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Country/Delegation: Iran

Committee: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Topics: 1. The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health, 2. Climate Refugees, 3. Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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1.

Iran has experienced climatic hazards over several decades as a result of climate change. The most harmful of these have been floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures. Droughts and floods have especially affected Iran’s ability to keep sustainable development. Iran is highly vulnerable to climate change as a result of its arid areas, limited water availability, limited forest coverage, liability to drought and desertification, vulnerability to floods, atmospheric pollution from urban centers, and with an economy highly dependent on the production of fossil fuels. These factors of climate change also affect human health in Iran by enhancing the spread of vector/water born diseases, bacteria and viruses, and the organisms that transmit them, such as mosquitoes, ticks, and sandflies.

Based on the climatology information of Iran, Khuzestan and Hormozgan, southern provinces of the country, and country border cities have the highest risk for vector and waterborne diseases. Such vector and waterborne diseases include Malaria, Cutaneous Leishmaniasis, Visceral Leishmaniasis, Crime-Congo Fever, Typhoid, and Eltor. The increase in diseases will cause economic loss for Iran’s government. The relationship between Iran’s economic loss and the total number of cases for each disease will be used to asses which diseases deserve the most economic attention from the government.

In response to the threat on public health as a result of climate change, Iran plans to implement solutions so to prevent these threats. The Delegation of Iran plans to implement climate-adaptive health programs in vector-borne sectors, and develop early-warning systems for vector borne diseases, droughts, and floods. The Delegation of Iran also hopes to raise community awareness about vector-borne diseases, create quarantine establishments in the high risk areas to diseases, and to increase research efforts about climate change impacts on vector-borne diseases, droughts and floods, and public health. The Delegation of Iran also hopes to protect public health against climate change by providing safe piped water in all urban and rural areas of the country to aid in times of drought or in the presence of unsafe drinking water due to waterborne diseases. Iran’s position on public health also stresses the support of the Kyoto Protocol.

2. Iran does not receive many refugees, let alone climate refugees, and is currently dealing with the displacement of its own peoples as a result of climate change. In the Middle East, the majority of refugees are fleeing Syria not only as a result of Syria’s Civil War, but also as a result of the long lasting droughts that have been caused by climate change. However, these problems do not only stem from Syria’s climatic issues. Climate refugees are abundant in Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and parts of Turkey.

Iran supports the Assad regime, but the problem is that Iran does not share a common border with Syria. Iran has not blocked their borders from refugees; however, Syrian refugees/Syrian climate refugees would have to cross Iraq to reach Iran. This feat would be nearly impossible due to the fact that eastern Syria and northern Iraq are controlled by ISIS. Another reason Iran is not a popular sight for these refugees is because most of them tend to be Sunni Muslims, who do not prefer to take refuge in a Shiite country. As Iran has large portions nonoptimal farming land and is neighbors to ISIS and political turmoil, the country is not seen as a first choice for any type of refugee, especially those displaced by the effects of climate change. These climate refugees seek asylum in European countries such as Germany and Sweden in particular. The Delegation of Iran is supportive and sympathetic towards the plight of the climate refugees as they deal with the displacement of their people themselves.

The Delegation of Iran, therefore, encourages European countries to welcome

climate refugees and to protect their rights as many are not protected in their search for asylum. Iran also hopes to prevent the increase of climate refugees and the depriving effects of climate change by dealing with issues such as desertification, which causes the mass displacement of peoples, especially in the Middle East. The poor often do not have basic services like insurance to protect themselves against drought and natural disasters. The protection of these people's rights would entail financing micro-enterprise projects so to provide insurance in the event of climatic displacement or disaster. Programs such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provide a viable template for how to deal with the displacement of climate refugees. The USAID proves to enhance poor people’s access to financial services such as savings accounts and credit. Their programs hope to improve the quality and affordability of financial services, increase access to subordinated populations such as women, the disabled, and those living in remote areas, and assist smallholder farmers selling and producing their products by linking them with buyers and suppliers of good and services. The Delegation of Iran looks positively on the future development of programs such as this to prevent the displacement of its people and the people of other countries affected by climate change.

3.

Iran has been affected by climate change and hopes to prevent these effects through the reduction of greenhouse gas emission. The Iranian resource-based structure of the economy and the energy-based production system has caused the consumption of fossil fuels to increase. The relation between energy consumption and greenhouse gases shows the greenhouse gas emissions will be high in the future if Iran continues its economic habits. The statistics show that CO2 emissions per capita in Iran have increased from 3.6 T in 1990 to 6.9 T in 2008.

However, despite Iran’s fossil fuel based economy, Iran hopes to reduce its greenhouse gas emission and has done so through the ratification of the Paris Agreement. Iran ratified the Paris Agreement on April 22nd, 2016. Iran's ratification of the Paris Agreement shows Iran’s recognition and support of the goals of the Paris Agreement. Iran has aims of keeping the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C, since this would significantly reduce risks and the impacts of climate change. Iran understands the need to cooperate and enhance the understanding and support for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission and hopes to do so by implementing early warning systems, emergency preparedness and risk insurance.

Iran plans to reduce its greenhouse gas emission by allocating much of its natural gas to other European countries. Iran’s Persian Pipeline is a proposed natural gas pipeline to transfer Iranian gas from the Persian Gulf to European markets. Iran also hopes to create initiatives in Third World countries, provide financial support for developing countries, and to transfer technology to these regions while raising awareness about the importance of the existence of developing countries and how they’re affected by climate change.