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UNFCCC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Climate Change and Human Health

There is zero scientific doubt that earth’s climate is rising at a gradual, yet constant rate. There is also zero scientific doubt that the health of the general population of the DRC has always been compromised, climate change or not. Global warming only serves as a catalyst to the deteriorating condition of the average DRC citizen’s health.

Infectious diseases such as Zika and Malaria run rampant throughout the country, and throughout the whole of Africa due to a simple, scientific process. Greenhouse gases such as CO2 cannot leave the atmosphere, therefore trapping heat above the earth. This causes global temperatures to rise, which allows disease-carrying insects to breed more quickly and thrive more easily. It has also been proven that the rapid change in the earth’s condition can cause natural disasters such as floods and landslides. All of these factors contribute to the great lack of well-being and health that the world is currently experiencing.

The impact of climate change on the DRC is massive. Two in five Congolese adults are affected by a mosquito-borne illness. These include, Zika, Yellow Fever, and Malaria. All of these infections can be traced back to the growth of insect population caused by climate change.

Almost 60% of all land area of the DRC is covered by forest. The lush forests provide lumber, oil, and other essential exports to major trading partners such as the United States. Due to climate change, however, these forests do not get the nutrients they need, which could be extremely detrimental to the financial stability of the DRC. Without monetary strength from trade, DRC citizens could be looking at low quality healthcare with high costs. At a time so dire, this must not occur.

In order to address the issues previously stated, the Democratic Republic of the Congo will institute effective, and relatively low-cost programs. In order to combat the issue of mosquito-borne illnesses, mosquito nets will be distributed in every city and village. Very few people have *free* access to this vital source of protection, and it is imperative that no DRC citizen sleep without one. In order to combat the issue of unhealthy forests, the DRC will implement a system that uses human waste to fertilize plants and encourage growth. This system is called *sludge conversion,* and will ultimately serve as an effective fertilizer.

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Climate Refugees

The impact of the global phenomenon that is climate change has driven many people out of their own homes. These people have been forced to seek refuge in foreign places, and because of this, are often discriminated against. Natural disasters and pollution alike have caused this crisis, one that has brought much pain and ruin upon families and individuals. Because this process is so slow, although consistent, it is not often covered by media. Activism is nearly impossible without media coverage, and it is imperative that more people are aware of their fellow human beings and the suffering that befalls them. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to convince certain governments to let those who need aid cross their borders, and rightfully so. However, permitting the entrance of refugees can have a very positive impact on the economy.

Nearly 500,000 individuals have sought refuge in the DRC from all over the world. 47% of these refugees came from Uganda, and the rest came from other African countries. The DRC welcomed these individuals with open arms. These refugees come from a number of backgrounds. Most came to escape their own war-torn home countries, but there is no data showing how many sought refuge from the natural disasters that plagued their homes. The DRC can offer insight to other countries that are weighing their options. Refugee admittance is an effective stimulant for the economy. The need for development creates jobs, and many refugees are willing to work in order to keep themselves and their families sustained. Housing development in the DRC has risen by 30% since refugees began to be taken in in 2015. Since then, thousands of jobs have been created, and the lives of these refugees have improved.

If it is within a country’s financial, populational, and secure ability, accepting refugees should be heavily considered. The DRC cannot properly weigh in on the topic of climate refugees, because it is not entirely known if any have been received. However, the DRC *can* attest to the fact that if possible, taking in refugees can be highly beneficial to the health, diversity, and economy of a country. The refugees taken in by the DRC have greatly improved their lives, and positively affected those of the citizens that they joined. The DRC implores able governments to consider the fact that people in need are not burdens, and they are not criminals. Crime rates have not risen with the coming of refugees in the DRC. Most of these refugees are families that are willing to work and are in search of a better future.

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The Paris Agreement

Greenhouse gases are becoming increasingly present in the earth’s atmosphere. The effects of the Greenhouse Gas Effect are so devastating, that all species are at risk, including humans. Air quality has decreased exponentially, sea levels have risen, and data show that the overall health of the average human has declined notably. The goal of the Paris Agreement is to deal with and control Greenhouse Gas emissions, implement serious mitigation strategies, and effectively channel finances into the cause, all by 2020.

In 2015, the delegation of the DRC submitted its Climate Action Plan in regards to the Paris Agreement. The issue of climate change is a big one to the DRC. The Democratic Republic of Congo ratified the UNFCCC in 1995 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, making its positions clear. In response to the agenda of the United Nations Río Conference in 1992 and with the help of certain NGOs, the DRC finalized its first National Environmental Action Plan in 1997.

This action plan addressed the country’s major issues related to poverty, population growth and environmental protection. Specifically, to prevent average atmospheric temperatures rising above 2ºC and to benefit from the many opportunities that come with a necessary global transformation to clean and sustainable development. The DRC recognizes the problem with increasing Greenhouse Gas emissions, and agrees that they must be reduced.

In order to decrease Greenhouse Gas emissions, the DRC proposes a strict and heavy carbon tax. A carbon tax would specifically target the use and overuse of fossil fuels from automobiles and factories, with the intent to decrease CO2 emissions created by citizens of the DRC. Security of land, forests and carbon rights is imperative to the success of the long-term health of any country. Specifically, in climate change mitigation and for sustainable resource use and management. The DRC encourages other able countries to follow suit. With a carbon tax, CO2 emissions can be reduced, and the overall health of the population and the earth can be improved.