

Climate Migration for the Japan Delegation

Before going into detail on the delegation from Japan's specific stance on the broader topic of climate migration, we believe it is important to establish what exactly climate refugees are, and why our nation's policy regarding climate refugees is becoming ever more prevalent.

The term refugee has quite specific and limiting parameters: if one is not forced out of their home based upon a specific type of persecution or violence, they are technically not considered a refugee. Colloquially however, the term "refugee" has expanded over the years to more broadly include any group of people who are no longer able to live in their original home due to any number of factors. Climate refugees specifically are those forced to migrate to a new home because increasingly dangerous environmental factors as a result of global warming make their previous home uninhabitable. Climate migration can occur as a result of various changes in climate ranging from extreme flooding and rise in sea levels to drought and eventual famine. As global warming continues to alter previously normal global temperatures and activity, the number of climate refugees globally will continue to rise.

First, climate refugees must be recognized as genuine refugees on the global scale. Additionally, the terms "climate refugee" and "economic refugee" are more similar than their names give them credit for. In the context of our warming world, economic refugees are climate refugees whose circumstances require migration not because of a specific natural disaster or the imminent sinking of their home, but because the climate has put them out of work. Most notably this affects farmers, where fluctuation in temperatures and erratic flooding patterns leads to consistent droughts, requiring they

seek asylum in a neighboring country. As it stands now, despite the fact that not many refugees are forced out of their countries *solely* due to the changing climate, any person or family whose primary reason for seeking asylum is the changing climate in their home should be granted refugee status. Although the exact number of climate migrants moving forward is unknown, many estimates predict that by 2050 there may be at least 200 million globally. As it stands now, Japan rarely accepts any refugees, regardless of their situation. In 2019, there were only 1,700 refugees in the entire country. Historically, Japan has been one of the hardest countries to emigrate to and eventually gain citizen status in. Harsh requirements for citizenship and steep taxes make establishing a life in Japan quite difficult. However, Japan's aging population and consistently shrinking workforce is increasing the need for emigration into the country, and makes it an ideal destination for a group of climate refugees in Southeast Asia (where there will eventually be over 100 million said refugees). So, Japan will accept a sum of climate refugees over the course of the next 15-20 years ranging from 6-8 million mark, which would triple Japan's immigrant population. However, as these decades pass, more and more climate refugees in Southeast Asia will need homes, and the responsibility falls on all countries - both directly in the region and bordering it - to save them. The countries most fit to accept significant sums of refugees are Thailand which sits in the middle of the region, South Korea to the north, and Australia and New Zealand to the south. The latter nation is one of the most welcoming to immigrants, and Japan believes that the existing cultural and language barriers can be overcome in the name of saving lives.

As we know, refugee crises are not simply solved when a group of people successfully emigrates to a new country. The question of how this group will adapt to

their new environment and integrate into their new home still remains. Japan believes that, although it will be difficult, communities of families from Myanmar, the Philippines, and Indonesia that will be coming into the country will be able to integrate into Japanese life without much long term trouble. Most of these climate refugees will have been farmers and workers in the agriculture industry in their past homes, and as it stands, a main demand for work in Japan is in agriculture. There is already a substantial population of foreign-born workers in Japan's agriculture industry, and these new members of the country will aid a workforce in desperate need of manpower and experience. Additionally, since large swaths of climate refugees will be moving into the country together, united by their experience, communities and towns will begin to emerge, centered around this agricultural work, allowing these groups to still find a sense of home and community in Japan.