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International Climate Alliance: Coordinating efforts for a sustainable future.

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ABSTRACT:

Climate change is one of our generation's most important challenges, having far-reaching consequences for the environment, society, and the global economy. In a gist, climate change can be defined as, long-term shifts in temperature patterns and weather conditions. Since the 1800s, human activities have contributed a lot to the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The scientific consensus is clear: our planet is experiencing a rapid warming trend, largely driven by the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial activities.

In understanding and addressing this climate change, international agreements are the critical instruments. These agreements have provided a platform for countries to come together, acknowledge the urgency of the issue, and commit to taking meaningful steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. These agreements not only laid the groundwork for collaborative effort but also urged states to collaborate in order to create a more sustainable and resilient future. By establishing common goals, frameworks, and mechanisms, these agreements are playing a crucial role in addressing the global climate crisis. Additionally, international agreements have facilitated collaboration and knowledge-sharing among nations. They have created opportunities for the exchange of best practices. Technology transfer, and capacity building, enable countries to learn from each other's experiences and accelerate their transitions to low-carbon economies. To build a low-carbon future it is important that countries must uphold and take strict actions to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

INTRODUCTION:

Over a period of time, the temperature of the earth has raised tremendously. The patterns of the weather have shifted due to the warming temperatures, which is upsetting the natural order. This is partly because burning fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas, results in the production of heat-trapping gases. This puts our own lives and all other kinds of life on Earth in grave danger. At a global level, several agreements, conventions, treaties, and protocols have been made to regulate the activities of humans in the right direction that have a substantial impact

on climate change. One of the significant international agreements on climate change was adopted in the year 1992 i.e. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Under the UNFCCC, Countries meet annually at the conference of the parties to assess progress, negotiate further commitments, and discuss key issues related to climate change. The landmark agreements; the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, represented a major milestone in international climate diplomacy. Furthermore, the UN Climate Change Summit and other international fora are some of the significant global environmental agreements that are aiming at international environmental issues and are taking actions to deal with them.

International agreements on climate change have provided a vital framework for global cooperation and action. By establishing legal frameworks, and mechanisms, these agreements have played a crucial role in shaping national and international climate policies. They provide a framework for global cooperation, guiding countries in their efforts to reduce emissions, adapt to climate impacts, and promote sustainable development. While international agreements are a crucial step forward, their implementation and enforcement remain key challenges. Although various stakeholders such as governments, businesses, civil societies, and individuals have been a part of this regime for a long period of time, the results are still not satisfactory. Hence, collaborative efforts of nations and all levels of society are essential to drive transformative change and achieve the goals set forth in international agreements. There have been several international agreements and initiatives focused on addressing climate change. Here are some key ones:

International agreements and initiatives focused on addressing climate change:

1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

At the global level, one of the most important agreements is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), established in 1992. The UNFCCC provides a framework for international cooperation to combat climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to its impacts. The treaty was opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1992, and it entered into force on March 21, 1994.¹ The UNFCCC

¹ shivajicollege,

<https://www.shivajicollege.ac.in/sPanel/uploads/econtent/0c1e68bbad478b08d9d8b5081cab1b1f.pdf>, (last visited June. 28, 2023).

has universal membership, with 198 parties (197 countries plus the European Union) as of now.² The UNFCCC promotes the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” which acknowledges the different capacities and circumstances of developed and developing countries in addressing climate change. The agreement has been instrumental in shaping subsequent climate-related agreements, including the landmark Kyoto Protocol (1997). And the Paris Agreement was reached in 2015.

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The UNFCCC continues to play a vital role in ongoing international efforts to address climate change, including supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement and enhancing global ambition to tackle the climate crisis.

2. The Kyoto Protocol:

The Kyoto Protocol was established in 1997, under the UNFCCC. The Kyoto Protocol sets binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. It introduced the concept of legally binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and created mechanisms to deal with the pertaining issues. The main objective of the Kyoto Protocol is to limit the emissions of six greenhouse gases, namely; carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆).⁵ The

² United Nations Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/status-of-ratification-of-the-convention>, (last visited June 30, 2023)

³ shivajicollege, Supra note 01, at 04.

⁴ United Nations Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/status-of-ratification-of-the-convention>, (last visited June 30, 2023)

⁵ United Nations Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-kyoto-protocol/what-is-the-kyoto-protocol/kyoto-protocol-targets-for-the-first-commitment-period>, (Last visited, 01 July 1, 2023)

agreement sets specific emissions reduction targets for developed countries, also known as Annex I countries, over a specified commitment period.

The protocol's emphasis on emissions reductions, the establishment of mechanisms to incentivize sustainable practices, and the focus on global cooperation have contributed to shaping the ongoing international efforts to combat climate change. The protocol employs three market-based mechanisms to achieve these targets.⁶

- a) Clean Development Mechanisms,
- b) International Emissions Trading,
- c) Joint Implementation

To ensure accountability and compliance, the Kyoto Protocol also establishes a rigorous system of reporting and monitoring emissions data.

Despite of significance in international climate efforts, it is crucial to note that the Kyoto Protocol's effectiveness has been a subject of debate. Some critics argue that the emission reduction targets set by the protocol were insufficient to address the magnitude of the climate crisis. But it can't be ignored that, the Kyoto Protocol remains an important milestone in international climate policy.

3. The Paris Agreement, 2015:

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, is a landmark international treaty under the UNFCCC. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Although, recently governments decided to update their national targets by 2020 since they were already aware that the level of emissions reductions suggested in their national targets (or nationally determined contributions, or NDCs) would not be sufficient to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.⁷ It was evident at COP26 (November 2021) that the new targets were still insufficient and would, at most, limit warming to 2.4 C, nearly a full degree beyond the Paris temperature limit.⁸⁹ One of the key features of

⁶ United Nations Climate Change, https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol , (last visited, 01 July 1, 2023)

⁷ climateactiontracker, <https://climateactiontracker.org/climate-target-update-tracker-2022/>, (last visited June. 28, 2023).

⁸ Climate Action Tracker, <https://climateactiontracker.org/climate-target-update-tracker-2022/> , (Last visited, July 1, 2023)

⁹ *Id*, at 06.

the Paris Agreement is the concept of nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Each participating country is required to submit an NDC outlining its efforts to reduce emissions and let the public know, how they are implementing climate actions.¹⁰ The agreement also establishes a transparency framework to track and report progress, enabling countries to monitor and assess their own efforts as well as the global progress towards the temperature goals.

The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016, and has been ratified by 196 parties, making it a truly global and comprehensive effort to address climate change.¹¹ It has been widely hailed as a historic achievement and a significant step forward in international cooperation on Climate Change. Doubtless, the Paris Agreement has inspired numerous initiatives and collaborations, and policies at the national, regional, and local levels. However, the challenge, of effectively implementing the agreement and achieving its temperature goals remains significant, requiring continued commitment and collective efforts from all parties involved.

4. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are voluntary emission reduction targets and actions that countries commit to, under the Paris Agreement. Each country submits to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change impacts.

NDCs play a crucial role in driving global climate action, as they serve as a roadmap for countries' climate efforts and provide the basis for international collaboration. It outlines the mitigation goals, targets, and policies that countries plan to implement to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These can include actions such as adopting renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, etc. NDCs may also include adaptation measures to address the impacts of climate change, such as strengthening infrastructure, implementing early warning systems, and enhancing resilience in vulnerable sectors. By submitting and implementing ambitious NDCs countries demonstrate their commitment to combating climate

¹⁰ Climate Action, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement_en#key-elements, (Last Visited, July 01, 2023)

¹¹ United Nations Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Agreement%20is%20a,force%20on%204%20November%202016>. (Last Visited, July 1, 2023)

change and contribute to the broader objective of achieving a sustainable and resilient future for all.

5. The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action:

The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, established in 2016, facilitates collaboration between governments and non-state actors such as businesses, cities, regions, and civil society organizations. Its aim is to enhance climate action and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement will serve as the basis for these efforts, which will be taken in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹²

The Marrakech Partnership for global climate executes a variety of activities such as organizing meetings at the conference of the parties, Regional climate weeks, the Global Climate Action Submit, etc. This collaboration between the government and key stakeholders is a huge step to reduce the impact of climate change.

6. The G20 Hamburg Climate and Energy Action Plan:

The G20 Hamburg Climate and Energy Action Plan agreed upon in 2017, outlines the commitment of G20 leaders to implement the Paris Agreement and accelerate the transition to sustainable, low-carbon economies. It focuses on areas like energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable finance.

The G20 acknowledged that improving energy efficiency across sectors is crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing energy security, and fostering sustainable economic growth. The G20 committed to promoting policies, measures, and best practices to increase energy efficiency in building, transport, industry, and other sectors. Overall, the G20 Hamburg Climate and Energy Actions Plans highlighted the collective commitment of the G20 nations to address climate change and promote sustainable energy solutions. By focusing on areas such as NDC implementation, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable finance, the G20 aimed to contribute to global efforts to mitigate climate change and foster a more sustainable future.

¹² Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, Climate change, (2016), <https://www.climate-chance.org/en/library/marrakech-partnership/>

7. The United Nations Climate Action Summit:

The United Nations Climate Action Summit, organized periodically by the UN, serves as a platform to mobilize action on climate change. The First summit was held in 2019, emphasizing the need to enhance ambition and accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Action Summit furthered the awareness that by the end of this century, 1.5°C is the socially, economically, politically, and scientifically acceptable limit for global warming, and that in order to reach this goal, the world must work towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050.¹³ With an objective to enhance global efforts in combating climate change, the Climate Action Summit has brought together world leaders, businesses, civil societies, and youth activists on the same pathway. The summit aimed to encourage the private sector, international financial institutions, and governments to increase investments in climate solutions. The United Nations climate action summit played a significant role in galvanizing global efforts to combat climate change. It provides a platform for countries, businesses, and civil society to showcase their commitments, initiatives innovative solutions for addressing the climate crisis. By focusing on ambitious targets, renewable energy, finance mobilization, and nature-based solutions, the summit aimed to accelerate climate action and drive the necessary transformations to achieve a sustainable and resilient future for all.

CONCLUSION:

International agreements on climate change are essential tools for addressing the urgent and complex challenges posed by climate change. As the world faces the increasing threats of climate change, these agreements served as a foundation for collective action and encouraged nations to work together towards a more sustainable and resilient future. They have fostered a shared understanding of the urgency and severity of climate change and have encouraged countries to work together towards sustainable solutions. While challenges persist, the collective efforts and commitments made under these agreements offer hope for a more resilient and environmentally responsible future. Both national and international agreements are equally important to achieve climate goals. Life on earth cannot be imagined without the basic elements that the environment provides us. Hence, it is important that countries should

¹³ United Nations Climate change, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/2019-climate-action-summit> , (Last Visited, July 1, 2023)

build upon these agreements, strengthen international collaborations, and take decisive action to mitigate climate change for the benefit of current and future generations.

