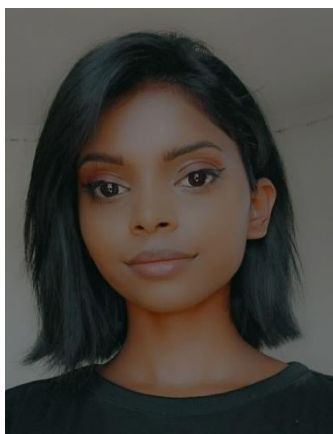


OPINION ARTICLE

The impact of climate change on South Africa

El impacto del cambio climático en Sudáfrica



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Climate change has quickly become one of the greatest challenges impacting regions all over the world. Despite it being a global challenge, developing countries have had a much more difficult time combating these effects (South Africa's 2nd Annual Climate Change Report, 2017). This is largely due to the population density, lack of funds and necessary resources in most developing countries. This article will explore climate change and the impact of this phenomenon on the country of South Africa.

South Africa is a developing country currently balancing economic restoration and social stability after a period of extreme unrest among citizens. The unrest included riots that resulted in the burning of buildings in the provinces of the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. This ultimately

makes the focus of environmental conservation and dealing with climate change much more difficult.

Most of the impacts of climate change in South Africa are displayed through the water. According to the Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa's 2nd Annual Climate Change Report, 2017), the changes in rainfall has changed both the amount of water available as well as the quality of said water. Regions along the West Coast will experience a decrease in water availability, while regions along the East coast will experience an increase.

This creates a greater challenge as different frameworks and solutions will need to be implemented to mitigate drought along the West and floods along the East. UNU-WIDER (2016), states that there are water networks in place to meet the demands of South Africans in urban centres which includes both local use and industrial use. However, many frameworks that have already been implemented do not take into account the different impacts that would be experienced by the rural areas. Rural areas lack the resources to protect infrastructure and agricultural yields during floods and droughts.

Another impact of climate change, other than water resources is food scarcity. South Africa is of great risk of food insecurity. Inequality is a major issue in South Africa resulting in many individuals living in poverty within the country (Ziervogel et al, 2014). A large number of South Africans depend on agriculture for both income and food. Climate change has detrimental impact on agricultural yields and staple crops. The rise in temperatures and lack of rainfall in certain areas will prevent harvests causing instability in the production of food for many South Africans (Ziervogel et al, 2014).

Climate change is going to have a dire impact on South Africa if more is not done to prepare and mitigate the damage. More measures will need to be taken to resolve the issues present and more research needs to be conducted to educate citizens on the dangers being faced.

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