

FORUM: ENVIRONMENTAL-COMMISSION 1

QUESTION OF: The Role of Veganism in Protecting the Environment

SUBMITTED BY: United Nations Environmental Commission for Europe (ECE)

CO-SUBMITTERS: Bahrain, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Malta, Federated States of Micronesia, Nicaragua, Tuvalu, UNEP, The Netherlands

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE,

Defining veganism as a way of living which, for reasons such as ethics, health and the environment, abstains from using any animal products and products in whose production an animal was involved,

Deeply concerned that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, animal agriculture accounts for 14-18% of global greenhouse gas emissions,

Noting that animal agriculture is responsible for 20-33% of fresh water consumption worldwide,

Noting further that the animal agriculture and fishing industries are also leading causes of other environmental problems such as water pollution, ocean dead zones, ocean waste, habitat loss and species extinction,

Realizing that the consumption of animal products is inherently energy-inefficient, as only a fraction of the calories fed to livestock is regained by their consumption and that it is thus more efficient for humans to consume crops directly,

Fully alarmed by the fact that global demand for animal products is projected to further increase in the future,

Bearing in mind that vegans and people that follow plant-based diets need to closely monitor their B12, Iron, and vitamin D3 in order to reach optimal health,

Having considered the fact that people who live in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) may not have the appropriate or adequate resources to switch to a fully vegan diet,

Noting with approval the measures taken by Canada and The Netherlands in order to educate their general population on healthy dietary options, and how these connect to a predominantly plant-based diet,

Reminding Member States that sustainability and development is a team effort, and that no one or no country is too small to make a difference,

Desiring a gradual replacement of animal-based foods with fruits, vegetables, legumes, and other non-animal-based products,

1. Encourages Member States to use their education systems to educate and raise awareness about the positive benefits of adopting a vegan diet with the primary intention of highlighting the environmental benefits, and with secondary intentions of outlining its benefits to human health and poverty in ways such as but not limited to:
 - a) the inclusion of lessons, workshops, speeches, during school time or after class regarding the importance of veganism in the protection of the environment
 - b) infographics produced by the Vegan World Alliance being posted around schools
 - c) promoting international “World Vegan Day” on the 1st of October and International “World Vegetarian Day” on the 30th of September, so as to:
 - i. spread awareness about both events and their respective ideologies
 - ii. introduce people to veganism and vegetarianism from culinary, healthful and

environmental points of view;

2. Recommends Member States cooperate with the Red Cross to standardize a Health Program for schools specific to their nation, which will encompass the pillars of Health such as but not limited to:
 - a) a well-rounded balanced diet, which will be tailored to specific countries and their available resources and development, with emphasis on the possibility of a vegan diet fulfilling dietary needs equal to a meat-based diet
 - b) the importance of certain nutrients and minerals including Iodine, Calcium, Vitamin C, B12, and Iron and the consequences of their deficiencies
 - c) the importance of a well-functioning cardiovascular system, with emphasis on the importance of exercise on health;
3. Further recommends the offering of government-funded vegan culinary courses which encompass a variety of recipes, dietary diversity and health aspects, with the purpose of:
 - a) introducing people to vegan and vegetarian cuisine
 - b) offering simple vegan recipes that are financially, environmentally and healthfully beneficial;
4. Asks for the creation of a United Nations (UN) sub-body called the United Nations Committee for the Promotion of Veganism (UNPV) to work in conjunction with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to carry out the following:
 - a) publish reports including numerical facts and statistics that highlight the environmental benefits of becoming vegan, to be conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and other members of various Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), these statistics will be recorded biannually, therefore keeping research up to date and relevant
 - b) supporting organizations dedicated to promoting veganism
 - c) create a separate branch of statistical analysts that will aim to:
 - i. research sustainable and profitable methods to manage farming systems
 - ii. set global standards for the treatment of livestock and maintenance of facilities
 - d) create and enforce the adoption of enforceable codes of conduct in animal welfare by all sectors of the livestock production industries, and provide adequate funding of the authorities responsible for the monitoring of farms to ensure that these are following the set guidelines and framework
 - e) provide assistance for farmers to implement sustainable agricultural systems and practices that repair, maintain and improve soil health including:
 - i. carbon storage
 - ii. water quality
 - iii. water use efficiency
 - iv. biodiversity;
5. Endorses the allocation of time and funds by Member States towards Research and Development into improving the efficiency of cultured meat production, with the following intentions of, inter alia:
 - a) reducing the slaughtering of animals for meat
 - b) providing a satisfying alternative to meat-eaters, other than plant-based products
 - c) decreasing the net number of livestock needed in order to produce enough meat fit for human consumption
 - d) reducing the resources necessary in order to produce meat efficiently, thus further protecting the environment by decreasing rates of deforestation;
6. Approves of the implementation of stricter legislation regarding the reduction of chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and antibiotics, which will:
 - a) yield alternatives, such as natural acids instead of heavy pesticides, which will not only

lighten farmers' manual work required, but also:

- i. improve people's health, as such chemicals added in food may cause health complications
 - ii. improve the environment's health, as pollinators may be negatively affected by chemical pesticides
 - iii. improves the lives of animals and biodiversity, as pollinators are a crucial component of the lives of animals and other living creatures
- b) make all diets, such as one that is vegan or mostly plant based, healthier due to the lack of pesticides and chemicals found in the food people consume;

7. Further suggests the integration of a circular economy in each respective Member State, both MEDCs and LEDCs, which will ensure that:

- a) the security of the supply of raw materials is improved
- b) new job opportunities are created
- c) economic growth is boosted
- d) the environment is protected;

8. Calls for further research into topics such as but not limited to;

- a) the mitigation of methane footprint from livestock in particular through the avenues of animal health and nutrition, selection and genetics, suited to climate and ecosystems
- b) plant-based alternatives to animal products
- c) cultured meat, meat that is artificially grown in laboratories, presents an environmentally friendly and energy-efficient alternative to regular meat and should be further researched
- d) agricultural and processing techniques in order to further reduce greenhouse gases produced from modern techniques such as the use of fossil fuel-driven equipment to apply fertilizers and pesticides, and the chemicals used themselves.