Committee: United Nations Framework on Climate Change: COP22

Topic: Climate Change

Country: Costa Rica

Delegate: Jade Eckl

**Topic Background:**

Climate Change has become one of the biggest problems that our world faces. By disturbing our environment and wrecking the natural order of life on earth, we as humans must solve the issue which we have created. Costa Rica has realized this issue needs solving, and has taken steps to become one of the leaders in fighting Climate Change. The government has devised short and long term plans which the country will live by so that they can help to keep the issue of Climate Change at bay. Even though they are one of the countries deemed sufficient by climate action trackers, they are still unable to be carbon neutral until 2085, which is considered surprising to many people since they are already 81% carbon neutral. Costa Rica’s President believes that climate change can be fixed because ”We do this with the hope that, eventually, we will be able to show the world that what ultimately needs to be done, can be done.”

Costa Rica’s economy is intertwined with Climate Change since it used to depend entirely on tourism and agriculture. But now has spread into many fields that aren’t as severely affected by Climate Change. But that hasn’t stopped Costa Rica in their battle of change. With that being said, the country still brings in large sources of revenue from these two main economic sectors.

Many people will travel to Costa Rica to explore the beautiful rainforests and stay on pristine beaches. Sadly, due to deforestation Costa Rica’s biodiversity is crumbling. But as humans continue to chop down forests, greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increase, which warms the earth and melts the Arctic ice cap. The freshwater runoff that comes from these ice caps is mixing with saltwater and wrecking the local marine life. This affects Costa Rica because as wildlife leaves their habitats in search of something new, they will start to move closer and closer to Costa Rica which can affect the marine life down south. As well when the ice caps melt, it makes the ocean levels rise. Some of Costa Rica’s lowest elevation levels are at sea level which means that over time, due to oceans rising, parts of Costa Rica will disappear, and be submerged underwater. This will kill agricultural sectors and stunt the amount of food that can be grown. Along with the destruction of the natural resources this will kill Costa Rica’s tourism appeal. If Costa Rica’s economy is unstable that means they’ll be able to fund less Climate Change projects, which can create major international setbacks since Costa Rica is one of the world’s role models in this field.

**Past UN actions:**

The United Nations has many policies and agreements that try to influence different sectors to fight global warming. But, the two main agreements are the Kyoto protocol and the Paris agreement. Both have innovative solutions yet the Paris agreement was only put in place because Kyoto failed. This is due to countries not following through on the promises they made. Kyoto was first put in place on December 11, 1997 in Japan with other countries joining, yet most of the countries were not able to follow through with their plans. Though the countries pledged to make a difference, a lot of the first world countries still have not cut back properly due to their economy depending on the mining of fossil fuels and their use. This failure had the UN members re meet in Paris on December 12, 2015. The Paris Agreement states that every 5 years the countries which are a part of this agreement will assemble and create serious resolutions, based off what research shows them needs to be done.

**National Policies:**

As well as these two international agreements/protocols, Costa Rica has created a lot of national programs and regulations. There are two main programs, one is the Emissions Reduction program (also known as the internal carbon market) which closely monitors the amount of CO2 that is produced from each sector. The second program deals with the forestry sector and is known as the Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. Between these two main solution driven plans (as well as many other protocols), Costa Rica is trying to create a plausible change for their country.

**Proposed Solutions:**

Costa Rica has already started to cut their carbon down at the source by reducing the amount used in all sectors of the country. They have projected their goals to be completely carbon neutral by 2085. The plan for their country comes from a competitive economy where businesses are encouraged to take risks in climate change action programs. These risks could potentially make the net worth of the company increase due to risk/reward factors that the country has added so that consumers demand products that use less carbon in manufacturing. As well as financial rewards, companies can build prestigious reputations, since many people are advocating clean products which are recycled, and/or keep the planet’s eco structure in good condition.

This shows other countries that even small nations that don’t produce that much in carbon emissions (as of 2015 Costa Rica produces 1.41t of CO2 per capita) are becoming invested in the process, since they want to follow through with their promise of reducing carbon. As well Costa Rica knows it cannot escape the damage done by other countries, and this is why they are advocating change. They will do this by using surveys, monitoring/tracking the amount of carbon being produced by their country via research methods and by investing in programs that advocate the importance of keeping Climate Change at bay. One of things that Costa Rica believes wholeheartedly in, is to limit the susceptibility of climate change on the economic sectors, as well as the country itself.

Another program that Costa Rica has heavily invested in, is the avoided deforestation program. Which advocates keeping forests intact. As well, the country is a part of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations. These two programs are both extremely important because they are helping Costa Rica with rebuilding the rainforests. The impact of tree planting campaigns, is that it helps the forests to replenish faster, while also making a global impact via marketing to many sections of the world. This is significant since more people will be able to view the change of one country, and help to influence their own. There are also many programs that make sure the environment stays clean, by having these parks regulate healthy rainforests, so that less trees die. This is beneficial because when a tree dies, it’s carbon is released via decay, which increases global warming. Costa Rica pays for a variety of programs that help with keeping different sections of their country clean, and making sure that the land is not wrecked by human pollution. Costa Rica hopes to sustain their countries natural beauty.

The final and most important impact that Costa Rica is trying to make, is to help keep climate change at bay by focusing on the education sector. They believe it is important for all citizens to take part in making a change in their country. The government is encouraging public awareness regarding climate change. It is important to their citizens to keep their country in the state that it is in, and by educating them about how to do so, Costa Rica is able to infuse nationalism in individual actions, coming together for a bigger cause. This unites the people behind a goal that they are passionate about and be world leaders of change. Laura Chinchilla, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica from 2010-2014 had once said that “The recently released Climate Vulnerability Monitors revealed how failure to act decisively on climate change has already caused unprecedented damage to the world economy and threatens human life across the globe. I welcome the World Bank's timely call for a global response equal to the scale of the climate crisis.” By focusing more on the education of the people and tourists who come to visit, Costa Rica can influence change on a national and international level.

Overall, Costa Rica is one of the leading countries in climate change, and that is why they have signed up with many action plans including Kyoto, the Paris Agreement, ERP and ERDD+. As well as they are one of the few countries that are currently following through with the plans efficiently. Costa Rica is such a driven country in terms of climate change and is eager to work with many organizations in hopes of keeping this earth clean. Hopefully, many other countries will be as inspired by this phenomenal country so that they too, can help make a difference in this world, in an innovative solution that allows both their economy to grow, as well as the environment to stay the same. Climate Change is one of the biggest problems of today’s society and that is why it is the most crucial issue that humans must solve.