Weather Attribution, 13 July 2018, www.worldweatherattribution.org/the-role-of-climate-change-in-the-2015-2017-drought-in-the-western-cape-of-south-africa/.

² Copernicus Emergency Management Service. “KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, April 2022.” Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS) Global Flood Monitoring (GFM), European Union, <https://global-flood.emergency.copernicus.eu/news/101-kwazulu-natal-south-africa-april-2022/>

³ “World Bank Supports Improved Energy and Freight Transport Services in South Africa.” World Bank, 5 June 2025, www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/06/09/world-bank-supports-improved-energy-and-freight-transport-services-in-south-africa.

addressing global challenges. Hosting the G20⁴ allows South Africa to promote international cooperation on climate change and to focus on the protection of people displaced or heavily affected. According to the G20 climate risk atlas⁵ “Between 1990 and 2015, climate change caused almost half of all heat-related deaths in the country. By 2100, heat-related deaths will climb 25 times higher than in 1990.”

Our strong communities from town and villages are planting trees and gardens to fight the drought. These gardens help families grow and have water during the dry seasons. Planting trees also stops soil from washing away during heavy rains giving the ground a lot of stability. Local people, especially in the rural areas, are working together creating strong communities that hold together. Some communities are creating small jobs in renewable energy farming. People can earn money and help the environment at the same time⁶. Some towns use solar panels or wind turbines to have clean energy.

South Africa reconfirms its commitment to the Paris Agreement 2015 to limit climate change. Developed countries should give financial and technical help to developing countries, especially help from global north to the global south. Moreover, sharing knowledge would be very important for technology, climate and disaster management⁷. Domestically, South Africa’s government is investing in renewable energy, reduction of carbon emissions and a warning system for floods and droughts are being improved.

In conclusion, we say that the International community should work together to fight climate change. Protecting people that are forced to move because of climate change should be a top priority for the international community. Strong global actions and support can reduce climate change effects and save a lot of lives.

⁴ “G20 South Africa.” G20, <https://g20.org/g20-south-africa/>

⁵ *G20 Climate Risk Atlas: South Africa*. G20 Climate Risk Atlas, <https://www.g20climaterisks.org/south-africa/>

⁶ “South Africa: EIB and FirstRand Bank Boost Renewable Energy Investments with €400 Million/ZAR 7.9 Billion Initiative.” European Investment Bank, 12 Sept. 2024, www.eib.org/en/press/all/2024-336-eib-and-firststrand-bank-boost-renewable-energy-investments-in-south-africa-with-eur-400-millionzar-7-9-billion-initiative.

⁷ “South Africa’s Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme.” NDC Partnership, ndcpartnership.org/knowledge-portal/good-practice-database/south-africas-renewable-energy-independent-power-producer-procurement-programme.