**Introduction**

In the 22nd Session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP), three very urgent issues are to be discussed. The first, ‘The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health’, is an issue that affects both developed and undeveloped nations alike, primarily through the increasing risk of extreme weather conditions and food, water and vector borne diseases. An agreement must be made for mitigation of health risks associated with climate change as well as adaptation of healthcare programs worldwide to acknowledge and prepare for the ever worsening effects of this issue. The second topic, Climate Refugees, is a fairly new concept representing the social effects of climate change on humanity. As climate change begins to alter temperature and weather conditions more drastically, many areas will be rendered unfit to live or cultivate. Developed nations such as Norway have a responsibility in acknowledging and assisting those already displaced and helping affected nations adapt and respond to these issues. The third and final topic, ‘Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions’, is perhaps the most pressing of the three. As time progresses and temperatures, sea levels and extreme weather events rise in severity the issues above will only worsen. It is of utmost importance that an international binding agreement is formed on greenhouse gas emissions and countries such as Norway are held accountable for the commitments made regarding emissions and fossil fuels in past conferences.

**Topic 001: The Impact of Climate Change on Human Health**

As a developed western nation, Norway has the economic resources, technology and infrastructure to allow for high adaptive capacity regarding climate change and its health effects. Norway has had extremely limited experience with the effect of climate change on the health of its citizens, the largest issue in Norway regarding health and climate change being relatively mild air pollution (especially compared to past levels). In Norway, many people with asthma and respiratory complaints and those suffering from cardiovascular disease have experienced health problems caused by air pollution. Another domestic health concern as a result of climate change is flooding, which aside from physical injury can lead to drinking water contamination and spread of waterborne diseases. Though there has been no concrete data indicating climate induced increases in flooding frequency/severity, climate model simulations have projected significant changes in dry and wet event characteristics in the northernmost regions of Europe.

Since the 1990s there has been massive change in Norway’s climate change policy to both mitigate and adapt to health related concerns, however there are still areas in which improvement in necessary. In terms of health concerns regarding air pollution; Statutory limit values for particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, benzene, carbon monoxide and lead based on EUs directives on ambient air quality, are set out in the Norwegian Regulations relating to pollution control. National targets for air quality have also been introduced for several pollutants. These are based on socio-economic considerations as well as considerations of public health. These policies are also instituted in combination with other international standards for emission reduction such as those established in the Kyoto Protocol to minimize the effect of air pollution on public health. By contrast, adaptation to the health concern of climate change induced flooding has not been dealt with nearly as effectively. An example of this is the response to a flood in eastern Norway in 1995. Despite considerable efforts to improve flood management after 1995, there are cases where municipalities have allowed new construction in affected areas without special measures to prevent future flood damages. A recent study of institutional responses to the 1995 floods concluded that current institutional frameworks provide weak incentives for proactive flood management at the municipal level. Pressures from powerful interest groups to develop business and residential housing often lead to construction in areas that are known to be exposed to floods, avalanches, or mudslides. Such an example shows that despite availability of resources, nations may still lack the knowledge and the proper legislation to protect their citizens from climate related health concerns. Institutional frameworks on infrastructure should provide a strong emphasis on climate related issues. Citizens should be provided with the knowledge to understand the benefits and the importance of emphasizing these concerns as the link between climate and health is often ignored or underestimated.

**Topic 002: Climate Refugees**

As climate change continues, the risk of extreme weather conditions, natural disasters, water/food scarcity and air pollution related illnesses will all become far more prevalent than ever before. As these issues become more prevalent, so too will the volume of “Climate Refugees”. It is Norway’s responsibility as a developed nation and member of the European Union to aid in achieving international legal framework for the protection of climate refugees and providing humanitarian aid to those already or at risk of being displaced.

Past actions by Norway on this front include the establishment of ‘The Nansen Initiative’. The organization was founded by the Government of Norway to address the need for a more coherent, inter-governmental approach to the issue of cross border displacement in the context of climate change. Through international discussion and consultation, The Nansen Initiative does not intend to construct new legal standards itself but “to build consensus among states on the elements of a protection agenda, which may include standards of treatment. Its outcomes may be taken up at domestic, regional and global levels and lead to new laws, soft law instruments or binding agreements.” The key elements of this protection agenda are defined as follows:

1. PREPAREDNESS before displacement occurs;
2. PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE during displacement; and
3. TRANSITION TO SOLUTIONS in the aftermath of the disaster.

The concept being that the organization’s work will allow for a stronger legal framework for climate refugees to be established in the future.

Outside of Norway’s own Nansen Initiative, there has been little change established in the field of environmental migrants since the adoption of paragraph 14 (f) of the Cancún Outcome Agreement in December 2010 (COP16), where states recognized climate change-induced migration, displacement and relocation as an adaptation challenge. Norway is a contributing member of both the UN and the EU, however neither organization has created any form of protection status for climate refugees nor shown any large scale coordination on the topic. The European Union must not wait on this issue as they have done but must assume a more proactive role within the union and within larger organizations such as the UN.

**Topic 003: Steps to Enforce the Paris Agreement and Further Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Though the Paris Agreement produced at the COP 21 conference last year was successful in being passed and ratified by many countries. It is very unlikely that sufficient progress will be made towards the 2 degrees celsius target until the agreement becomes binding and member states are held accountable for their actions. As the agreement stands, there is little incentive or legislation for countries to make the drastic changes to their entire economic sector, environmental policy, etc. to achieve the overall goal.

Norway was the first developed nation to ratify the Paris Agreement after it was introduced in December of 2015. Therefore, Norway is one of the 97 parties that are now legally bound to the agreement by their respective legislative bodies. Both prior to and following the conference, Norway has slowly taken action in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. This includes the divestment of its sovereign wealth fund from 14 coal mining companies, 5 tar sands oil producers and several other companies involved with the fossil fuel industry. Norway’s sovereign wealth fund has also used its influence in the corporations it remains invested in to engage in discussion over steps towards more sustainable practices. Despite this, Norway still has its fair share of problems involving the fossil fuel industry as it still, even after divestments, derives an extremely large amount of wealth from North Sea oil. In fact, in May of 2016 Norway violated the Paris Agreement by giving approval to 13 oil explorers to begin offshore drilling. The reality is that if nations wish to adhere to the “carbon budget” necessary to have a chance of holding the planet to only a 2-degree Celsius rise in temperature from pre-industrial levels, it will cause large fossil fuel corporations to lose about $1 trillion a year. The current situation in Norway shows just how difficult it is to balance environment and economy under the targets of the Paris Agreement. In order to ensure that countries such as Norway will no longer violate the agreement, clear, specific timelines must be established for phasing out fossil fuel investment and nations need to be closely monitored and held legally accountable for their decisions.

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