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HUMAN RIGHTS I

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Topic I:

Global initiatives to support economically disadvantaged regions threatened by climate change

I. Background information

Climate change affects low-income countries the most. This fact is not only unfair as these countries produce the least greenhouse gases but also poses a big issue because they have far less capability to adapt to the changes than high-income countries. An important thing to note is also the fact that the affected poor countries' mean annual growth rate decreases significantly which is mainly influenced by the economies relying on agriculture or natural resource extraction which is very negatively influenced by the global warming.

The climate change has many consequences. The environmental costs are increased temperature, excess precipitation or droughts, increased sea levels and overall extreme weather conditions. These affect agricultural production, the productivity of workers, safe water harder to access and the land non-habitable. Due to this, many citizens are forced to become environmental refugees. The health effects include vector-borne, water and food-borne

diseases, respiratory problems, allergic disorders, malnutrition, heat-related disorders and mental health problems.

Another issue that the climate change poses is the shrinking of land-based glaciers. This increases in aeroallergens and air pollutants in ambient air and causes changes in the ecosystem which ends with reducing biodiversity.

The effects of climate change on the environment can already be observed and the look into the future is even scarier. In the coming years, the global warming is expected to double with 130 countries to be highly vulnerable to climate change and 50 countries to be suffering from acute impacts. The droughts will get longer and more frequent, the hurricanes will become more intense, sea levels will rise and arctic will probably become ice-free.

II. UN involvement

United Nations have set up The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which is an international mechanism for facilitating the cooperation between Member States. The UN is the only forum where an agreement towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions can be implemented as there are 190 countries with different economies and views but with one goal and atmosphere because this challenge involves every nation. In 2007 the climate change became an issue of a very high concern.

Another mechanism of the UN such as The Kyoto's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) which allows higher funds and new high-technology to flow to the affected countries, The United Nations Environment Programme has implemented a project that has brought solar energy to many households in India which not only reduced emissions but also an immediate help in the local community. Rapidly growing economies promised to use the renewable resources which, according to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has reduced the emissions by 500 million tons over the past three years.

On 1st January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into force. With these new goals, countries will make efforts to not only end poverty but help with climate change as well. Even though they are not legally binding, the governments are expected to establish frameworks for achievement of the 17 goals.

III. Questions to consider

- Is your country able to help with this issue?
- Has your country made any efforts to help with this crisis? If not, why?

- How deeply is your country affected?
- What are the best steps that your country is able to undertake in order to help with this issue?
- Are the 17 Goals enough or should be established an agenda focused on the climate change alone?

IV. Sources

- <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214999615012242>
- <https://www.opencanada.org/features/inequality-explained-7-ways-climate-change-and-inequality-are-connected/>
- <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/un-role-climate-change-action-taking-lead-towards-global-response>
- <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>
- <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

Topic II:

Improve conditions in refugee camps in North Africa and incorporate the possibility to apply for asylum on site

I. Background Information

North Africa is nowadays one of the most overcrowded areas, when talking about the number of refugees. Over 6 million refugees are located on the Middle East and North Africa. According to the continuing refugee crisis, the flow of asylum seekers and refugees is getting stronger. Their intention is to continue to Europe through Mediterranean Sea, but they also stay in refugee camps in North Africa. Sometimes just temporarily and sometimes for an indefinite period of time. They very often fail to apply for the asylum there, so it forces them to stay in local refugee camps.

Refugee camps are getting overcrowded, so the countries of North Africa often face issues with taking refugees in the camps. Refugees, who are not taken in have nowhere to go and have no other choice than staying on the streets. This leads to instability, chaos, dissatisfaction not only of citizens, but also of refugees. In extreme cases, it can lead to violence and rancor. Countries of North Africa also suffer from poverty, partly because of this situation. The most disconcerting situation is in Libya, being the most significant transit country.

The situation in camps is alarming. Countries are not able to access basic services to asylum seekers and refugees, according to the amount of them and to the lack of finances. Not sufficient medical care, shortcoming of food, improper hygiene, deficiency of space lead to dissatisfaction, violence and turmoil.

II. UN Involvement

In 1960, when the flow of refugees started to be intense due to decolonization, the UNHCR was able to get involved and take action in solving this issue. So, the UN started to support the most affected countries of North Africa by humanitarian and financial aid.

Since 2014 UNHCR works on a project called 'Global action plan to end statelessness', which is planned to continue until 2024. This project involves a lot of actions, which should enable getting the asylum, ensure better system of the identity management, ensure safety and protect refugees. Some of the main actions are: ensuring birth registrations and that children aren't born stateless, preventing nationality loss, improving data on statelessness.

With help of the UN, countries of North Africa have already invested more than 180 million USD into refugee programs and IDP projects (Internally Displaced Persons projects).

For 2018, it's planning to continue promoting the individual biometric registration – more information at the UNHCR site, chapter Safeguarding fundamental rights.

The UN supports governments by financial and humanitarian aid and especially in the case of Libya is going to continue, even strengthen supporting it.

III. Question to Consider

- What is your country's stance on the refugee crisis?
- How could your country contribute in the issue of statelessness?
- Is your country able to financially help the most affected countries of North Africa?
- How would your country solve the problem of insufficient conditions in refugee camps?

IV. Sources

- <http://www.unhcr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa.html>
- <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/statelessness/54621bf49/global-action-plan-end-statelessness-2014-2024.html?query=global%20action%20plan%20to%20end%20statelessness>