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**Position Paper for the UN Framework on Climate Change**

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

Today, climate change is amongst the most challenging and pressing tasks that humanity faces. It is widely recognised that climate change will not only have harsh impacts in the future, but also in the present day. (WHO, 2016) Around the world, we have already begun to see the detrimental effects of climate change on human health, such as an increase in the spread of infectious diseases and the negative impacts of climate change on clean air and water, and consequently, human health. (WHO, 2016). The effects on human health due to climate change vary greatly depending on the socio-economic status and location of a country. Consequently, different health hazards are present in different parts of the world. Moreover, hazards relating to the spread of diseases are more common in developing countries while developed countries face problems in terms of air pollution, heat stress and heat waves.

Spain, due to its geographical location, faces a grave threat from climate change. Recent studies have concluded that if greenhouse gas emissions are not significantly reduced over the following decades, southern Spain and much of the Mediterranean will transform into an arid desert by 2100 (Vaughan, 2016) Additionally, Spain already recorded its hottest year in 2015, and also experienced a record breaking heat wave from June-July; any additional increases in temperature could be devastating for our population. (The Local, 2016) The increase in temperature poses a constant threat to the health of the locals, especially due to high air pollution levels and heat waves (The Local, 2016). These issues are persistent in numerous countries throughout the world and need to be combatted. Spain is one of the most adversely affected countries by climate change in the developed world; the WHO reports states that Spain is the most polluted country in Europe. (the local, 2016).

Consequently, Spain realizes the importance of reducing the impacts of climate change and health hazards such as air pollution, which stem from climate change. As a result, Spain has signed on to the Paris agreement and the Congress has agreed to fast track the ratification of the agreement (Progressive Spain, 2016). Spain has decided to combat our air pollution problem through the use of biofuels across the country (Jimeno, 2016). The nation has adopted a quota system, in which a national energy commission requires companies to use a certain amount of biofuels and submit certificates to the commission (Jimeno, 2016). Furthermore, companies which fail to meet the requirements/ quota have to pay penalties which are then distributed amongst the companies that exceeded the quotas (Jimeno, 2016). This model can be adopted in countries with a similar socio-economic status and could potentially reduce air pollution, thus helping combat problems stemming from air pollution. Additionally, this system does not only negate air pollution but also encourages the use of environmentally friendly fuels through a simple reward system. Moreover, this system can be adopted by newly industrializing countries with †he help of foreign aid. Numerous developing counties have substantial secondary industries but do not have any policy on controlling emissions. The quota system used in Spain could be modified and made available to these countries, with rewards for companies who exceed their quota coming from foreign aid and the penalties paid by companies which fail to meet their quotas.

**Topic Two: Climate Refugees**

Climate change is an immense force and can have grave effects on humans through natural disasters that lead to forced displacements. The UNHCR states that people will attempt to survive the changing landscape till a certain extent but will eventually move due to the innate desire to survive (UNHCR, 2015). The term refugee has political significance and many people that are displaced by climate change may not meet this definition but still need support. The effects of climate change on a country can be disastrous as shown by the Syrian Crisis which started out as a climate change issue but due to widespread avoidance and unwillingness to resolve the issue, has been transformed into the most pressing issue faced by the world today. (Dinshaw, 2015) A severe draught caused farmers to move inland to cities resulting in overpopulated cities, causing unrest and forcing Syrians out of Syria and coining the term ‘Syrian’ refugee. Problems such as this are prevalent throughout the world, and need to combatted properly to first reduce the amount of climate refugees and to ensure proper transition of existing climate refugees.

Spain along with various countries from Europe, has already strongly shown its stance on refugees through the opening of our doors to refugees from the Mediterranean in 2015. (Mount, 2015) Furthermore, Spain provided various methods of support to refugees with programs such as housing and language lessons being provided in Barcelona. (Mount, 2015) Additionally, municipalities in Spain took the matter in their own hands and set up ‘safe cities’ in order to provide a safe haven for incoming refugees, for example the city of Valencia dedicated 110 social workers just to take care of refugee children. (Piquer, 2015) This model of helping refugees can be changed and geared towards helping climate refugees coming from nations that have been affected by natural disasters.

Climate refugees need to be clearly defined by the UN and need to given a category by themselves and can not be lumped together with normal refugees, due to the extremity of their situation. Climate refugees have limited resources due to their displacement and need immediate. Spain’s willingness to help refugees is apparent through the actions taken in 2015, but Spain alone can not take on the task of taking in climate refugees and integrating them. Accepting climate refugees is only the first step in a long process, and needs to be combined with support and integration programs such as the language programs adopted by Spain. Climate refugees go through emotional and physical turmoil and acceptance is only the first step to recovery and support from the local government is necessary for them to become contributing members of society.

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

Spain is yet to ratify the agreement, but has put the agreement on a ‘fast track’ ratification process of 6-months in comparison to the normal year-long process (Progressive Spain, 2016).

Spain is firmly committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for various reasons. First, we recognize the need to decrease the significant amount of air pollution in the country. Second, as recent studies have shown, the current rates of climate change will have grave effects on South Spain and will transform the existing landscape into arid desert by 2100 (Vaughan, 2016). Consequently, Spain has adopted many policies to combat these problems and reduce air pollution, namely the biofuel quota system which rewards companies who use biofuels and concurrently forces companies that do not meet quotas to pay fines and penalties. (Jimeno, 2016)

The Paris agreement has ambitious goals but more reduction in greenhouse gas rates is required in order to combat the disastrous effects of climate change. The committee can encourage further reduction with a rewards-based program, similar to the current biofuel quota system adopted by Spain but on a much larger scale. Incentives can be provided for lower emissions and severe penalties can be enacted for exceeding emission limitations. Furthermore, aid needs to be provided to developing countries in order to develop the framework for more environmentally-friendly technology. By the same token, seminars need to be held for companies throughout developing countries highlighting the importance of reducing emissions and promoting the use of more efficient technology. These programs may require an increase in the $100 billion fund, but will have an immense impact in terms reducing the adverse effects of climate change. Next the goals of COP22 can be achieved by reducing the dependence on cars as a method of transportation. Moreover, countries need to develop sustainable and efficient public transport methods which reduce emission outputs significantly. Countries that have been reluctant to sign on to climate treaties in the past can be given incentive by introducing rewards that are mainly financial in nature. These awards can be stemmed from the $100 billion fund, and will encourage counties who have been reluctant of entering these agreements before to rethink their stance.

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