**UNFCCC Conference of Parties: 22nd Session**

Delegate for China

As a young developed country, home to the world’s largest economy but also the largest producer of carbon dioxide, China holds a large stake in climate change. As a nation we believe that in order to solve the many problems that have arisen due to climate change over the years, countries must strive to work together in order to combat this global issue. One of the key components to doing this is not just looking at the short term solutions with which we can aid our countries, but also the long term solutions, moving away from carbon based energy sources, and towards a sustainable world.

**TOPIC 1: IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN HEALTH**

“Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Modern day climate change is an international problem that disregards borders, economies and human lives. It is insidious, has had detrimental impacts on human health, and has posed major threats to government’s ability to provide public health services. China believes that the most prevalent issues regarding climate changes effect on human health includes natural disasters, spread of diseases and smog. Disastrous events linked to climate change have restricted our ability to preserve a healthy population. An example of this is flooding, which takes thousands of lives every year and places strains on our economy.[[2]](#footnote-2)

China has been negatively affected in various other manners as well. In recent years, levels of biodiversity in the country have drastically decreased. In addition, the toxic smog that blankets most of China’s major cities and economic centers is presenting a host of health problems such as respiratory and circulatory diseases. Over the last few months, the highest level of alert has been issued multiple times to warn civilians in highly polluted cities to stay inside in order to avoid the toxic smog. In order to issue a red alert there must be air level qualities higher than 300 API.[[3]](#footnote-3) To give some context, the amount of pollutants found in an air quality level of 150 is already seen as unhealthy[[4]](#footnote-4), and most other major cities, for example L.A. or New York, have air level qualities of 0 – 100 API in general.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The issue of climate change and its effect on human health is an incredibly relevant one to the People’s Republic of China, as demonstrated by the fact that “bad air contributes to 1.6 million deaths a year or roughly 17 percent of all deaths in China.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Human health should be seen as a principal focus of a healthy society as it is integral to our ability to sustain a world and combat the issues of tomorrow. In the past China has drafted the "Enhancing capacity-building in global public health" resolution on behalf of the UN In an attempt to combat the growing issue of human health in connection to climate change.[[7]](#footnote-7) This resolution in particular called upon countries to increase awareness and health systems surrounding infectious diseases such tuberculosis and malaria. As a developed nation, China has the ability to hone and target the precise issues that need attention so that a positive impact can be made globally.

In response to the many natural disasters that China has experienced, we propose to follow the two prong approach. First, continue to follow a short term reactive plan of action that is geared towards addressing the harms caused of natural disasters. For example, the past Chinese government attempted to set up warning systems[[8]](#footnote-8) which work to avoid the loss of human life. We plan on continuing the development of these warning systems, under the continued leadership of our Government. We also plan on increasing public awareness surrounding disaster preparedness through training. The second approach includes a preventative plan that through the advancement of technology and innovation seeks to deliver infrastructure that can withstand natural disasters.

Additionally, China intends to establish a system that helps control the spread of infectious diseases. This includes measures such as containment, vaccination, and increased access to systems that incorporate hygienic standards. In combination with these systems, China needs to promote and provide access so that citizens remain informed and educated. In the long term, to stop infectious diseases, China proposes to address the fundamental rise in temperature created by carbon emissions as the two are linked.

Lastly, China is focused on improving air quality in major urban centers. In the short term, we propose to increase availability of masks, and other devices, to minimize the health effects on citizens caused by smog. One preventative plan to address this issue relates directly to the amount of Carbon Dioxide released, as per topic 3. In order to reduce the amount of smog in China’s major cities, the amount of electricity generated by burning coal needs to decline. Coal represents a major energy source for China. That said, there are more carbon neutral energy sources now within the marketplace that China needs to use to a) meet its energy needs, and, b) reduce its carbon footprint.

**TOPIC 2: CLIMATE REFUGEES**

The issues caused by climate change are not limited to human health and natural disasters. One of the latest issues at the forefront of climate change are refugees. In China many people now carry the title of ‘climate refugee’ as they are forced to flee their homes in order to escape the adverse effects of climate change.[[9]](#footnote-9) Globally the resettlement of climate refugees is reaching the tens of millions, most of which is occurring in Asia and the Middle – East.[[10]](#footnote-10) The issue of climate refugees is undoubtedly an important one. Collectively, nations throughout the world face the challenge of providing a solution for 43 million people worldwide that are classified as refugees or displaced persons. [[11]](#footnote-11) The added challenge of climate refugees is that they can be prevented in a manner that benefits the world in other ways as well. China proposes a combined plan integrating the short-term aim of resettling climate refugees and rebuilding infrastructure damages, as well as a long-term objective of disaster prevention. Problems that lead to citizens becoming climate refugees, including natural disasters and areas that become uninhabitable, we would also be reducing the other negative effects of climate change, such as the spread of infectious diseases and increase in sea levels.

At present time China has already put into place a plan similar to the UN’s suggested Natural Disaster Emergency Response Plan in an attempt to combat the climate refugee problem. This plan lays out in detail the current steps in place to combat the devastation that follows natural disasters, but one of China’s goals is to build off of this for even greater emergency preparedness. One of unique aspects of the climate refugee problem in China is the level of displaced citizens within the country itself.[[12]](#footnote-12) The variety of issues due to climate change experienced in China is different in rural and urban situations. In large cities the thick and toxic smog that coats most urban centers causes citizens to seek other potential places for residence in more rural locations. On the other hand, people living in these more rural areas face problems such as mudslides, typhoons and floods that cause them to migrate to the perceived safety offered within urban settings. This constant back and forth with no foreseen solution in the near future is not the way that the delegation of China proposes to continue. This issue is incredibly relevant and important to China so instead we propose working together to not only find ways to aid climate refugees, but also, to halt the cause of these refugees in the first place.

In an attempt to combat the pressing issue faced with climate change China proposes that both an immediate and long-term plan be created. The preventative measures which China plans on undertaking involve prioritizing the resettlement of people affected by climate change and the rebuilding of areas heavily impacted by these disasters. Prioritizing the rebuilding of areas affected by disasters will enable those effected to return home to a safe space, thereby reducing the movement of climate refugees. There is once again only one possible preventative plan that would amount to any actual change, and that is to try and prevent these disasters in the first place. The only way to effectively do that is by addressing climate change with policies that lead to measurable results.

**TOPIC 3: STEPS TO ENFORCE THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND FURTHER REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

On November 4th, 2016 the international community saw significant development to the Paris Agreement, as it is now considered international law. Yet, even though the legal aspect of enforcing the goals and regulations have been adequately addressed, China believes that more global collaboration could expedite the process toward achieving these goals.

The emission of greenhouse gasses, Carbon Dioxide especially, is one of the biggest contributing factors influencing climate change.[[13]](#footnote-13) Every day we burn fossil fuels to produce energy which drives economies and generates prosperity. Unfortunately, this approach to energy generation comes with consequences that impact the global population. Last year alone almost 39.8 tons of Carbon Dioxide were released into our atmosphere,[[14]](#footnote-14) a record high. This issue is incredibly important because without a decrease in emissions global temperatures will continue to rise, devastating ecosystems and destroying countries. It is imperative that this destructive path is stopped before it is irreversible. China believes that the root conflict preventing the reduction of carbon emission globally is economically advantageous. Thus, we urge the international community to collaborate in helping economies, especially developing ones, to transform and diversify their industries and develop renewable energy.

In the past China has taken several steps towards attempting to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Just last year it signed the Paris Agreement, setting a goal on a global platform to reduce such high levels of emissions.[[15]](#footnote-15) This issue is incredibly relevant to China as it is such a significant contributor to the high levels of greenhouse gasses emitted globally due to its large population. Consequently, a reduction in China’s emissions would positively support the global initiative to decrease the effects of climate change.

China is a developed nation with a large population and strong economy, and we would also benefit immensely from a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to the ratification of the Paris Agreement, China has also taken many steps on a national scale in order to reduce it greenhouse gas emissions and will continue to implement additional programs to reduce carbon emissions. For example, China is gradually altering its energy mix and starting to rely on more carbon neutral energy solutions. It also aims to develop its forestry footprint to offset emissions that cannot be circumvented.[[16]](#footnote-16) China’s stance is remain committed internally and internationally to the goals stated in the Paris Agreement.

“Quick fixes” for climate change do not exist in the same manner as they might for other international issues, although some short term solutions are possible. One of the reactionary plans that China is currently in the process of implementing and will continue to implement is reforestation.[[17]](#footnote-17) By planting more trees not only does that lead to economic activity but also provides a CO2 trap to filter excess CO2 from the atmosphere.

Another concept China proposes is upgrading infrastructure[[18]](#footnote-18) and creating new regulations regarding infrastructure built in the future. Placing regulations around the way buildings are built can ensure that they are more energy efficient, thus decreasing energy consumption. The preventative plan that China proposes urges more developed nations to take the initiative and develop their renewable energy industries, as well as financially aid less developed countries so that they can implement more carbon friendly initiatives. Our goal is to decrease our dependence on non-renewable energy sources as they are a primary cause of climate change, which has many negative consequences as outlined in this paper.

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