**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

Philippines

**Overview**

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro from June 3rd to June 14th of 1992 an international environmental treaty was negotiated. This treaty entered into the United Nations force on March 21st, 1994. This treaty was called The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The idea of this treaty was drafted on May 9, 1992 and was officially signed on June 4, 1992. The objective of this treaty was to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would not disturb the health of humans and to ensure that temperature increases were limited by human interactions with the Earth. In 2015, 196 parties of the UNFCCC came together to discuss the Paris Agreement. This agreement is aimed to limit global warming to less than two degrees celsius, and pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5 degrees celsius. The Paris Agreement was sealed on December 12, 2015 and was opened for signature on April 22nd, 2016, Earth Day. As of November 2016, 193 UNFCCC parties have signed the treaty, 97 of which have ratified. This agreement will take effect on November 4, 2016. The Conference of the Parties (COP 22) will take place in Morocco from November 7 to 18, 2016.

**Topic 1: The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health**

The Philippines has received many casualties due to typhoons. From 1947 to 2014, the Philippines has experienced 10 extremely deadly typhoons; 5 of these happening since 2006. In November of 2013 a typhoon hit the Philippines. The biggest typhoon in this country’s history. Typhoon Haiyan, known as Super Typhoon Yolanda, negatively impacted this country tremendously. The Philippines suffered greatly due to this natural disaster. Haiyan was responsible for more than 6300 lost lives, more than four million displaced citizens, and two billion dollars worth of damage.

The Global Climate Risk Index in 2015 listed the Philippines as the most affected country by climate change, using 2013’s data. A large part of this is due to where they are located. The Philippines is located in the western Pacific Ocean, surrounded by naturally warm waters that will likely get even warmer as average sea-surface temperatures continue to rise. As a collection of more than 7000 islands, the Philippines lacks any natural barriers. The mangrove ecosystems in the Philippines are one of the best buffers against typhoons. These mangroves help mitigate the impact of storm surge and stabilize soil. However almost half of this ecosystem has disappeared since 1918 due to deforestation.

Due to the lack of being able to develop, it has been difficult for the Philippines to prepare and respond to natural disasters. For a developing nation, such as the Philippines, warning and having to relocate millions of citizens when a storm is approaching is a tremendous task on its own, especially when these people are spread out across more than 7000 islands. Having to reconstruct and rebuild from a typhoon costs an enormous amount of money, putting the Philippines in economic drought.

The Philippines is also at risk of diseases due to the change in climate. Vector-borne diseases are the most important public health problems confronting the nation. These diseases are caused by the bite of infectious arthropod species, such as mosquitoes, ticks, bugs, and flies. These mosquito-borne diseases, more specifically dengue and malaria, are the major health problems facing this nation. According to Dr. Lilian A. De Las Llagas, “these two mosquito-borne diseases (MBD) are directly influenced by climate. Malaria and dengue are seasonal in nature; thus, there are high and low peaks in their transmission.” Mosquitoes are widespread with the increase in temperatures and due to climate change these diseases are gotten more easily.

The Philippines needs to consider the many steps the nation can take into stabilizing a better future for the citizens. One such step is informing citizens of this country and around the world, especially the youth, about the challenges facing the Philippines and about the practical clean-energy solutions available that can further address the harmful effects of climate change in the Philippines. Other countries can help by welcoming citizens from the Philippines when disasters, such as Typhoon Haiyan, happen. Many countries have taken action to support the Philippines and help them during a time of suffering by providing them will millions worth of food, shelter, clothing, and helping to rebuild this country.

**Topic 2: Climate Refugees**

A refugee is referred to someone who crosses a political border to reach a safe haven. Climate change has affected and still is impacting this country greatly. The country of the Philippines has grown more and more worried due to the rapid change in our country’s climate. Due to the many casualties this country has experienced, due to natural disasters, most of which come from typhoons, our fear of more of these disasters happening has increased. We care for the lives of our citizens and need to do our best to help them as soon as possible. Our current president, Ricardo Duterte, is aware of the climate changing and believes that addressing this situation is the top priority.

Philippines already is a developing country and these natural disasters are not helping us progress whatsoever. Millions of people in this country are in a state of constant dislocation. This constant dislocation leads to Filipinos needing to relocate from place to place, hoping to secure a better life. Filipino activists in the United States of America have begun to address this issue. These people have been asking the Department of Homeland Security to grant Temporary Protected Status to undocumented Filipinos - estimated to number 200,000 to 300,000 people - who are currently living in the United States. A couple years ago, President Obama gave TPS protection to people of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea because of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Also, after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Obama granted the status to Haitian nationals.

Time after time, when this country is trying to rebuild, another problem comes along in the form of a natural disaster. In the past 10 years alone the Philippines has experienced 10 extremely deadly typhoons. The temporary protection helps just for a little bit of time but does not help the long-term issue. For the safety of our citizens, we need to take time and look at the bigger picture. We need to help the people of this country find security and comfort just as Canada helped the Syrians not too long ago by giving them a home. We need somewhere for some of our citizens to stay during desperate times.

The country of the Philippines proposes we develop a natural disaster emergency response plan. This country has experienced many hardships due to the natural disasters that have happened within the past few years. The Philippines needs the help of other countries in the UN to accept us into their countries so we can take a step further into securing the safety of our citizens. We need to identify potential emergency scenarios so that we can determine resource requirements and to develop plans and procedures so we do not suffer as much. Ultimately, the safety of our citizens is one of our top priorities and we need to make sure that we get as much help as possible.

**Topic 3: Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

President Ricardo Duterte expresses disapproval with signing the Paris Agreement; however, Senator of the Philippines, Loren Legarda, called on Duterte to agree on the treaty “as the Philippines has everything to gain and nothing to lose”. However, Duterte acknowledges that the change in climate is a big issue and needs to be addressed more sooner than later. Legarda suggests that signing the treaty is crucial as the nation would be able to gain funds that would help the Philippines adapt to climate change, which we so desperately need. The Philippines needs to ratify the agreement as we are one of the most vulnerable nations in terms of climate change.

The Philippines is a developing country that is a low-emitter of greenhouse gases. Signing this agreement will establish a little bit of security. We will also be able to get more aid from other developed countries that are high-emitter of greenhouse gases. There is nothing to lose from ratifying the agreement. For the Philippines, it is more so of a win rather than a loss. After all, under this agreement, developed countries must raise one hundred billion dollars every year to help developing countries like the Philippines.

Currently the Philippines are more towards the bottom of the list in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. The Philippines right now accounts for less than 1% of the global greenhouse gas emissions total. Compared to countries such as China, the United States of America, the European Union, India, Russia, Japan, and Germany, the Philippines is comparatively small in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Conclusion**

The country of the Philippines has experienced a time of loss and suffering due to natural disasters and change in climate. This country experiences many hardships due to these natural disasters while still being in the developmental stage. Due to the change in climate, vector-borne diseases are getting more and more spread throughout the citizens of the Philippines. The health of the people in the Philippines is suffering greatly. We desperately need help from other countries, thus we will try to convince our President to ratify the Paris Agreement. We believe that it is essential to do so and getting help from other countries that are developed is crucial. We need our citizens to obtain safety and security due to the many natural disasters that we get over the years.

**Topic 1:**

Health Impacts of Climate Change

http://www.up.edu.ph/health-impacts-of-climate-change/

How is Climate Change Affecting the Philippines? http://www.ecowatch.com/how-is-climate-change-affecting-the-philippines-1882156625.html

**Topic 2:**

Emergency Response Plan

https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/emergency

UN summit to address a new category of refugees: People fleeing the effects of climate change

http://fusion.net/story/33163/un-summit-to-address-a-new-category-of-refugees-people-fleeing-the-effects-of-climate-change/

**Topic 3:**

Duterte: addressing climate change is ‘top priority’ for Philippines

http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/07/25/duterte-addressing-climate-change-is-top-priority-for-philippines/

Paris climate deal takes effect today

http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/11/04/1640333/paris-climate-deal-takes-effect-today