

International Actors Debate

Instructions

In this interactive debate, you will assume the roles of key international actors involved in the global climate migration discourse.

Objective: Your goal is to persuade other actors—and especially the professor that represents a donor country—to support your viewpoint on climate-related migration issues. The more actors align with your position, the more likely you are to earn various types of “capital” in the form of poker chips, including potential “economic support” from the donor country.

How to “Win”: The team that earns the most “red chips” (economic capital) wins.

How the Game Works

Role Assignment

Each team will represent one of the following actors:

- UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
- WBG (World Bank Group)
- PDD (Platform on Disaster Displacement)
- IOM (International Organization for Migration)

- The donor country is played by the professor

Chips = Capital

The professor will distribute a set number of poker chips to each team. Poker chips represent different types of capital you can use to influence the debate:

- Red chips = Economic Capital (e.g., funding, resources)
- Blue chips = Social Capital (e.g., time-outs, strategy huddles with other teams)
- White chips = Symbolic Capital (e.g., this can be used at any time to interrupt others speaking or to ask to speak again)

Initial Chip Distribution

Actor	Red Chip (Economic)	Blue Chip (Social)	White Chip (Symbolic)
UNHCR	2	4	2
WBG	5	4	1
PDD	0	6	3
IOM	3	4	1

Chip Usage Rules

Use chips strategically to gain an advantage or disrupt others. You can deploy these chips at any time during each round.

● Red Chips (Economic Capital)

- Show your financial power or offer incentives
- Remember: these are the most valuable chips to end up with

● Blue Chips (Social Capital)

- Pause the round to huddle again with your team
- Give another team time to huddle with your team (as a strategic alliance)

○ White Chips (Symbolic Capital)

- Interrupt another team's turn
- Take an extra turn for your own team

How Each Round Works

Each round focuses on a specific discussion question. Your team's goal is to persuade others—and especially the donor country—that your perspective is the most valid and effective.

During the round, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Strategize internally
- Present your position
- Debate and respond to others
- Use your chips strategically to influence the outcome

Round Structure

1. Strategy Huddle (5 minutes)

- Each team has **5 minutes** to meet privately and develop a strategy.
- You should decide how to present your argument and which chips (capital) to use.

2. Initial Arguments (1 minute per team)

- Each team has **1 minute** to make their case on the discussion question.
- Try to persuade other actors and position yourself to earn red chips from the donor country

3. Rebuttals (1 minute per team)

- After all teams present, each team gets **1 minute** to respond to others.
- Use this time to challenge opposing views or reinforce your own.

4. Chip Decisions by Donor Country

The professor (acting as the donor country) will decide **which teams earn red chips (economic capital)** based on:

- Strength of your argument
- How many actors you persuaded
- Strategic use of chips

Debate Topics & Lead Actors

There will be four rounds total based on specific debate questions. Each question will be introduced by a lead actor, but all teams are expected to participate.

1. Does climate change force people to move?
Lead Actor: IOM
2. Should we amend the Refugee Convention to include climate change?
Lead Actor: UNHCR
3. What is the best policy solution to address climate-induced displacement?
Lead Actor: WBG
4. Do current laws and policies adequately address climate displacement?
Lead Actor: PDD

IOM Brief

- You don't have skin in the game about the Refugee Convention
- You want yourself to be considered the premiere organization working on all things migration – so you want to demonstrate you work on climate change first
- You want to make sure that donors and peers recognize that climate change is more related to migration than displacement
- Economic capital is the most important, but you know you need social and symbolic capital to stay relevant

PDD Brief

- You're a state-led process, so you let nation states lead the discussion and try to find a happy medium
- You need actors with more symbolic capital, like UNHCR and IOM on your side
- You're very practical and can sense the "art of the possible" – that means if someone suggests something that feels like a solution, you will also support it

UNHCR Brief

- You are the “keeper” of the sanctimony of the Refugee Convention
- The Convention has been under attack and slowly eroded by different nation states over the last decade, especially by your donor countries
- Your donor countries are weary about “mission creep” and expanding notions of refugee
- The number of refugees has risen over time
- You’re concerned existing resources do not meet the mark

World Bank Brief

- You treat your decisions as a version of cost-benefit analysis
- Your bottom lines are: how much economic capital can I accrue and who can I share it with to get them to do what will have the most impact
- Everything must be seen through a development lens (e.g. how can you decrease poverty, how can you ensure access to markets and free trade)
- Your donors are nation states, so you are weary about making any overtly political statements
- You must be seen as the most technically proficient institution, with the most research expertise, so you will ask others a lot of questions