

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

СТАЛНА МИСИЈА РЕПУБЛИКЕ СРБИЈЕ ПРИ УЈЕДИЊЕНИМ НАЦИЈАМА И ДРУГИМ МЕЂУНАРОДНИМ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈАМА

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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with reference to the latter's Note Verbal dated 2 June 2008, concerning Human Rights Council resolution 7/23 entitled "Human Rights and climate change", has the honour to convey the answer of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia.

"In accordance with the regional assessment originating from the Fourth Report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the Republic of Serbia belongs to the group of states already affected by the changed climate conditions.

Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with other relevant institutions, had started the activities in order to determine the effects of the changed climate conditions at national level through the First National Communication. Among others, these activities include the assessment of the climate change effects to the health. After these activities will have been conducted, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning in cooperation with other relevant institutions will prepare recommendations concerning measures to be taken in order to adapt to the changed climate conditions."

Furthermore, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia has the honour to enclose herewith the Information concerning the Climate Change and Human Rights in the Republic of Serbia, submitted by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration



Geneva, 2 October 2008

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA
Fax No 022/917 90 08

OHCHR REGISTRY

- 2 OCT. 2008

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STUDY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Submission by the Republic of Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is situated in the South East European, in central part of the Balkan Peninsula with the territory of 88361 km². Serbia has a population of 9,863,000, with almost half of the population in rural areas. Demographic trends are, as follows:

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Serbia	10196	10131	9863	9925	9970	9981	9959	9915	9861	9800	9727	9635
	50.9	51.1	51.5	52.4	53.8	55.8	58.4	61.2	63.9	66.6	69.1	71.6

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unup>, Monday, August 25, 2008

In 2002 there were approximately 800,000 people (10.6% of the population or 250,000 households) below the national poverty line, with consumption (by consumer unit) of less than 4,489 Dinars or 72 USD per month, i.e. 2.4 USD per day. The main national goal is reduction of poverty to some 6.5% in the year 2010, with an average annual GDP growth of 4-5% and an increase in personal consumption of about 1.9%.

Republic of Serbia and other countries belonging to the South East European (SEE) region is exposed to a variety of natural hazards, including floods, droughts, forest fires, extreme low and high air temperature, landslides etc. that have caused economic and human losses across the region.

Current weather/climate change impacts on selected sectors in Serbia

Assessment of economic losses caused by climate related hazards and catastrophes for the selected sectors of Serbian economy have been undertaken. The selected sectors (agriculture, flood management, energy production – heating plants, road maintenance, and commercial air transport) for this assessment make 49% of all weather/climate-dependent sectors. It was found that total annual economic losses from hydro meteorological hazards and unfavorable weather/climate conditions and disasters (floods, droughts, hail, frost, heavy rain, snow, strong wind, extreme low temperatures, etc.) in selected sectors are in the range between 200 and 600 million euros.

Table below gives an overview of the recent preliminary disaster risk assessment based on the incidence rate of variety hydrometeorological hazard. In addition, the study analysed the vulnerability of the Weather/Climate-dependent economic sector, which make about 43.5% of GDP (excluding taxes) of Serbia.

Table 2: Current weather/climate change impacts on selected sectors in Serbia

Sectors which are exposed to weather/climate risk	Weather/ Climate driven phenomena	Impact/Vulnerability
Agriculture, biodiversity, forestry	Hail, Strong wind, Flood, Late/Early frost, Drought, changes in means temperature and precipitation	High
Energy production and transmission & distribution of electricity and heating energy	Extreme low & high air temperature, Heavy precipitation especially wet snow, Thundering and lighting, Drought; changes in mean temperature and precipitation	Relatively high
Transport (road, rail, river and aeronautical)	Fog, Heavy rain, Snow, Slippery conditions (glaze, freezing, ice), ice on river; changes in means temperature and precipitation	Medium, but aeronautical High
Civil engineering (Road construction and bridges, water engineering, building constructions)	Strong wind and gust of wind, Heavy precipitation, Frost, Thundering and lighting; changes in mean temperature and precipitation	Relatively low to medium
Water resource management	Drought and Flood; changes in mean temperature and	Relatively high

	precipitation	
Tourism and Trade	Every deviation of normal climatological and weather seasons; changes in mean temperature and precipitation	Medium
<i>Source: Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia and The World Bank project, 2006; "Economic benefits of RHMS of Serbia"; Statistical Yearbook for 2000-2005; IPCC, AR4, 2007</i>		

Future Impacts and vulnerability to climate change

Investigation of the precipitation and temperature trends and projections shows that climate change will influence decrease in crop productivity and food production in agriculture sector. The results of studies show agriculture sector vulnerability through: (1) weeds, pests, and diseases and partly yield loss and (2) economic and social effects (economic and social disparities, greater economic and individual dependence on agriculture, widespread poverty, inadequate technologies and transition problems). The research on influences of climate changes on plant production and ecosystem in eastern Serbia shows reduction of food production as well as deficiency in drinking water and water for livestock, drying up of numerous wood species and deserting majority of rural areas, mainly caused by droughts in this Serbian region.

A preliminary analysis of the precipitation trend and projections on the territory of Serbia indicates current and future large decrease implying disturbance in the water regime and water supply, irrigation, river navigation, exploitation of water for hydropower and other purposes. These changes have been directly impacting on reduction in hydropower production. The vulnerability of water resources will imply changes and damages of public supply and demand and irrigation, at the first place. These changes will directly impact energy sector in context of demand, renewable and non-renewable generation and distribution.

Different studies indicate that during the past years the frequency in the occurrence of heat-waves and conditions favourable for the occurrence and spreading of forest fires were increased which point at vulnerability of forestry systems on climate change. Also, it is expected to affect all species in context of shift of natural ecosystem.

Projected changes in heating degree days and cooling degree days will change in heating and cooling requirements and potentially will shift the peak in energy demand to the

summer season with implications for the need for additional energy capacity and increased stress on water resources.

Increase of heat-related deaths and change of potential for disease transmission (the spread of tick-borne diseases) as well as impact on settlements, infrastructure and tourism is expected, too.

It is projected that conditions will worsen in Southern Europe as a region already vulnerable to climate variability. This will pose challenges to many economic sectors and increase health risks.

The current climate change is threatening the lives and livelihoods of people particularly the poor. The future effects of climate change on the sustainable development and implementation of the national MDGs in the Republic of Serbia will depend on trends in both climatic and non-climatic factors and on adaptive capacity buildings.

This is challenging because major economic sectors are already vulnerable to current climate variability and climate related natural hazards, and in addition to the typical impacts, local climate change introduces an additional element of uncertainty about temporal and spatial climate change distributions.

Belgrade Initiative on Enhancing the Regional Cooperation in the Field of Climate Change

Bearing in mind these challenges, but also the opportunities presented by SEE countries, the Sixth Ministerial UNECE Conference "Environment for Europe" 2007, adopted so called Belgrade initiative on enhancing regional cooperation in SEE in the field of climate change. Based on this Initiative, the Republic of Serbia has hosted the Subregional Climate Change Center for South East European recently established in Belgrade (under the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia). This Center will support development and implementation of the SEE Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Adaptation, with aim, inter alia, to strengthen capacities of the national authorities in the region responsible for reliable early warning systems and alarms against the occurrence of natural disasters and climate extremes, as well as authorities responsible for risk assessment and vulnerability to natural disasters and extremes and catastrophes induced by climate change. The Belgrade Initiative on Climate Change will foster the cooperation at sub-regional, regional and international level having in mind the goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), particularly its Nairobi Work Programme related to impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.