

***Position paper for the Framework Committee on Climate Change***

The Republic of Iceland is honoured to be a part of the United Nations Framework Committee on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Iceland is thrilled by the topics at hand: The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health, Climate Refugees and Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Green House Gas Emissions. The Republic of Iceland is content to address these topics as we acknowledge the importance of fighting climate change through United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13: "take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact". Iceland believes that fighting climate change is urgent and that it should be at the top of the world's priorities. Therefore, Iceland invites all Member States to work on resolving these three matters in order to combat climate change.

**I. The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health**

The Republic of Iceland strongly believes that fighting climate change would limit human casualties and benefit the living conditions of the earth's population. Indeed, climate change has proven to have a negative impact on human health (WHO, 2016). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 2030 and 2050, 250 000 additional deaths per year are expected to be caused by Climate Change. During times of extreme warm temperatures, fatality numbers rise especially with elderly people, women in particular, (WHO, 2016) and various infectious disease agents proliferate due to climatic fluctuations. Floods, caused by climate change, also have negative impacts on human health as they contaminate waterways and drinking water supplies with human garbage, animal wastes as well as dangerous products and chemicals already present in the environment, such as pesticides, (SSUNS, 2016). As researches by the WHO have shown, floods do not only contaminate freshwater supplies as they increase the risk of water-borne diseases and generate rearing grounds for insects carrying diseases such as mosquitoes. WHO estimates that by 2030, the damage, reconstruction and health costs due to climate change will be between 2 and 4 billion \$US per year which is something we could avoid by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, Iceland believes that all Member States should work together to limit the pervasive effects of climate change. As a signatory of the Paris Agreement (COP21), Iceland is committed to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change in order to reduce its impacts on human health. As a matter of fact, The Republic of Iceland recently submitted to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) a plan of actions to reduce 40% of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Iceland also is a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol and ensures its compliance to the second commitment period of this agreement which consists of reducing 20% of their greenhouse emission until 2020. To insure further fights against climate change, Iceland proposes the following solutions: firstly, Iceland believes that every Member State should implement a national plan that reduces greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with COP21. Secondly, in order to accomplish COP21's goal of keeping the global temperature rise below two degrees and to achieve SDG 7, the Republic of Iceland urges all Member States to invest in renewable energy such as wind power and solar energy. Iceland invites all Member States to invest 25% more of their annual budget, on environment, in research on renewable energy, in production of renewable energy as well as in switching from fossil fueled energy to green energy. Thirdly, Iceland suggests that a World Forum discussing green energy should take place, once a year, to teach Member States how to switch from fossil fuel to green energy. Iceland insists on reaching a common consensus on this issue, as all Member States would work together to find long-term and affordable solutions that will allow them to change fossil fueled energy to green energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**II. Climate Refugees**

The Republic of Iceland, concerned by the growing number of Climate Refugees, believes that we should address this matter as it is of utmost importance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) came to the conclusion that mass groups of individuals will be forced into migration in order to ensure their survival. This phenomenon is anticipated to become problematic in the near future as it is estimated that there will be between 25 million and 1 billion climate refugees by 2050 (Amy Lieberman, 2015). Iceland believes that Member States planning on welcoming them must start thinking as soon as possible as to how they will welcome them. The problem is that climate refugees are not included in the

definition of refugees. Therefore, there is no form of international legal protection or any agency that ensures the safety and respect of their basic human rights. As a signatory of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which legally binds all signatory countries to protect refugees, Iceland strongly suggests that we add to this agreement, the legal protection of climate refugees. The Republic of Iceland advises that a World Forum discussing climate refugees should be held to review the refugee definition and to: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, SDG 3. All Member States could discuss on measures to incorporate social measures such as language courses, in order to facilitate the refugees’ integration and to: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, SDG 4. Iceland also encourages all Member States to develop a Natural Disaster Emergency Response Plan, funded by a percentage of their country’s GDP, to be prepared in case of domestic and international emergencies such as natural catastrophes. Every NDERP should be based on the Member States’ risks of encountering a natural disaster. For instance, a lot of volcanos are found in the Republic of Iceland so its NDERP should mostly prepare for that kind of environmental crisis. In case of environmental catastrophe, all Member States should have a plan of action with safe places and social help for people in need.

### **III. Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Green House Gas Emissions**

The Republic of Iceland firmly believes that all Member States should take concrete steps to enforce COP21. Even though all Member States of the United Nations agree on the necessity of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and on achieving “Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”, SDG 7, progress can still be made on that matter. The Republic of Iceland submitted a plan of action to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), named Iceland’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, in which Iceland participates in the worldwide fight of keeping global warming below 2°C by committing to reduce 40% of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. As a matter of fact, Iceland plans to reduce its gas emissions in the sectors of energy, industrial processes and product use, agriculture, land-use change, and forestry. Iceland’s electricity and heat production is almost 100% renewable since 1990 (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), 2016). The Republic of Iceland is a proud signatory of the Kyoto Protocol and ensures its compliance with the commitments of this agreement, which consists, inter alia, of the “Promotion of sustainable forms of agriculture in light of climate change consideration” and of the “Research on, and promotion, development and increased use of, new and renewable forms of energy, of carbon dioxide sequestration technologies and of advanced and innovative environmentally sound technologies” (Kyoto Protocol, Article 2). The Republic of Iceland invites all Member States to submit a plan to the ADP to reduce their percentage of greenhouse gas emissions in order to enforce the Paris Agreement, to achieve SDG 7 and to ensure a better future for our planet. Iceland also strongly suggests the creation of a world organization where Member States who want and have the possibility to do so, would come together to financially help Member States who cannot afford renewable energy. This will considerably help them reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

## Bibliography

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