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## LEGAL ASPECTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION IN TAJIKISTAN

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Climate change denotes enduring alterations in temperatures and atmospheric conditions. These changes may result from natural causes, such as variations in solar activity or significant volcanic eruptions. However, since the 1800s, human actions have emerged as the predominant catalyst for climate change, chiefly attributable to the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas [1].

Climate change impacts nations across every continent, causing economic disruptions and influencing the livelihoods of individuals. Alterations in weather patterns, rising sea levels, and intensifying weather phenomena are indicative of this global challenge.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) became effective on March 21, 1994, and currently boasts nearly universal participation. The primary objective of the UNFCCC is to avert "dangerous" human interference with the climate system. Kazakhstan ratified the UNFCCC in May 1995, while Tajikistan followed suit in 1998 [2].

The Kyoto Protocol was initially adopted on December 11, 1997, and after a complex ratification process, it officially came into effect on February 16, 2005. Presently, there are 192 Parties adhering to the Kyoto Protocol. In March 1999, the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC and later ratified it on March 26, 2009, aligning itself with global efforts to combat climate change. Additionally, Tajikistan became a party to the Kyoto Protocol in 2008, pledging its commitment as a Non-Annex I Party to the Convention.

The Kyoto Protocol effectively translates the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change into action by obligating industrialized nations and transitioning economies to curtail greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions based on predefined targets. In contrast, the Convention solely requires these nations to implement mitigation policies and measures while providing periodic reports on their progress [3].

The Paris Agreement stands as a binding international treaty addressing climate change. Ratified by 196 Parties during the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21 of the UNFCCC) on December 12, 2015, in Paris, the Agreement took effect on November 4, 2016. Its primary aim is to limit the global average temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels, striving to cap the rise at 1.5 degrees Celsius. Moreover, the Agreement outlines sustainable development measures to adapt to the evolving climate. Kazakhstan endorsed the Agreement through Presidential Decree No. 301 on July 20, 2016, and ratified it via Law No. 20-VI on November 4, 2016. The Parliament of Tajikistan ratified the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2017 [4].

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, unanimously embraced by all United Nations Member States in 2015, represents a collective strategy aimed at fostering global peace and prosperity for present and future generations. Central to this agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), serving as a pressing summons for collaborative action across nations, whether developed or developing. These goals underscore the imperative of addressing poverty and other forms of deprivation concurrently with endeavors to enhance healthcare and education, diminish inequality, promote economic advancement, combat climate change, and uphold the preservation of marine and forest ecosystems.

The 13 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) focuses on the urgent need to combat climate change, a global challenge impacting all nations. This goal calls for a comprehensive grasp of climate change and its interconnected environmental, economic, and human rights dimensions [5].

According to the report of the Resolutions General Assembly, transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable reminds goals of SDG 13 are:

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities [6].

According to the material prepared by the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Republic of Azerbaijan on "International Initiatives of Tajikistan on Combating Climate Change" [7]. Tajikistan is actively striving to garner attention from regional governments and the global community to prompt more proactive measures in combating climate change. Notably, during the first online session of the UN High-Level Thematic Debate on "Implementing Climate Action" on October 27, 2021, President Emomali Rahmon underscored Tajikistan's minimal contribution to global warming, accounting for a mere 0.0003% of global emissions.

Despite its modest impact, Tajikistan has voluntarily committed under the Paris Agreement to maintain greenhouse gas emissions between 80-90% of 1990 levels, with a potential reduction to 65-75% of the baseline with international assistance. This reduction will primarily be attained through the continued advancement of renewable energy sources, particularly hydropower and solar energy [8].

The Republic of Tajikistan is renowned for its abundant water resources, contributing approximately 60 % of the water reservoirs in Central Asia. The primary source of these resources originates from the glacial reservoirs within the region.

During the XX century, Tajikistan boasted over fourteen thousand glaciers, covering an area equivalent to 8 % of the nation's total landmass. Regrettably, the impact of climate change has accelerated the melting of these glaciers. Presently, more than one thousand glaciers in Tajikistan have vanished entirely, resulting in a reduction of almost one third of the country's glacier mass within a relatively brief timeframe.

Simultaneously, concurrent initiatives are poised to catalyze a fresh global movement aimed at fostering collective efforts to address climate change. These endeavors align harmoniously with the continuous endeavors of the global community under the Paris Agreement to curtail carbon dioxide emissions and forestall a temperature increase exceeding two degrees Celsius.

However, the realization of these goals could be protracted in the absence of essential resources, investments, knowledge, and technology. Consequently, the proactive support of the international community in this endeavor stands as a pressing concern for numerous developing nations.

In October 2015, Tajikistan submitted its initial Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) for anticipated implementation, in compliance with resolutions from the 19th and 20th Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, encompassing the Lima Call for Climate Action (Lima, Peru, December 2014). In 2019, Tajikistan diligently prepared and submitted its First Biennial Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report, adhering to the Guidelines for Biennial Reporting by Non-Annex I Countries, to the UNFCCC Secretariat. Tajikistan has developed a National Climate

Change Adaptation Strategy until 2030, which aims to manage and reduce risks associated with climate change. Among the risks in Tajikistan are floods, avalanches, droughts and other natural hazards that put the population at risk and undermine the country's food security [9].

Tajikistan officially embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the United Nations Summit in September 2015. This transition signifies a shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underlining a holistic and participatory strategy for sustainable progress in Tajikistan.

Subsequently, in 2016, Tajikistan formulated and ratified the National Development Strategy for the period leading up to 2030 (NDS-2030). This blueprint outlines the primary strategies aimed at realizing the SDGs within Tajikistan [10].

Green economic transformation is an alternative to the conventional growth model. It is a way to improve the quality of life in the present as well as for future generations. This transition can be a catalyst for accelerating growth and progress towards the SDGs.

In 2022, the Strategy for the development of green economy in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2023-2037 was adopted. The development of green economy is linked to the strategic goals of the country, among which are ensuring energy independence and efficient use of energy, overcoming the communication deadlock and turning the country into a transit country, ensuring food security and access to quality food, accelerated industrialisation and expansion of productive employment. The strategy focuses on institutional reform measures, efficient use of natural capital, attracting investment, introducing modern and innovative technologies and strengthening international cooperation in the green economy.

It is expected that in the near future Tajikistan, utilising its potential for renewable energy production, could become the fourth largest producer of renewable energy in the world. Tajikistan also has the potential to develop organic agriculture, electric transport and infrastructure, and green trade to meet the needs of global markets [11].

According to the Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023 "Green Development for Shared and Sustainable Prosperity" Tajikistan has already developed a framework for green development that provides a solid foundation. Looking ahead, the country has identified the following priorities to support and accelerate the transition to a greener economy:

- implementation of legislation and policies in all the production and services sectors of the economy ensuring that climate actions are not undermined and there is no harm to the environment. In addition, it is important to provide the necessary incentives for the private sector to adopt such practices, actively seek to increase green public finance and use it to attract more green finance from the private sector as well as from the development partners;

- conduct regular environmental impact and green economy assessments to shape policies and related budgetary allocations for supporting decarbonization efforts. It is also crucial to build national capacity to conduct such policy assessments;

- introduction of green public procurement processes, introduction of climate and environmental safety requirements for goods and services purchased in all the sectors, including infrastructure. It is necessary to establish guidelines and rules to encourage circularity by reducing consumption, and increasing reuse and recycling;

- strengthening inter-agency cooperation to overcome gender and social inequality in access to resources, new technologies and methods of the green economy in accordance with the specific needs and interests of different groups, ages, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups [11].

To sum up, Tajikistan has made some progress in addressing SDG 13, which focuses on climate action. The country has taken steps to increase its resilience to climate change and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Some of the key initiatives and actions taken by Tajikistan include:

1. Developing a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan to enhance the country's resilience to climate change impacts.

2. Implementing projects to promote renewable energy sources, such as hydropower, solar, and wind energy, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

3. Participating in international climate agreements and initiatives, such as the Paris Agreement, to work towards reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Raising awareness about climate change and its impacts through educational campaigns and programs.

Despite these efforts, Tajikistan still faces challenges in fully achieving SDG 13, including limited financial resources, lack of infrastructure for renewable energy, and vulnerability to climate change impacts such as natural disasters. Continued support from the international community and further investment in sustainable development practices are crucial for Tajikistan to make more significant progress towards SDG 13.

Overall, effective implementation of SDG 13 in Tajikistan requires a comprehensive approach that integrates climate change considerations into national development planning, policies, and programs. It also requires collaboration with international partners and organizations to access technical expertise and financial support for climate-related projects and initiatives.

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