

MUNLawS Position Paper

Delegate Name: Kellen O'Halloran



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Committee: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Topic: Addressing Climate Change and Ensuring Protection for Persons Displaced Due to Adverse Effects of Climate Change

The Republic of Ireland most certainly understands that climate change is one of the biggest existential threats to humanity. Ireland's approach to climate diplomacy is rooted in a strong dedication to taking action domestically, as well as adhering to the solutions and commitments outlined in the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Minister Sean Fleming at the 2024 United Nations General Assembly said that “those who have contributed least to climate change are among the most vulnerable to its impacts,”¹ emphasizing that all countries, especially those responsible for this crisis, must cooperate with the international community and help combat the threat of climate change.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reported that 2024 was the hottest year in 175 years of observation, with global mean surface temperature reaching 1.55 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline². The warming has caused extreme weather events, including floods, droughts, and storms. According to a UN report, only one-third of the world's river basins are currently within normal water levels, and accelerating glacial melt added an estimated 1.2 millimeters to global sea-level rise in the past year alone³. These findings show the extreme threat global warming poses towards every country.

Ireland's physical and economic landscape has already been affected by climate change. Intense storms and rising sea levels threaten coastal towns such as Cork and Galway. Droughts and irregular rainfall have impacted agriculture, an essential aspect of Ireland's national economy. In 2021, our government passed the Climate Action and Low Carbon

¹ Fleming, S. (2024). *Ireland national statement at the United Nations General Assembly*. Government of Ireland.

² UN News. (2025, September 23). *WMO warns of global water crisis as 2024 becomes hottest year in history*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165873>

³ World Meteorological Organization. (2025). *State of global water resources 2024*. WMO. https://library.wmo.int/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=22670

Development Act. This act commits us to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with an interim target of a 51% reduction by 2030⁴. Ireland understands that accountability must be shown by all nations. In accordance with this understanding, we acknowledge the Environmental Protection Agency's findings that indicate Ireland is not on track to meet its goal of a 51 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, falling short at a projected 23% reduction in emissions⁵.

The Republic of Ireland stands here today eager and ready to address the issue of displaced persons due to the adverse effects of climate change. We recognize the humanitarian impact of the climate crisis. In October, Ireland provided 40,000 people in Vietnam with clean drinking water following a number of devastating typhoons that hit the northern region of Vietnam⁶. Ireland stands firmly alongside the European Union in addressing the growing challenge of displacement. Along with the EU, Ireland does not legally recognize "climate refugees" under its asylum laws. Rather than granting "climate refugee" status, our approach prioritizes addressing the root causes of displacement.⁷ In adherence with this, starting this year, Ireland has pledged to provide €225m annually in international climate finance, as outlined in the International Climate Finance Report 2024⁸.

While gathered here today, Ireland is ready to address the shared concern for "climate refugees" and take action against the climate crisis. It is clear that the current international framework leaves a clear legal gap for people who are forced to leave their country because of a climate-related hazard. While we do not, under our national or EU asylum systems, formally recognize the category of "climate refugees," we fully acknowledge the growing humanitarian urgency.

⁴ Government of Ireland. (2021). *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021*. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/32/enacted/en/html>

⁵ Environmental Protection Agency. (2025). *Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions projections 2025*. <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/ghg-projections/>

⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2025). *Irish Aid to support 40,000 people following Vietnam typhoons*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-foreign-affairs/press-releases/irish-aid-to-support-40000-people-following-vietnam-typhoons/>

⁷ Apap, J., & Harju, S. J. (2023). *The concept of 'climate refugee': Towards a possible definition* [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698753/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)698753_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698753/EPRS_BRI(2021)698753_EN.pdf)

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs. (2024). *International climate finance report*. <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/news-and-publications/latest-news/news-archive/new-report-shows-increase-in-ireland-s-climate-finance/>

