

Integrating human rights in Nationally Determined Contributions

Expert Workshop 3-4 June 2019, Geneva

Rationale

All governments are obligated to respect, protect and fulfill all human rights for all. These obligations have clear implications in the context of climate change. The Paris Agreement, for example, affirms that governments should respect, protect and take into consideration their human rights obligations when taking action to address climate change and the most recent report of the IPCC describes, respect for human rights as critical to achieve effective climate action for people and planet.

2019 is a critical year for climate action. COP24 in 2018 saw the adoption of most of the implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement and now governments have to prepare their new or enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020. The existing mitigation commitments of States are insufficient to prevent catastrophic climate change and there is limited time left to act. A rights-based approach to climate action can drive higher ambition and ensure more effective action. To promote this approach, this expert workshop seeks to facilitate the exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned as well as to identify potential gaps and obstacles regarding the integration of human rights in the planning of NDCs.

Objective

The workshop has three primary objectives:

1. to transform the commitment to human rights-based climate action reflected in the Paris Agreement into positive measures at the national level - in particular in the context of the planning of NDCs
2. to document lessons learned and identify good practices in order to inform rights-based climate action
3. to identify knowledge gaps and opportunities for capacity building with respect to the planning of rights-based climate action.

Format

The workshop will be comprised of a mix of plenary sessions and working groups. To enable free conversations, the workshop will take place under Chatham House Rules. The sessions will include:

- Legal framework related to the integration of human rights in climate policies and the value of the integration of human rights in climate action
- Experience sharing regarding the role of human rights in the planning of NDCs
- Discussions of good practices and lessons learned
- Identification of support and capacity building needed

The program of the workshop will reflect various human rights-related elements of the Paris Agreement such as gender equality, land tenure, the rights of indigenous peoples and just transition. Its composition will ensure that the experience and role of diverse actors are addressed.

Guiding questions will be circulated to the participants to facilitate the preparation of interventions.

The workshop will seek to build on existing initiatives seeking to support the planning of NDCs and to foster synergies with relevant ongoing processes.

Outputs

The workshop will result in a short report building on the case studies and experiences presented in Geneva to develop concrete recommendations for integrating human rights in NDCs. The lessons learned will be shared at events taking place during the June 2019 Human Rights Council session and the June 2019 climate negotiations.

Participants

The expert workshop will seek to bring together in Geneva approx. 45 experts – from governments, IGOs, NGOs and academia – to reflect on the lessons learned, opportunities and challenges with regards to rights-based climate policies, including in relation to issues such as food security, just transition, indigenous knowledge and gender equality.