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SSUNS Position Paper
Climate Change
Syria

Topic 1: Climate Refugees

A major contributor to our conflict in Syria has to be blamed on climate change. In 2006, Syria suffered its worst drought in 900 years, ruining through the fertile crescent and forced as many as 1.5 million rural denizens to crowd into cities alongside Iraqi refugees and decimated the country's livestock. Water became scarce and expensive. Water shortages, ruined land and corruption, sparked revolution. Lack of work, along with recurring violence, has prompted many Syrians to flee to Turkey and then cross the ocean to Greece. Hundreds of adults and children have drowned along the way. Desperate strangers of all ages gathered along the Turkish coast from not only Syria but from all over the middle east. They crowd onboard big rafts and set out for the roughly 16-kilometer crossing to Lesbos. The boats are routinely overloaded, and in rough seas they are easily swamped. Most cannot swim, and 20 percent are children. Drownings happen all the time. 21 million people are refugees world wide, have been displaced from their home country and forced to leave. 86% of these refugees are hosted by low and middle income families. First world countries, like Canada have the ability to take in more refugees than they are currently doing. There is so much inhabited land that our refugees are able to live in; all in all many countries are not doing enough. The world has a very short memory. In the aftermath of World War II, most countries agreed to protect refugees through the 1951 Refugee Convention, and through UN agencies like the UNHCR. These countries need to stick to their word and lend a hand to the overwhelming number of refugees.

Topic 2: The impact of climate change on human health

The impact of climate change include warming temperatures, changes in precipitation, increases in the frequency or intensity of some extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. These impacts threaten our health by affecting the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the weather we experience. Reduces the availability of safe food and drinking water. In Syria, we have limited drinking water, and if this water is unsafe or contaminated disease will overwhelm the syrian people. Damaging roads and bridges, disturbing access to hospitals and pharmacies. Changes in Climate Change increases stomach and lung diseases, and being a 3rd world, poorly funded country, we have very limited hospitals and medical support/funding, and we just do not have the ability to protect/provide help to all those who have been affected. Mental health issues is also another health impact. Those with mental health illnesses are extremely vulnerable to extreme heat. Studies have found that having a pre-existing mental illness tripled the risk of death during heat waves. Syria is known for our heat wave and drought during 2000s and if this happens again many of our Syrians will not stand a chance, not only due to mental illness but also due to the lack of water and food supplies we have.

Topic 3: The necessary steps to enforce the Paris Agreement and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions

The Paris agreement is just some signatures on a piece of paper until action is actually made; it was just the first step of many to come. Countries need to start reducing the amount of greenhouse gases they produce. The solution is simple: renewable resources. Yes it may be more expensive but look at the long term effects. Less emissions in the air therefore less economic depressions, less pollution related diseases, and overall a healthier planet. The one problem would be where we get the funding, but that is something worth discussing.