



Integrating Human rights in National Climate Commitments and International Climate Negotiations

A Workshop and High-Level Roundtable

6-7 October 2019, San José (Costa Rica)
Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Rationale

The Paris Agreement states that governments should respect, protect and take into consideration their human rights obligations when taking action to address climate change. These obligations are directly relevant to climate policies, for instance, in relation to public participation in decision-making, mainstreaming gender across climate action and ensuring respect for the rights and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. Integrating human rights in climate action is not only a legal and moral obligation but also contributes to more effective mitigation and adaptation policies as described in the most recent report of the IPCC.

2019 to early 2020 is a critical period for climate action as many governments have to prepare their new or enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions. A rights-based approach to climate action can drive higher ambition and ensure more effective action that benefits climate-affected people and communities contributing to the realization of their human rights; particularly during the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement. The NDC revision and renewal process offers a critical window of opportunity to promote human rights policy coherence by building on the exchange of good practices and experiences among countries.

This combined workshop and high-level roundtable will facilitate the exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned as well as support the development and dissemination of a blueprint for the integration of human rights in the planning of national climate commitments. While the focus of the Workshop will be on the planning of national climate commitments, including NDCs under the Paris Agreement, workshop outcomes will also seek to address the broader context of climate policy planning. The Workshop will build on the lessons learned during an exploratory workshop held in Geneva in June 2019 as well as inputs generated from meetings held at the climate negotiations following the approval of the Paris Agreement and existing initiatives to support the planning of national climate commitments such as the NDC partnership and the work of UNDP and the Climate Land Agriculture Rights and Ambition Coalition.

Organized in the context of the pre-COP to be held in San José from 8-10 October, the Workshop will conclude with a forward-looking High-Level Political Roundtable intended to raise awareness and build ownership amongst key decision-makers regarding the need to better reflect human rights in the UNFCCC process, including at COP25.

Objective

The Workshop and Roundtable have three primary objectives:

1. To strengthen the knowledge-base regarding practical approaches to integration of human rights in climate change policies, including the development of a blueprint for integrating rights in national climate policies – including the NDCs;

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2. To raise awareness about the opportunity offered by the enhancement or updating of NDCs and the planning of national climate policies to better integrate human rights in climate action; and
3. To build momentum for the integration of human rights in climate negotiations through a high-level political forum preceding the opening of the pre-COP.

Format

The Workshop will be comprised of a mix of plenary sessions and working groups. To enable free conversations, participation in the Workshop sessions will be by invitation only and take place under Chatham House Rules. The High-Level Political Roundtable will be open to a public audience and livestreamed. Discussions will reflect various human rights-related elements of the Paris Agreement such as gender equality, public participation, land tenure, the rights of indigenous peoples, and a just transition. They will address:

- The legal framework related to the integration of human rights in climate policies and the value of the integration of human rights in climate action;
- Existing guidance related to the preparation and communication of NDCs;
- Good practices and lessons learned in relation to the integration of specific human rights elements in the planning of climate policies;
- Identification of support and capacity building needs;
- Core elements to be included in a blueprint for integrating rights in national climate commitments; and
- Key human rights entry points in the climate negotiations

Participants

The Workshop will bring together approximately 45 experts and decision-makers, primarily from governments but also including representatives from key IGOs, NGOs and academia. Some participants are expected to already be traveling to San José for the pre-COP. Organizing the workshop in San José will allow the event to benefit from the preexisting convergence of key actors for the pre-COP and the human rights expertise available in the city due to the presence of regional human rights institutions.

Outputs

The discussions will contribute to development of a technical guidance document in the form of a blueprint that identifies key steps to integrate human rights in the planning of climate commitments including concrete examples or case studies as well as critical information to include in the communication of NDCs to the UNFCCC.

High-Level Political Roundtable

The High-Level Political Roundtable will take place on the evening of the second day of the Workshop. It will gather national experts and high-level representatives to identify the key elements of a collective strategy to promote human rights at the UNFCCC.

Expression of gratitude

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