



# *Research Report*

**Forum:** *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation*

**Issue:** *Combatting climate change in the Islamic world*

**Chairs:** *Matthijs Koch and Gialesi Notkamp*

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## Personal Introduction

Dear CalsMUN delegates,

My name is Matthijs Koch, I am 18 years old and I will be serving as your chair during the conference.

Last year I graduated from Cals College and currently I live in Delft, where I study *Architecture and the Built Environment*.

I started my MUN-career as a delegate at Cals College, and I have been the Deputy Secretary General and Conference Manager at respectively the first and second edition of CalsMUN. I am very excited to be back at CalsMUN and I am looking forward to meeting all of you soon!

The best of luck with your preparations,

Matthijs



Hey, I'm Gialesi Notkamp. I'm a first year student at the Technical University Eindhoven, where I study Electrical Engineering. I like to play the piano, row and hang out with friends. I have attended 10 MUN's –of which one was a University MUN- and I like participating in MUN's very much. Unfortunately due to my busy schedule, I won't be able to participate in many MUN's. Thus I was extra thrilled when the opportunity was given to me to chair at CalsMUN, the MUN of my high school. The past two years I have helped set up the CalsMUN, so I'm very excited to come back as a chair. Hope you're all excited too!





## *The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation*

The Organisation of Islamic cooperation is an organisation similar to the UN. Excluding the UN it is even the largest inter-governmental organisation. The OIC focusses on protecting the interests of the Muslim world. They consist of multiple bodies and 57 member states. The goal of the OIC is to preserve Islamic social and economic values. The OIC also strives for a better connection on the grounds of social, economic and political grounds for its member states. Syria has been suspended due to human rights abuses in the Syrian Civil War.<sup>1</sup>

Even though the OIC is not actually a body of the UN but rather an organisation similar to the UN, we will still be debating at a Model United Nations, so we will apply the same rules and procedures that apply in a normal MUN committee in this MUN's OIC.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oic-oci.org/home/?lan=en>



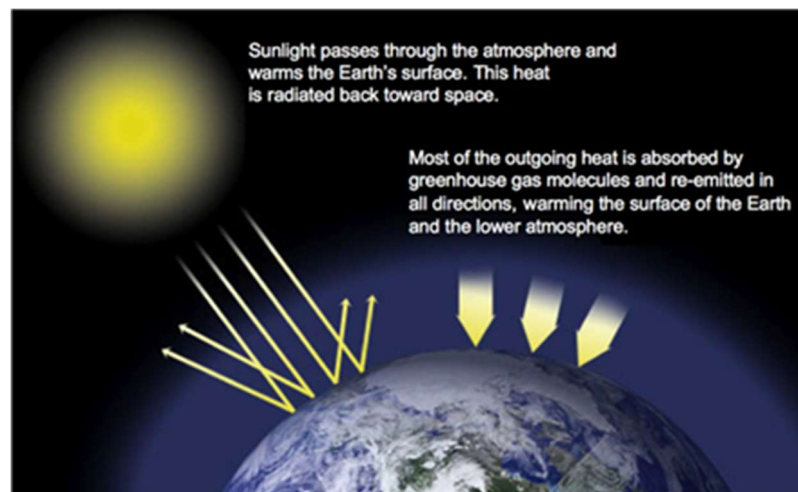
## *Issue: Combatting climate change in the Islamic world*

### **Introduction**

Climate change is without a doubt one of the most pressing issues of modern times. Rising sea levels, extinction of species, impairment of ecosystems, extreme weather and health issues are just a selection of the negative effects of climate change on our world. There has been enough research that has been thoroughly tested and supported by many independent observations and results, that it can be seen as a scientific fact that the Earth is warming, and that this is very likely due to human activities. While this is obviously not a positive notion to begin this report with, the fact that the recent climate change has been initiated by humans, also means that humans can influence the course of climate change towards a more sustainable level.

### **General information**

Climate change is to be attributed to the increased amount of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. The atmosphere can be seen as a giant blanket which covers the Earth, of which a short explanation can be seen in image 1. Really simplified: a thicker blanket (more greenhouse gases) causes the Earth to warm up.



1. Image showing how greenhouse gases serve as a thermal blanket.

The main gases contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, and to a lesser extent chlorofluorocarbons

*Carbon dioxide* ( $CO_2$ ) is the most important cause of climate change. In nature, carbon dioxide is produced by respiration and volcanic activity, but since the start of the Industrial Revolution, humans have increased this natural  $CO_2$ -concentration by over a third, largely due to the combustion of fossil fuels for electricity production, industrial processes and combustion in transport. There are also other factors such as deforestation that influence the natural balance of  $CO_2$ .

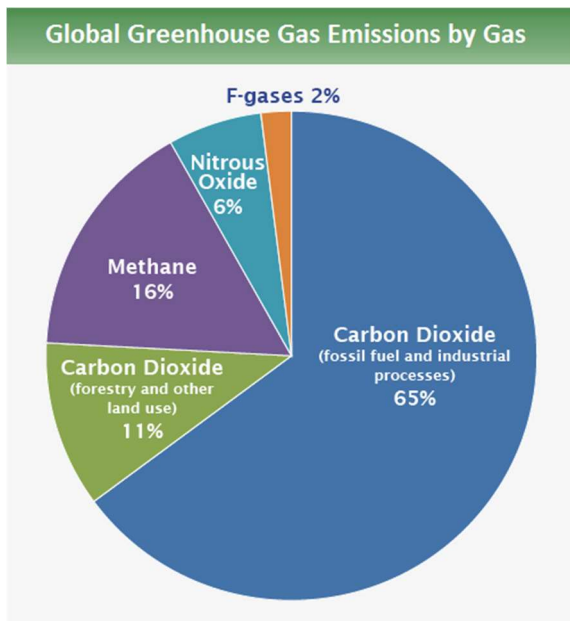
On molecular level, *methane* ( $CH_4$ ) is more active as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, but less abundant in the atmosphere. The causes of methane production are almost



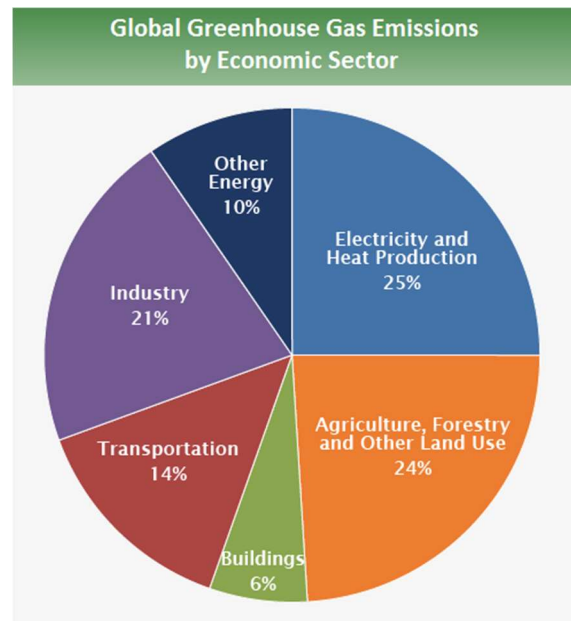
exclusively from agricultural practices, in particular from livestock and rice cultivation. Other causes can be found in waste-management and biomass burning.

Similar to methane, *nitrous oxide* ( $N_2O$ ) is mainly produced in agricultural activities. In this case mostly from the use of fertilizers. Fossil fuel combustion also creates nitrous oxide.

*Chlorofluorocarbons* (CFCs) are synthetic gases (formerly) used in certain consumer products, such as hairspray. They contribute to the destruction of the ozone layer. Since the discovery of its negative effects on the ozone layer, the use of this gas has been strictly regulated.



2. Pie chart showing the distribution of greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide accounts to over three thirds.



3. This pie chart shows how the emissions of greenhouse gases are distributed among economic sectors. The emissions from 'Electricity and Heat Production', 'Industry' and 'Transportation' are almost exclusively from burning fossil fuels

## Previous attempts to solve the issue

### *Paris Agreement (2015)*

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. To reach these ambitious goals, appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework will be put in place, thus supporting action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries, in line with their own national objectives. The Agreement also provides for enhanced transparency of action and support through a more robust transparency framework."



### **Possible solutions**

It is important to know that there is not a quick fix to this problem. Transitioning to a greener society requires investments of time and money, which most people and most governments don't want to sacrifice. It requires changes in all facets of society; the way our industries work, the way we produce electricity, the way we build and the way we eat all influence emissions. Although every small change helps, it is impossible to combat climate change without governments leading the way.

Especially in the Middle East, there is a huge dependency on fossil fuels in the national economy. For those countries, the step to a green economy is even bigger, but also a lot more influential, both biologically and politically. These countries are in the position where they can use the wealth gained by fossil fuels to become world leaders in the field of renewable energy by being active in research and guiding LEDC's towards a green future.

The most viable option for most of the countries in the OIC seems to be solar energy, considering the geographical locations of the countries.

## *Major countries involved*

### **Countries**

*Every single one* is involved as is shown by Sofiah Jamil in 'Climate change and the Muslim world': "The OIC has much to be alarmed by this (Climate Change), given that nearly all of its members are developing countries and 40 out of its 57 members have experienced a climate-related disaster at least once. According to United Nations statistics, OIC members have in the past five years, experienced at least: 32 floods; 11 flash floods; 6 typhoons; 5 cold waves; 4 droughts; 3 tornados; and 3 snow avalanches."

### **Organisations**

#### **Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**

OPEC is an intergovernmental organisation consisting of 14 countries, of which the majority of countries are in the OIC as well. Its aim is to "coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its Member Countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry." OPEC policies appear to directly affect crude oil prices, which is also why it has often been labelled a cartel.



## *Timeline of related events*

**1920-1925** - Opening of Texas and Persian Gulf oil fields inaugurates era of cheap energy.

**1976** - Studies show that CFCs (1975) and also methane and ozone (1976) can make a serious contribution to the greenhouse effect.

**1979** - World Climate Research Programme launched to coordinate international research.

**1985** - Villach Conference declares consensus among experts that some global warming seems inevitable, calls on governments to consider international agreements to restrict emissions.

**1987** - Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention imposes international restrictions on emission of ozone-destroying gases.

**1988** - Toronto conference calls for strict, specific limits on greenhouse gas emissions; UK Prime Minister Thatcher is first major leader to call for action. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is established.

**1992** - Conference in Rio de Janeiro produces UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but US blocks calls for serious action.

**1997** - International conference produces Kyoto Protocol, setting targets for industrialized nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions if enough nations sign onto a treaty (rejected by US Senate in advance).

**2000** - Global Climate Coalition dissolves as many corporations grapple with threat of warming, but oil lobby convinces US administration to deny problem.

**2005** - Kyoto treaty goes into effect, signed by major industrial nations except US. Work to retard emissions accelerates in Japan, Western Europe, US regional governments and corporations.

**2006** - China overtakes the United States as the world's biggest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**2008** - Climate scientists (although not the public) recognize that even if all greenhouse gas emissions could be halted immediately, global warming will continue for millennia.

**2009** - Many experts warn that global warming is arriving at a faster and more dangerous pace than anticipated just a few years earlier.

Copenhagen conference fails to negotiate binding agreements: end of hopes of avoiding dangerous future climate change.





**2012** - Controversial "attribution" studies find recent disastrous heat waves, droughts, extremes of precipitation, and floods were made worse by global warming.

**2015** - Paris Agreement: nearly all nations pledge to set targets for their own greenhouse gas cuts and to report their progress.

Mean global temperature is 14.8°C, the warmest in thousands of years. Level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere reaches 400 ppm, the highest in millions of years.

*This timeline is extracted from the American Institute of Physics. The most important information for this issue is taken into this research report. For a more elaborate timeline, please visit their [website](#).*

## *Key terms*

### **Climate change**

A permanent change in weather conditions (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)

### **Global warming**

A general increase in world temperatures caused by increased amounts of carbon dioxide around the Earth (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)

### **Greenhouse effect**

The gradual warming of the air surrounding the Earth as a result of heat being trapped by pollution (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*)



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Images:

1 <https://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>

2 & 3 <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data>