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

Increased changes in greenhouse gas concentrations as well as other drivers of climate change, have a major impact on the environment we live in, and bring about a number of health consequences for all in New Zealand. The impacts climate change change have on the world we live in include increasing temperatures, drastic changes in precipitation, as well as an extreme change in weather, and topographical patterns worldwide. These intense changes in our climate has and would progressively continue to have huge implications on our health in a major way. Climate change threatens the water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe, along with the weather we experience; in turn having a range of impacts on overall health, along with people's susceptibility to disease and illness. The most vulnerable people of New Zealand being, children, the elderly, the poor, and those in general with underlying health conditions. An increase in mortality rates and disease contraction can be expected, due to the extreme change in weather patterns and events it causes. Things such as floods, tsunami’s, droughts, heatwaves, and other forms of natural disaster would see a considerable increase in how often they occur, and would be at a much more extreme level than normal. These are events that usually kill thousands upon thousands of people yearly in both developed and developing nations. Imagine the impact there would be if we saw an increase in its severity and frequency, of what already are severe events. These extreme events would directly affect human health by reducing the availability of safe food and drinking water; damaging roads and bridges, disrupting access to hospitals and pharmacies; interrupting communication, utility, and health care services; and can just generally harm someone through its sheer brutality. Changes in climate, as well, have an effect on the air we breathe. The shift in weather patterns and the increasing temperature would worsen the quality of the air we breathe, directly having an impact on our respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Rising carbon levels and warmer temperatures escalate the number of airborne allergens in the air. One in nine Kiwi adults are diagnosed with asthma with an overall cost of $800 million a year to fund asthma prevention and treatment. These numbers will be expected to increase continually if something isn't done abruptly to reduce impacts of climate change. When it comes to water impacts, people are more likely to become ill if exposed to contaminated drinking or recreational water. Climate change increases the risk of illness through increasing temperature. There would be more frequent, heavier rains and runoff, and storms. Health impacts would include things such as gastrointestinal illness like diarrhea, effects on the body's nervous and respiratory systems, as well as liver and kidney damage. Droughts can cause increased concentrations of effluent pathogens, overwhelming water treatment plants and contaminating surface water. (Older treatment plants being more at risk). These implications would lead to a higher demand for suitable sources of water and make it more difficult and expensive for the people of New Zealand to access water. Nutritious food is as well a basic necessity of life, and failure to obtain sufficient calories, macronutrients, and micronutrients, can result in illness and death. While malnutrition and hunger are typically problems in the developing world, New Zealand and other developed countries still have significant populations affected by insufficient food resources and undernutrition. Climate change and the higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are expected to affect food safety and nutrition even more so than it already is. Increases in chemical contaminants in foods, and salmonella levels escalating, all due to the rising climate, has had, and would continue to have major impacts on the population of New Zealand. The overall impact of climate change on the people of New Zealand's health, is a situation not to be taken lightly whatsoever. It is critical that sound policies be developed and approved to reduce the impact climate change has to ensure the safety and good health of our people.

**Topic 2: Climate Refugees**

A striking phenomenon of climate change is its induced displacement of people around the world. Every year, millions of people are being forced to move/flee from their homes in various countries around the globe, due to natural hazards in these countries; many of which are related to extreme weather conditions. The continual worsening of climate change is making matters worse, by increases the frequency and severity of these natural hazards occurring, and a recent rise in the use of the word ‘climate refugee’ has become far to prominent in today's world. The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), in 2009 claimed 500 million to 600 million people, nearly 10% of the world's population, are at risk of displacement by climate change (Vidal,2009). Around 26 million have already had to move; a figure that the EJF predicts could grow to 150 million by 2050. In a changing world, the traditional definition and understanding of the word ‘refugee’ must be something we look into, as we have to begin accommodating new circumstances and situations that emerge. The fundamental issue is that it is unclear what policies and laws there are that protect people being displaced by extreme weather hazards and events. New Zealand itself can be seen as a prime suspect in not being able to protect persons fleeing these hazards. A recent case last year, 2015, saw a Kiribati man named Ioane Teitiota’s bid rejected to become a climate refugee in the country. His home island of Kiribati, made up of a stream of islands only a few feet above sea level, was under threat of being swallowed by the sea, due to the recent escalations of climate change and its rising sea levels. His rejection and eventual deportation, was as a result of the insufficient definition and understanding of what a ‘refugee’ was by 1951 Refugee Convention. Despite officials acknowledging his and his family's position, they were still not able to classify him as a refugee and grant him living privileges in the country. This is why we in New Zealand believe that there must be a global response to climate refugees, in reevaluating what a refugee classifies as. This new category of refugee should find its place among international law, providing protection and better resources and accommodation to those who are forced to flee their countries and are in pursuit of a safe haven; similar to those fleeing from war and persecution. We here are committed to work with other countries around the world in finding a solution to this dilemma.

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

It is a priority of New Zealand that there continue to be international communal efforts in tackling the major dilemma of climate change. Although New Zealand has always been a low contributor to greenhouse emissions (approx. 0.15% of world emissions), we are committed to working towards a united solution for the problem of climate change. New Zealand, following the implementation of the Paris Agreement, has set a target of reducing greenhouse emissions by 30% below 2005 levels, by the year 2030. We have also set a long term ambition of reducing emissions to 50% of 1990 levels by the year 2050. Currently New Zealand is on set to the majority of its targets, however may find it difficult to meet all. The dominance of biological methane, in our agricultural based economy, as well as transportation emissions, have appeared as particular challenges for reduction on our recent emission profile. Nevertheless, we are taking serious action to attend to each issue. In terms of biological methane, New Zealand has committed $45 million to the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases out to June 2019, along with a further $48.5 million towards the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre, for the research into technologies that would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the country. On a transportation side, New Zealand is set to take advantage of existing renewable sources of electricity generation (approx. 80% in 2014). We have also set a target of increasing renewable generation to 90% by the year 2025, in attempt to reduce emissions from the transportation sector. By finding more renewable ways of transporting people having the littlest effect on emissions this will further support and better the transformation of our transport sector. Transformation of the agricultural and transportation sectors, however, is not projected to meet the 2020-2030 period as requested by all countries. It is expected that these sectors would see and accelerated emission reduction post 2030 once agricultural mitigation technology becomes more widely applied and the uptake of low-emission transport technology increases. We recognize that tackling a major issue such as climate change, is an urgent need, and some of these expectations have not been met by New Zealand, however, we ensure that we are doing all that we can to resolve these issues, and this matter will continue to be a top priority of ours.

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