**Lauren MacDonald**

**Eritrea**

**UNFCCC, SSUNS**

**Ursula Franklin Academy**

“Eritrea fully appreciates the complexity, the scale and the consequences of climate change. The strong linkage that climate change has with poverty, food insecurity, underdevelopment, and diseases and degradation of the environment is obvious to us.”

* Minister of Land, Water and the Environment: Mr. Tesfai Ghebreslasie

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

It has become evident, in recent years, that climate change poses a significant threat to human livelihoods, and health. Projections made by the World Health Organization show an estimated 250,000 deaths as the results of various climate change related health issues, between the years 2030-2050[[1]](#footnote-1); the toll will impact future generations, not to mention the current population, which is already affected by the consequences of climate change. These predictions are very concerning to Eritrea, and the nation would like to continue to assist in creating, and enforcing effective implications on a global scale, to combat the egregious health effects created by ignorant environmental practices.

As one of many developing countries, Eritrea unfortunately experiences several of the poor health problems created by the effects of climate change, (examples include: malaria, hepatitis a, typhoid, dengue fever, diarrhea, malnutrition and yellow fever) while contributing only 4.57 Mt C02 eq. (2010) in greenhouse gas emissions[[2]](#footnote-2). Nevertheless, this does not mean, that Eritrea is not an active member, working for solutions, and mitigation. Eritrea believes that joining in partnership with developed nations, who have the means to afford more sustainable technologies will allow collaboration for better overall environmental practices, and a reduced the number of heath grievances in Eritrea. For example, establishing air conditioning units for public buildings, in efforts to reduce mortality rates during heat waves. Following Eritrea’s attendance at the “2015 Paris Climate Conference,” a report written, entitled, “Eritrea’s Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) Report[[3]](#footnote-3),” which explicitly includes a portion (4.1.4), on the topic of public health, discussing the spread of diseases throughout Eritrea, as an outcome of the rise of climate change. Additionally, in 2015, Eritrea held a domestic climate change conference in Asmara, which discussed resolutions for climate change issues faced within the nation[[4]](#footnote-4).

Eritrea is pleased by the resolution passed by the Sixty-First World Health Assembly, entitled “Climate change and health[[5]](#footnote-5),” which worked with the World Health Organization to make progress to create awareness on the issue of climate change health effects, as well as collaborating with various levels of international government, and United Nations to: “ensure that health protection and health promotion are central to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies[[6]](#footnote-6),” and better equip healthcare structures for the effects of climate change. Additionally, Eritrea supports the partnership with both the World Meteorological Organization on Health and Climate Change, and the Global Framework for Climate Services. Eritrea believes that the more research preformed on weather patterns, and the corresponding health issues that ensue, the better prepared nations can be to undertake the aftermath of these climate phenomenon’s, as well as the more resources available for countries to cope through these difficult situations.

Finally, to reiterate, Eritrea is affirming their commitment to developing current climate change frameworks, and ensure their reality. This said, Eritrea would like to acknowledge the difficult financial implications that may appear when considering solutions that confront current health despairs created by poor environmental stewardship. Eritrea is a nation with a GDP of only 543.82 million US Dollars, in 2013[[7]](#footnote-7) and foresees difficulty implementing the “possible solutions,” when many technologies come at high prices. Eritrea urges member states to consider the financial implications (as well as the fact Eritrea is not at fault for many of the health issues its people face): perhaps by creating an international fund for developing nations, or perhaps instituting a special United Nations committee which focuses specifically on how implications will affect developing nations financially, and how to best assist these nations. Regardless of the way in which actions are taken to overcome this, Eritrea will do their best to help create resolutions that are both attainable and realistic.

**Climate Refugees**

Eritrea, is currently in a situation similar to Yemen, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, and many other nations facing arid, rainless conditions, caused by climate change; thus, it is subsequently in the midst of a climate refugee crises[[8]](#footnote-8). Unfortunately, the nation faces rising numbers of malnutrition, and disease; and despite the two million US dollars donated to aid made by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs the situation continues to worsen. Furthermore, 200,000 refugees are still displaced in central Africa,[[9]](#footnote-9) and Eritrea has an emigration rate of approximately 5,000 citizens per month[[10]](#footnote-10)

Clearly, Eritrea (as a nation with climate refugees) supports the reduction of people who are forced to flee do to issues surrounding environmental changes. An account of one Eritrean family who found refuge in My Ayni Camp, Ethiopia, was truly destressing: after trying to seed short crops, and use different watering systems then they had previously, “the short-term seeds were successful, but not as successful as the seeds we used before,” Eritrea feels helpless that they are unable to make an immediate positive impact on the lives of its citizens. However, Eritrea is committed to working harmoniously with other member-states in hopes of creating resolutions which benefit all nations, including its own (and their citizens) who face crises. Eritrea hopes that the, predominately, developed nations who largely are responsible for the turmoil in developing nations, can especially assist financially, to help the citizens who face immediate impacts, and their governments, who do not have the economic support systems to create a lasting influence.

As a nation who has experienced armed conflict first-hand[[11]](#footnote-11), the nation of Eritrea expresses deep concern that climate change is a contributor of the basis of war, such as the case, currently, in Syria. Eritrea believes the best solution to halt climate refugee issues, and potentially subsequent climate-war refugees is to work to end the causes of climate change, at the roots; this way the issue will be less likely to re-occur later in the future. For example, creating equal distribution of climate change actions, and technology to reduce use of unsustainable resources and methods, will allow countries to all have a basic level of mediation in their nation, and hopefully cease people from having to elsewhere, globally, for better climate conditions. As previously stated, Eritrea is suffering from extreme drought[[12]](#footnote-12), that is difficult to control in its middle stages, however, if Eritrea had acquired stronger irrigation technologies, prior to the climate disaster, perhaps less civilians would have been forced to flee.

**Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Green House Emissions**

Eritrea is fully committed to upholding the results and measures discussed at the Paris Climate Conference, in 2015. Following the Paris Agreement, Eritrea drafted a report on its proposed actions to attain goals set forth at the conference (entitled “Eritrea’s Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) Report.”) In this document, Eritrea puts forward its goal to “reduce C02 emissions from fossil fuels by 21.3% in 2020, 30.2% by 2025,[[13]](#footnote-13)” an amazing feat, considering its greenhouse gas emissions are already sit at a low 4.57 Mt C02 eq. (2010)[[14]](#footnote-14). Additionally, Eritrea hopes to be at the fore front of future international climate change agreements, in regards to carbon- based emissions, and is making a conscious effort to make realistic, yet ambitious goals.

As mentioned in Section 4, of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties: 22nd Session, many developing nations (such as Eritrea) feels that they are passionate about ending climate change, and widely experience its effects (disease, unusual weather patterns, etc.) however, regardless of its actions, similar consequences will occur, do to the actions of larger, and more wealthy, developed nations. In other words, Eritrea’s efforts may be overshadowed by the 5406 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (2014), released into the atmosphere, by the United States,[[15]](#footnote-15) as well as the emissions created by other global superpowers. Eritrea believes it is important that developed nations take responsibility for their large emission rates, and that these member-states should ally to create a partnership with developing nations: be it financially, or another way, to assist impoverished nations in purchasing and implementing the necessary technology to reduce C02 emissions.

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