STUDENT REFERENCE SHEETS

These reference sheets provide a snapshot of the climate issues facing each country.

Divide the countries between your group, once you have finished reading, come together and discuss which issues you feel are most important.

EUROPEAN UNION

DENMARK

Denmark is dealing with rising sea levels, which lead to coastal flooding. More frequent extreme weather, such as heavy rains and storms, damages homes and infrastructure. Denmark is working to cut carbon emissions by using clean energy sources like wind power. However, climate change can also harm farming, making it harder to grow crops. To deal with this, Denmark depends a lot on pesticides. So, they face a challenge in protecting their environment while ensuring food production stays reliable.

BELGIUM

Belgium faces environmental issues. Old factories and industries produce pollution, harming nature. Being a low-lying country, rising sea levels cause more floods, damaging homes and the economy. Belgium aims to use more wind and solar power, but its outdated electricity system needs improvement. Additionally, they waste a significant amount of food, which harms the planet.

FRANCE

France faces more frequent heatwaves, which can damage farming and public health. Intensive farming practices harm the land, making it challenging to grow food. Shifting weather patterns contribute to an increase in diseases carried by insects. France also grapples with the difficulty of modernizing its aging nuclear power plants and seeks cleaner energy sources to address these challenges.

GERMANY

Germany faces increasing pollution from cars and trucks, leading to environmental damage and unpredictable weather. They aim to use cleaner energy sources but still heavily depend on coal. Extreme weather events such as floods and storms harm buildings and infrastructure. Factory pollution contributes to acid rain, which is harmful to wildlife and ecosystems.

GREECE

Greece is experiencing rising temperatures, which increase the risk of wildfires. They use a lot of fossil fuels for energy, but it's challenging to harness wind power because of their hilly terrain. Their outdated energy systems require modernization. Economic instability leads to higher food prices for people. Additionally, poor land management practices make farming less productive in the country.

HUNGARY

Hungary deals with vehicle pollution and more frequent droughts and hot days, which harm farming. They depend heavily on fossil fuels such as coal and oil for energy. Water is becoming scarce, and floods cause damage in both cities and rural areas. Farming methods that harm the soil quality are a concern, and the air quality in cities is declining.

ITALY

Italy faces increasing sea levels, which put cities like Venice at risk of flooding. The country needs to modernize its old electricity system to use cleaner energy sources. Land degradation from landslides and soil erosion is damaging both the environment and the economy. Additionally, the Mediterranean Sea is becoming more acidic, negatively impacting sea creatures and the fishing industry.

POLAND

Poland relies heavily on coal for energy, making it challenging to switch to cleaner sources. More frequent heatwaves and storms are occurring, disrupting normal weather patterns. Natural habitats are vanishing, affecting wildlife. Poor food storage practices lead to environmental damage and economic losses. Excessive coal use causes air quality issues, impacting people's health.

SWEDEN

In Sweden, warmer temperatures are causing its forests to shrink, which affects their ability to absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. While Sweden uses renewable energy sources like wind and solar power, they are working on improving how they store this energy for when it's needed. The rising temperatures also harm the diversity of life in Sweden's lakes and rivers. Sweden relies a lot on food imports, which can make food prices go up. Additionally, as cities grow, they start taking over the natural habitats of animals and plants in forests and wetlands.

SPAIN

Spain deals with scorching hot weather, causing heatwaves and forest fires. The situation worsens due to the use of fossil fuels. Additionally, the levels of river water are dropping, which makes it challenging to generate hydroelectric power and use cleaner energy sources. Agriculture is suffering from desertification, where fertile land becomes barren. Land quality is deteriorating because of improper land use and construction projects. These issues are causing significant environmental and agricultural problems in Spain.