

CONCERN DEBATES

League Phase Motions 2021-22

On September 25th 2015, 193 countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty and hunger, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all, as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by the year 2030.

When launching the 17 Goals the then UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stated that “...this can be the first generation to witness a world without extreme poverty, where all people – not only the powerful and the privileged – can participate and contribute equally, free of discrimination and want.”

For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and ‘ordinary’ people.

This year, once again our Concern Debate motions highlight some of the individual goals and the challenges that we must face (and the debates we must have) if the goals are to be achieved.

THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development



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In 2019 millions of students and protesters took to the streets across the world, including tens of thousands in Ireland and the UK, to demand urgent action from political leaders to tackle climate change.

Inspired by Greta Thunberg who swapped school for striking outside the Swedish parliament each Friday, the *Fridays for Future* movement became headline news as youth, angry and frustrated at government inaction, sought to take their future into their own hands.

While governments will claim that they have not only listened to students on the issue of climate change, but have taken bold steps to reach international targets and have encouraged industries to do the same, others would argue that the pace of action is far too slow and that governments continue to put 'profit before the planet'. So, they would argue, that for all their 'sound and fury' the school strikes haven't really made any difference at all.

Given the recently released IPCC report and the meeting of Global Leaders at COP26 do students need to start striking once again?

Debate it!

Watch out for: COP 26 hosted by the UK in Glasgow, October 1st-12th, 2021 <https://ukcop26.org/>

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



ROUND 1

THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE

“School strikes are an effective way of getting governments to act on Climate Change”



Proposition



<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/climate-change-strike-irish-students-join-millions-protesting-globally-1.4024673>

<https://www.unicef.org/environment-and-climate-change/youth-action>

<https://www.conservationguide.org/news/9-reasons-why-the-school-strike-for-climate-works-and-why-we-must-listen>

<https://theconversation.com/climate-strikes-researcher-explains-how-young-people-can-keep-up-the-momentum-113594>

Opposition



<https://nypost.com/2019/09/17/the-climate-strike-is-a-crock-that-exploits-kids/>

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-criticises-pupils-missing-school-to-protest-over-climate-change-11638238>

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/dublin-school-warns-pupils-off-infuriating-climate-strikes-1.4022682>

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1180731/climate-change-protests-children-school-walkout-poll-greta-thunberg-extinction-rebellion>

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After decades of progress on reducing world hunger, trends in recent years indicate that it is on the rise again.

Despite producing enough food to feed 10 billion people (or 1.5 planet earths'), hunger still persists. In a profound example of how unequal our world is, there are 690 million people who go to bed hungry each night while 650 million people are obese. (World Health Organisation, 2020)

We are also told that edible food waste amounts to 1.3 billion tonnes globally each year, more than enough to feed the worlds hungry.

So if production is not the issue, what is? Conflict, Climate and Covid all have a big part to play in keeping hunger in place. Those trying to end world hunger say that governments have a huge role to play and that simply if the political will was there we could end world hunger, if not by 2030, then most certainly by 2050. We managed to reduce global hunger by nearly 50% between 1990 and 2015...so why can't we do it again?

Others would argue that ending hunger is simply too complicated, that there are too many issues involved and that it is not just about governments giving more money to solve the problem or increasing emergency aid in times of famine. Sadly, they argue, hunger is more an issue of geography, population and good governance and that surely, if we could have solved the problem of hunger by now, we would have.

So...are the issues to ending world hunger insurmountable?

Debate it!

Watch out for: The United Nations Food Systems Summit September 23rd, 2021 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en>

The Global Hunger Index which Concern launches in October <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/concern-worldwide.html>



ROUND 2

THEME: WORLD HUNGER

“The challenges to ending world hunger are insurmountable”



Proposition



<https://www.who.int/news/item/15-07-2019-world-hunger-is-still-not-going-down-after-three-years-and-obesity-is-still-growing-un-report>
<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/hunger-rising-globally-covid-19/>
<https://www.who.int/news/item/13-07-2020-as-more-go-hungry-and-malnutrition-persists-achieving-zero-hunger-by-2030-in-doubt-un-report-warns>
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/climate-and-people/pandemic-had-worst-case-scenario-impact-world-hunger-un-report/>

Opposition



<https://www.un.org/zerohunger/content/challenge-hunger-can-be-eliminated-our-lifetimes>
<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/food-systems-hold-key-ending-world-hunger>
<https://developmenteducation.ie/feature/is-the-world-on-track-to-achieve-zero-hunger-by-2030-five-takeaways-from-2-key-reports/>
<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2018/0510/962580-how-to-achieve-zero-hunger-for-all/>

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Bernie Sanders, the US Senator, famously stated that *'billionaires should not exist'*, vowing that if he was elected President of the United States he would implement a wealth tax that would *'reduce the outrageous and grotesque and immoral level of income and wealth inequality'*.

According to a report by Oxfam entitled *Time to Care*, the world's 2,153 billionaires have more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 percent of the world's population. Another startling statistic from the report states that the 22 richest men on earth have more wealth than all of the women in Africa combined.

In July 2021 Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson flew in their own rockets to space, in effect 'launching' their space tourism ventures. Elon Musk on the other hand, has greater ambitions with his plans to colonise Mars. Many people expressed anger at the 'joyrides' to space particularly in light of recent investigations highlighting how billionaires and other super wealthy people avoid paying income tax. Bezos in particular was singled out for criticism given the long-running complaints about working conditions and low pay for Amazon employees.

Others however argue that all three men are philanthropists, having pledged billions to environmental and social causes and charitable works in Africa. Furthermore, many argue, their companies provide employment for thousands of people around the world. Supporters of billionaires believe that hard work, initiative and 'smarts' should not be penalised and that not only should people be allowed to earn as much as they can but they should not be criticised for how they spend it. Particularly if it means creating 'ground breaking' private ventures like space tourism.

So...is it wrong for billionaires to joyride to space while we have so many problems back on earth?

Debate it!

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



ROUND 3 THEME:

REDUCE INCOME INEQUALITIES

“It is simply wrong for billionaires like Bezos, Branson and Musk to ‘joyride’ to space with so many problems back on earth”

Proposition



<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/jeff-bezos-space-flight-money-better-uses/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jul/20/bezos-space-travel-blue-origin-amazon-criticism>
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/amazon-workers-slam-jeff-bezos-b1887944.html>
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/07/space-billionaires-jeff-bezos-richard-branson/619383/>

Opposition



<https://time.com/6071799/jeff-bezos-space-trip/>
<https://www.blueorigin.com/news/club-for-the-future-selects-19-charities>
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2021/07/19/billionaire-private-investment-is-good-for-the-space-industry-whether-we-like-it-or-not/>
<https://www.gobankingrates.com/money/entrepreneur/if-you-could-afford-to-go-to-space-would-you-we-asked-someone-bidding-on-a-seat-in-bezos-spaceship/>

General <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2021/aug/03/the-billionaire-space-race-podcast>

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Countries around the world welcomed the production of Covid vaccines that would help end the global pandemic and allow a return to pre-Covid 'normality'. However Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing and global access has been limited by vaccine nationalism and patent restrictions.

Globally, approximately 2.7 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered. As of June 2021, high and upper-middle income countries have secured over 8.1 billion doses of all Covid-19 vaccines, while low- and lower-middle-income nations, where the majority of the world's population reside, have secured just 2.1 billion doses.

While it was set up to provide access to Covid-19 vaccines to people globally, COVAX is sometimes seen mainly as an aid project benefiting low and middle-income countries, instead of a globally collaborative initiative that governments should support to get the pandemic under control.

And while COVAX is finally supplying vaccines, it's been criticized for what it doesn't do — namely, equip nations with the knowledge and infrastructure to produce their own. If your problem is you want to have affordable vaccines around the world to cover the majority of the world, then the solution would be free licensing or compulsory licensing. COVAX doesn't do that.

So...is Covax part of the problem and not the solution to vaccine equity?

Debate it!

Watch: <https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/news-and-events/news/news-article/2021/07/vaccine-equity-the-challenge-of-our-time>

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



ROUND 4

THEME: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

“Despite its best intentions, Covax is part of the problem, not the solution, when it comes to vaccine equity”



Proposition



<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/africas-covid-19-envoy-blasts-eu-covax-vaccine-78601850>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-a-grand-plan-to-vaccinate-the-world-against-covid-unraveled-covax-11622045728>

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/health/covid-19-vaccines-for-all-why-covax-is-not-working-76977>

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/exclusive-let-down-by-rich-failing-poor-global-vaccine-scheme-be-shaken-up-2021-06-23/>

Opposition



<https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility>

<https://www.unicef.org/supply/covax-we-have-achieved-something-has-never-been-done>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/access-and-allocation-how-will-there-be-fair-and-equitable-allocation-of-limited-supplies>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/04/homepage2/covax-africa-rollout/index.html>