Committee: United Nations Framework on Climate Change

Delegate: Carl Beach

Delegation: Federal Republic of Germany

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

Within Germany, health care coverage is universal for all legal residents, in which social government insurance accounts for 85% of the population, and with private insurance, some 99.6% of the population is ensured. The subsequent fees for the average doctor visit are very inexpensive, and the 2011 health spending per capita of Germany was $4,495, when costs of living are taken into account, opposed to the US, in which the 2011 health spending per capita rested at $8,508.

The number of days per year in which temperatures rise to over 30 degrees centigrade has risen from 3-8 in Germany, who is expected to see a general rising in temperatures, more humid winters, more frequent extreme weather events, and a greater risk of invasive species. Germany has worked towards heat warning systems, new agricultural drought resistant crops, flood control, and planning of urban and costal protection. After the 2003 heat wave adaptation measures to health sector include increased education of the public, specialized medical/nursing staff about health risks and preventative measures. Introduction of early-warning systems that are aligned at local and federal levels, (one issue lacking during the 2003 heat wave), increased medical research in climate related diseases, expansion of medical prevention and care, and implementing technical protection such as air conditioning.

In terms of food security, Germany and the EU have banned GMOs, and also have virtually no cases of malnutrition. A New York Times study in 2016 has found that “genetic modification in the US and Canada has not accelerated increases in crop yields or led to overall reduction in the use of pesticides.” After analyzing sugar and beat, wheat, and corn, rapeseed related crops, and the use of insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, this NY Times study shows that the US and Canada have gained no discernible advantage in yields- food per acre- compared to Western Europe. While GMOs has worked to increase bug and pesticide poison resistance, cross-breeding plants to bring out desirable traits, has greater potential to increase crop yield. In working towards food security threatened by climate change, GMOs are, on average, more expansive due to higher seed costs, and heavier pesticide appliance. Germany instead has worked with organizations such as CGAIR to safeguard seed diversity and cross-breed many non-domesticated crops, specialized in growing in severe climates, with domestic crops to increase the adaptability of food security in the 21st century.

**Climate Refugees:**

Germany maintains an open door policy to refugees, and accepted over 1 million refugees in 2015 alone, mostly those displaced from conflict within the Middle East. The EU works in a Common European Asylum System which ensures the legal adoption of refugees into member states, and despite Germany’s heavy role in the refugee absorption, issues regarding the Asylum System and the general responsibilities of various European countries have led to disagreements.

Germany itself does not expect to experience large external displacement of German refugees due to climate related events. Germany has worked to ensure that flooding and heavy precipitation does no cause potential risk for internal displacement. For example, the Eider Barrage in Germany is located at the entrance to the North Sea Coast, and is Germany’s largest coastal protection structure which operates a series of dykes and locks to prevent flooding.

Among the EU, the European Emergency Response Capacity, established in 2001, is a large volunteer population in which 19 emergency response units are already registered (water purification teams, high capacity pumping units, firefighting teams, etc.). Those participating in the ERC have financial support to then upgrade their national response capacities to natural disasters, in which the EU covers 85% of costs related to transport of teams, and additionally contributes to the cost of certification and training costs. The European Medical Corps also relay on voluntary contributions form members states, and up to date nine member states have volunteered special medical units, including Germany. Two of these units were deployed in response to the Ebola crisis.

Germany’s emergency response plan involves both the government administration to the states, and state response. NGO cooperate bodies make up 80% of Germany’s rescue service and 95% of the German disaster medical relief, which combined with the government employees employ over 1.2 million volunteers and 100,000 professionals. Rescue service is then delegated to professionals while disaster relief is conducted by volunteers. The German government also maintains the right to call on the deferral army in the case of a disaster, and this was done in the Oder River flood of 1997.

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

Germany and its chancellor, Angela Merkel, have worked tirelessly within many multinational bodies such as the EU, the G7, and the UN to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The EU in particular operates a Carbon Trading System (ETS) operates in 31 countries and covers some 45% of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions under this system. ETS works on a cap and trade principle, in which an overall cap is set on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions emitted by instillations in the system. Overtime this cap is reduced so that total emissions fall. The trade features of this system including companies buying emission allowances, which can be traded, within the emissions cap. EU emissions as a whole are 24% below 1990 levels, and the EU is on track to meet the 20% target reduction by 2020. Even during 1990-2014 the EU’s GDP grew by 48% while its amount of emissions to produce a euro of economic value was reduced nearly in half, showing the ETS’s economic feasibility. Germany would seek to link EU ETS with other compatible systems.

The German Ecological Tax Reform in 1999, increased taxes on fuels and levied taxes on non-renewable electricity production. Income taxes were reduced proportionally so that the total tax burden remained constant. This is an example of tax shifting that can be very effective, so that while the overall tax burden is not increased, emissions taxes may increase. Germany supports more strict carbon reduction methods, such as taxes on carbon, though recognizes these taxes may not need to be mandatory. Additionally, G20 government’s subsidies to fossil fuel production averaged $444 billion annually in 2013 and 2014. Germany has ended fossil fuel production subsidies, and believes in a transition of these subsidies to fund investment to renewable sources.

Germany has aimed to cut greenhouse gas emissions, starting in 2007, by 40% by 2020, and up to 95% in 2050. As of 2014, Germany had reduced 27.7% of this 40% goal. Before the UN climate summit in Paris of 2015, Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, or INDCs, were present in many countries such as Germany. Most of Germany’s energy comes from wind, solar, and biomass energy sources while hydropower is relatively low.

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