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**52nd Session of the Human Rights Council**

Plain English version of:

Panel discussion on climate change’s negative impact on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by people in vulnerable situations

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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| *What is the aim of this document?* |
| This report contains a summary of the panel discussion mentioned in the title to this report.  The panel discussion was held based on Human Rights Council resolution 47/24.  The panel discussion was held on 28 June 2022.  *Who is this document for?*  This report is for people who:   * draft, design, or are interested in climate policy as it affects people in vulnerable situations, * advocate for the rights of people in vulnerable situations in the context of climate change, or * are interested in the area of climate policy and the rights of people in vulnerable situations generally. |
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I. Recommendations

**Understand the climate crisis**

1. Climate change is an environmental and social justice crisis. For climate action to be fully effective, it must involve people in vulnerable situations, i.e.:

* Indigenous Peoples,
* local and rural communities,
* peasants,
* migrants,
* minorities,
* children,
* older persons,
* women,
* persons with disabilities, and
* other people in vulnerable situations.

States must apply a human rights-based approach and an intersectional perspective to climate action to address climate change impacts, in particular on people in vulnerable situations. This is because people in vulnerable situations are often more exposed to climate change’s negative impacts due to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

2. States should urgently reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. This must be done in line with their common but differentiated responsibilities. Because of this approach, developed countries have more responsibility when addressing the climate crisis that they have created. States must end fossil fuel subsidies and create mitigation and adaptation plans. These plans should follow the scientific community’s recommendations and comply with States’ human rights obligations.

**Make sure those affected by climate change participate in climate action**

3. States are urged to make sure that people in vulnerable situations can meaningfully participate in and influence climate-related decision-making. States should:

* take measures to allow people in vulnerable situations to represent themselves in climate change meetings,
* include people in vulnerable situations in parties’ delegations to conferences, and
* make sure people in vulnerable situations effectively and meaningfully participate in the negotiations.

**Strengthen and protect those suffering from and stopping climate change harm**

4. States should strengthen the resilience of people in vulnerable situations and support recovery from climate change’s long-term effects. Speakers highlight the links between climate change, conflict and displacement. Speakers also urge States to act to prevent conflicts starting because of competition over decreasing land and agricultural resources that result from climate change.

5. Several speakers call for environmental human rights defenders to be better protected. Many risk their lives to defend the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment – to the benefit of all of humanity.

**Identify rights, practices and contributions**

6. Speakers emphasize the need to recognize the important contribution of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities to both climate change mitigation and adaptation through the use of their traditional knowledge and practices. Recognizing Indigenous Peoples’, and local communities’ rights - including their land and resource rights and their right to self-determination - is highlighted as essential for sustainable, human rights-based climate action.

**Mobilize more resources and use them more effectively**

7. States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement should fulfil their commitments to provide and use climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. This should be done through international cooperation to support climate action in developing countries.

8. States should increase international climate finance, in line with their responsibilities under the Paris Agreement and international human rights law. The need to make sure that climate funding reaches people in vulnerable situations directly is stressed. This group includes Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women in remote areas.

9. Several speakers call to increase funding to compensate both for: (a) loss and damage, and (b) adaptation. This can be done through a new finance facility for loss and damage under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is to compensate for climate change’s disproportionate impact on people in vulnerable situations and developing countries.

**Recognize businesses’ responsibility for climate change**

10. Speakers emphasize that businesses should be legally liable for growing greenhouse gas emissions. Businesses should be held accountable and pay for the impact of growing greenhouse gas emissions. Speakers highlight climate change’s transboundary impact and large impact on small island developing States and least developed countries.

**Better cooperation between bodies to help the most vulnerable**

11. Speakers call to increase synergies in the outcomes of the various United Nations bodies related to human rights and climate change. Now that the Human Rights Council has adopted resolution 48/13 - recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment - States parties to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are called upon to include clear human rights references in the decisions of the 27th Conference of the Parties to the Convention. By doing so, this will:

* contribute to better protecting the rights of communities that are most vulnerable to climate change, and
* comply with States’ human rights obligations and climate change commitments.

II. Introduction

12. Under resolution 47/24, the Human Rights Council held a panel discussion on climate change’s negative impact on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by people in vulnerable situations, on 28 June 2022, at the Council’s 50th session. The full panel discussion video is available at <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1m/k1m5u7uvlv>.

13. The President of the Human Rights Council chaired the panel discussion. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights opened the discussion with a statement. This was followed by a video screening of testimonies about climate change’s negative impact on people in vulnerable situations.

14. The panel discussion provided an opportunity for States, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to discuss:

* climate change’s negative impact on how people in vulnerable situations fully and effectively enjoy their human rights, and
* the best practices and lessons learned when promoting and protecting such person’s rights.

International Sign interpretation and real-time captioning allowed people with disabilities to follow the discussion.

15. The panellists included:

* the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry,
* the Chair of the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change and Chair of the Sudan Youth Organization on Climate Change, Nisreen Elsaim,
* the Secretary of the Council of the ICCA Consortium, Sara Oliveros López, and
* the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for International Environmental Law, Carroll Muffett.

III. Opening remarks

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| **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** |

The High Commissioner’s main points:

16. A safe and stable climate is an integral component of the right to a healthy environment. The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 48/13, recognizes the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. At the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”, held in June 2022, the Secretary-General called for all States to accept the right to a healthy environment and to take immediate and ambitious action to address the climate crisis.

17. Climate change affects the human rights of everyone, everywhere. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that at least 3.3 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate change’s impacts. The Secretary-General described that fact as an environmental and social justice crisis, where people in vulnerable situations are at higher risk of suffering a negative impact. The High Commissioner stated that people in marginalized or vulnerable situations are more exposed to climate change’s negative impacts, because of social and economic constructs combined with multiple forms of discrimination. These persons include Indigenous Peoples, local and rural communities, peasants, migrants, children, women and persons with disabilities.

18. For many Indigenous Peoples, climate change puts food security, traditional livelihoods, cultural practices and their right to self-determination in danger. That risk is greater for those with insecure land and resource rights. In rural communities, climate change may restrict access to food, with a devastating impact for local communities and peasants. The impact on women and children in rural areas, who are more likely to be living in poverty or suffer from malnutrition, is particularly significant. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency, intensity and severity of droughts. From 2009 to 2019, droughts affected over 100 million people, severely affecting their right to life, livelihoods and food security. Women are affected twice as much as men by drought, land degradation and deforestation. The effects of this are made worse by women’s unequal and limited opportunities to acquire access to or own land.

19. In small island developing States:

* intensifying floods, typhoons, cyclones and hurricanes damage homes and communities, and
* sea level rise swallows coastal land and contaminates the groundwater that people needed to survive.

Both events threaten the existence of some nations. Least developed countries and small island developing States together account for about 2% of global emissions. In contrast, the Group of 20 members is responsible for 80% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions. In the Secretary-General on human rights and climate change’s report, he calls to urgently reduce emission reductions and increase adaptation to limit climate change’s impact on people in vulnerable situations and to build resilience. Climate action is only fully effective when including the perspectives of people in vulnerable situations. Indigenous Peoples, and rural communities and are key actors in preserving ecosystems that support carbon absorption, management and storage. All those activities help to mitigate climate change.

20. Environmental human rights defenders contribute in an important way to those efforts and the need to better protect them. The Secretary-General recognized the contribution of people in vulnerable situations to climate action. For example:

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| **The Seed Indigenous youth climate network** | Brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to protect their land, culture and communities from fossil fuel extraction and global heating. |
| **The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development’s feminist participatory action research programme** | Allowed Indigenous women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons to document their experiences, responses and needs, to support those that climate change affects most in shaping climate policies. |
| **The Wampis Nation in the Peruvian Amazon** | Developing their own climate adaptation plan to limit climate harm and reduce forest degradation by 2030. |

21. In Human Rights Council resolution 47/24, the Council called upon States to improve international cooperation and assistance, including in financing, to support developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. For the most vulnerable countries, climate finance in sufficient measures is key to building resilience and adaptive capacities. A human rights-based approach to climate finance involves making sure that such financing is accessible to those most in need, ring-fencing 50% of all climate finance for adaptation and making the climate finance available in the form of grants rather than loans.

22. In a video screening of testimonies about climate change’s negative impact on human rights, seven climate activists from around the world that participated in the Collective for Climate Rights’ video campaign highlighted how they and their communities have been affected by climate change impacts.

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| **Marinel Ubaldo,**  **Philippines.** | Communities are at risk of being washed away by typhoons and sea level rise.  People are deprived of their basic human rights.  She has lost friends, relatives, her house and her possessions.  She calls upon first-world countries to increase funding for loss and damage. |
| **Ivonne Yanez,**  **Ecuador.** | She witnessed glaciers melting in the Andes Mountains, increasing risks to future drinking water supplies.  She calls to recognize the ecological debt of the industrialized countries in the global North to the countries in the global South. |
| **Roland Ngam,**  **South Africa.** | Climate change has led to the loss of animals and drought in the region.  Some farmers have stopped farming because it is too dry.  He calls upon world leaders to respect their climate commitments. |
| **Marie Joanita Meltebury,**  **Vanuatu.** | Communities in the South Pacific are living in a climate emergency that other countries often ignore.  She highlighted how Pacific communities are committed to a climate-stable Pacific, and use their traditional knowledge and customs to navigate the global climate catastrophe.  She calls to end all fossil fuel subsidies. |
| **Norma Brunetto,**  **Italy.** | Her country is on the borderline of a climatic hotspot and is experiencing the rise of extreme weather phenomena all over its territory.  She demands that policymakers in Italy and all over the world create mitigation and adaptation plans, in line with the scientific community’s recommendations. These plans should recognize that climate justice is also social justice. |
| **Merryl Habchy,**  **Lebanon.** | She is concerned about increasing temperatures negatively affecting the agricultural sector – an important economic resource for the people in her country.  She recalls how a wildfire in northern Lebanon in August 2020 forced many people to leave their homes. |
| **Margaret Taylor,**  **New Zealand.** | She stresses that homes in her community, including her own house, and even entire islands, are at risk of being submersed because of climate change.  She calls upon world leaders to:   * follow the leadership of leaders in the Pacific region and young activists, who are brave, resolute and resilient, * be ambitious in the goals that they set and generous in the climate finance that they offer, and * phase out the use of fossil fuels.   She stated that 1.5 degrees would give the Pacific region a good chance of survival and urges world leaders to deliver on that target. |

IV. Panel discussion

23. The President of the Human Rights Council opened the panel discussion and invited the panellists to make their statements.

A. The panellists’ contributions

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| **The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry** |

Mr. Fry’s main points:

24. In 2018, approx. 19.2 million people were displaced because of disasters linked to natural hazards, mostly being weather- and climate-related. The number is likely much higher when considering people moving because of slow-onset events.

* In 2019, 24.9 million displacements took place, across 140 countries and territories.
* In 2020, 30 million people were displaced by extreme weather events that climate change has made worse.

25. The number of climate-induced human displacements is growing. Climate change affects more people than any other cause. The United Nations humanitarian appeals for extreme weather disasters rose by over 800% between 2000 and 2021. Since 2017, donors met 54% of those appeals on average, leaving approx. $28 billion and $33 billion uncovered. The increasing number of people displaced by climate change’s impact is an unacceptable human rights tragedy.

26. Many people face multiple forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and classism. Also, those factors might combine, or overlap, to create extreme difficulties putting some people at disproportionate risk from climate change’s negative impacts. He referred to his meeting with gender and climate justice activists in the Women and Gender Constituency, where he heard that:

* a young woman from Uganda is working at the community level to provide clean energy and healthy food for women, and
* women in Cameroon are working to resolve differences between the French- and English-speaking communities, and to overcome deep-seated patrimonies that have blocked action to address climate change impacts.

Limited resources are available and women face challenges in remote rural areas to get access to funding. National adaptation plans should be refocused to recognize the needs of people in vulnerable situations and focus on local level solutions.

27. People in vulnerable situations must be heard. The Anglican Consultative Council has noted that Indigenous voices are increasingly being heard in climate discussions. However, their ability to participate meaningfully in and influence decision-making remains limited. That is also the case for children and young people. Opportunities need to be found for children and young people in vulnerable communities to share their experiences and lessons learned, e.g. through information-sharing platforms.

28. Major greenhouse-gas-emitting countries need to take much more action to reduce their emissions. However, we can see that many of these countries were against a new financial facility for loss and damage at the Subsidiary Body for Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’s 56th session. Supporting people to recover from climate change’s impact helps to avoid tensions and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict. Also, supporting a new finance facility for loss and damage should be encouraged.

29. The corporate sector’s role is important. The Secretary-General has spoken about the role of fossil fuel companies and the banks that finance them, calling on businesses to change. Businesses must develop a corporate model that respects people’s rights. Indeed, business accountability is a theme that he will address in his role as Special Rapporteur. Not taking urgent action and responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions will harm more people, leading to more efforts to hold businesses accountable.

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| **The Chair of the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change and Chair of the Sudan Youth Organization on Climate Change, Nisreen Elsaim** |

Ms. Elsaim’s main points:

30. The air that we breathe, our food, our water and our health need a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In the resolution the Human Rights Council adopted in October 2021, the Council states that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right. A different resolution (48/14) established the Special Rapporteur’s mandate to promote and protect human rights in the context of climate change. Those resolutions further highlight the connections between climate change and human rights.

31. States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change failed to include clear human rights references in the outcomes of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Clear human rights references are also not included in action for climate empowerment or gender. These are also not referenced at the global stocktake, which took place after the Human Rights Council resolutions mentioned above were adopted. A contrast exists between the progressive steps the Human Rights Council has taken compared with the Conference of the Parties and other bodies. There is a need for synergies in the outcomes of various United Nations agencies.

32. According to the non-governmental organization Global Witness’ findings, on average, more than four people are killed every week for defending the environment. This constitutes a human rights violation. Climate change impedes how people enjoy the right to life, and a decent, peaceful and healthy life. Climate change affects all human rights but its effects vary:

* from region to region, and
* according to the situations of vulnerability in which people found themselves.

Talking about climate action is impossible without talking about human rights, including the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. These are factors that bring visibility to the vulnerability and needs of climate-affected communities.

33. Sustainable climate action cannot be achieved without good governance. The combination of strong institutions, political will, strategies and stakeholder engagement will have a positive effect on both the climate change sector and the human rights sector. The Human Rights Council must accelerate action related to:

* the third generation of rights,
* environmental rights, and
* climate change,

before the climate change problem worsens beyond repair.

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| **The Secretary of the Council of the ICCA Consortium, Sara Oliveros López** |

Ms. Oliveros López’s main points:

34. Growing evidence confirms the key role that Indigenous Peoples, and local communities play in biodiversity conservation. Also, these groups can advance immediate and effective responses to climate change. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services recognizes that the best-conserved areas, including those overlapping with officially protected areas, are located in the territories of life, territories and areas that Indigenous Peoples, and local communities conserve, also known as “ICCA”. ICCA are as diverse as the peoples and communities who shape and sustain them through their unique cultures, governance systems and practices. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has highlighted similar findings. Recognising Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, innovations, practices, institutions and values, and implementing measures to improve their quality of life, is important for biodiversity conservation.

35. More attention must be paid to:

* the type and quality of local governance of territories and biodiversity, and
* strengthening the capacities and rights of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities.

Unfortunately, this is currently far from a reality in the territories of life, as the ICCA Consortium’s members have highlighted in various forums. ICCA representatives have intervened at forums, e.g. the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2017, and have emphasized the importance of those decision-making spaces for Indigenous Peoples, and local communities to collectively take part in decision-making related to their territories.

36. At the national level, threats to territories of life are disguised as development projects, including in the Mayan Train case, the Transisthmian Corridor and “fortress conservation” in Mexico. These threats lead to violence against those territories and their custodians. At the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, resources are being given to support Indigenous Peoples’ efforts in the fight against climate change. At the high-level event on the theme “Transforming action for nature and people”, held in the margins of the General Assembly’s 76th session, a number of philanthropic organizations announced a $5 billion investment to support the goal of protecting 30% of the planet by 2030. However, she questioned whether those resources will reach Indigenous Peoples, and local communities or rather only large non-governmental organizations. She concluded by calling to recognize Indigenous Peoples’, and local communities’ territories of life as an effective strategy to adapt for and mitigate climate change.

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| **The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for International Environmental Law, Carroll Muffett** |

Mr. Muffett’s main points:

37. With the climate crisis accelerating, effects can be seen on a large number of rights. These effects fall disproportionately on people in the global South, in particular those in vulnerable situations. This is illustrated in the landmark inquiry report of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines into the human rights impact of climate change in the country, and the responsibilities of the “carbon majors”, i.e. companies that are the world’s largest producers of crude oil, natural gas, coal and cement.

The Commission found that the climate crisis unfairly affects the Philippine people, mostly affecting:

* women and girls,
* children,
* Indigenous communities,
* those living in poverty and
* the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities and allies.

Protecting the human rights of people in vulnerable situations requires urgent action to limit global warming to the greatest extent possible.

38. The Commission has recognized the responsibility of the “carbon majors” and the Philippine Government to act, and the duty of all Governments to cooperate to protect people from climate-related harms. This requires mainstreaming human rights into climate action, including in decisions related to climate finance and adaptation, both within, between and among States. Given that the Group of 20 members is responsible for 80% of global emissions, while small island developing States and least developed countries combined accounted for only about 2% of emissions, an equitable approach to such action is critical. The responsibility for the climate crisis is not shared equally. The responsibility for climate action should fall most heavily on those responsible for creating the crisis.

39. States parties to the United Nations climate agreements are obliged to cooperate internationally to provide and use climate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to address climate change. That obligation echoes the duty of States, under article 2 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to work together to use the maximum available resources to progressively realize human rights. There is a need to:

* dramatically and urgently increase levels of climate finance, and
* recognize that funds must flow with equal urgency to loss and damage and adaptation as they do to mitigation.

40. Climate financing must not make existing structural inequalities worse or add to recipient countries’ existing levels of debts. Without substantially increasing levels of climate finance, and more equitably distributing and making it easier for the countries and people that climate change affects most to get access, climate finance will be inadequate to satisfy developed countries’ human rights obligations and climate commitments. Making decisive progress on those issues at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be essential to move towards meeting those obligations and protecting the rights of the people that are most at risk from climate change.

B. Interactive discussion

41. To see who made interventions and spoke, and who did not have time to speak, please see Annex 1 at the end of this report.

42. People in vulnerable situations, many of whom are disproportionately affected by climate change’s impacts, include:

* Indigenous Peoples,
* local and rural communities,
* peasants,
* migrants,
* children,
* women,
* older persons,
* persons with disabilities and
* environmental human rights defenders.

The discussion brought forward compelling testimonies and insights from representatives of States and other stakeholders about the consequences of inadequate climate action. Speakers drew attention to how climate disasters and other negative climate-change effects have deepened existing social inequalities. Speakers highlighted the need to recognize the intersection between racial and environmental injustice, stressing that intersecting risk factors are a particular concern. Applying an intersectional perspective is key to addressing the climate-change impact experienced by millions of people.

43. It was underlined how women, who represent most of the world's poor, may be more at risk than men to climate change impacts and more dependent on threatened natural resources. Women play a central role in natural resource management, food production, nutrition, caregiving and the well-being of families and communities. Because of environmental degradation and weather-related disasters, women and girls face separation from support networks, homelessness and an increased risk of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. They also suffer reduced access to employment, education, essential health-care services and psychosocial support because of the loss of homes and livelihoods, water scarcity, food insecurity, the destruction of schools, health facilities and transportation systems and the displacement of families and communities. Speakers stressed that climate change is both an environmental and a social justice crisis. Importantly, this has direct implications for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Climate justice may be advanced through:

* increased and gender-responsive climate action that also addresses inequalities related to sexual and reproductive health, and
* integrating rights into climate financing, policies and interventions.

44. Several speakers recalled how the global water crisis of water pollution, water scarcity and water-related disasters, in combination with rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns and loss of adaptive capacity and ecosystem services has serious implications for Indigenous Peoples, and local communities and their rights to self-determination, health and life. The right to food is also under threat because of droughts, floods and desertification. Speakers underlined how climate change increases risk factors and directly affects the effective enjoyment of human rights, leading to people experiencing deeper poverty.

45. Climate action can only be fully effective when it integrates the perspectives of people in vulnerable situations and addresses their needs. Mechanisms that inclusively engage and consult people contribute to strengthening a bottom-up approach and protecting the rights of people in vulnerable situations. Often, people in vulnerable situations are excluded from having access to information and meaningfully participating in developing and implementing nationally determined contributions and climate adaptation plans. States are called upon to guarantee the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters for all people, especially those in vulnerable situations.

46. During the discussion, it was noted that small island developing States constantly experience climate change impacts. Also, small island developing States have limited financial resources which affects their capacity to uphold human rights and address climate change’s negative physical, social, cultural and economic effects. Climate-induced displacement is a deeply distressing reality for people living in small island developing States. Many speakers emphasized that developing countries need assistance for mitigation and adaptation, and compensation for loss and damage, as highlighted in the Paris Agreement. The importance of fulfilling pledges and increasing international cooperation for climate finance, capacity-building and technology transfer was also highlighted. Speakers called to integrate the development dimension into all climate-related action to strengthen the medium- and long-term resilience of people in vulnerable situations, and to prevent conflicts that may be triggered by competition for scarce land, water and resources.

47. The speakers highlighted the importance of implementing a people-centred, human rights-based approach to addressing climate change’s negative impacts. Integrating human rights into global climate action, including climate finance, will:

* increase the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of global climate action, and
* contribute to recognizing and empowering people in vulnerable situations as agents of change.

48. A series of good practices for human rights-based climate action were shared, e.g.:

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| **The Intergovernmental Authority on Development’s disaster risk management strategy** | Aiming to build resilience to drought and other disasters to reduce their impact on people’s livelihoods and assets. |
| **The European Union Green Deal** | The European Union is the world’s largest provider of public climate finance to developing economies. |
| **Morocco** | Making commitments to mitigation, adaptation, cooperative approaches and transparency in the context of climate change. |
| **Namibia** | Supporting the climate resilience of women and children in vulnerable situations by requiring that all climate change action under the national climate change strategy and action plan, 2013–2020, be gender sensitive. |
| **Maldives** | Reducing and tackling environmental vulnerabilities as the first country to phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbons. |
| **Angola** | Implementing the Cafu project, a large-scale project, based on integrated policies, that looks for sustainable solutions, which encourages resilient economic, social and cultural development in local communities in Angola’s south. |
| **Fiji** | Creating a national adaptation plan that supports efforts to make sure people in vulnerable situations are fully involved in development-related decision-making processes at all levels, and across all stages of designing, implementing and monitoring policies and plans. |
| **Malteser International, the relief agency of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta** | Supporting communities that are vulnerable to climate change’s negative effects, including droughts, floods and food scarcity. |
| **The Human Rights Council** | Recognizing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Also establishing the Special Rapporteur’s mandate to promote and protect human rights in the context of climate change as examples of how the Council is addressing some of the most important human rights issues of our time. |
| **The Geneva pledge for human rights in climate action** | Creating an initiative that may be used as a bridge to make sure that human rights play a key role in addressing climate change while leaving no one behind. |

Speakers encouraged the Council to do more to mitigate climate change’s impact on the lives of people and communities in vulnerable situations and to protect their human rights.

49. Speakers also asked the panellists a number of questions. Panellists were asked to explain:

* how to best promote the integration of a gender perspective into climate action,
* how to address climate change’s negative impact on people in vulnerable situations,
* how to make sure that people in vulnerable situations meaningfully participate as agents of change, including at the international level,
* how the Human Rights Council can help to promote synergies and coherence in the work of international bodies, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to promote more sustainable climate action,
* what the panellists saw as the main barriers to inclusive, rights-based climate action and how to overcome them,
* how human rights-based climate action can contribute to making sure small island developing States survive and protecting people in vulnerable situations within those countries, and
* best practices that will assist States in mobilizing resources and support the reduction of climate change’s negative impact on people in vulnerable situations.

C. Responses and concluding remarks

50. After the interactive discussion, the President of the Human Rights Council invited the panellists to make concluding remarks.

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| **The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry** |

Mr. Fry’s main points:

51. It is clear from the testimonies provided that climate change is a global problem that affects people throughout the world, particularly those people in vulnerable situations. We must build resilience to climate change’s long-term negative effects. Women and girls in climate change meetings should be better represented, including as part of delegations, to bridge the gender divide. Young people and children should also be included in climate change decision-making processes to make sure that their voices are heard. The States in the room should include women, young girls and children in their delegations to the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC, and not just to attend side events but to participate in the actual negotiations. He expressed support for the calls to protect environmental human rights defenders, noting the need to address the unacceptable situation of environmental defenders being killed in various countries.

52. Parties must act to advance human rights-based mitigation which requires all people’s full representation so that they might provide input into mitigation plans, for example, as Fiji has highlighted in its remarks. He referred to the concerns expressed by the Sami people concerning the development of wind turbines on their land without their free, prior and informed consent. This is an example of how increased efforts are needed to make sure that the human rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected, protected and fulfilled during climate action. We must close the gap between the human rights sector and the climate change sector, stressing that the Human Rights Council’s members are also parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Creating an improved dialogue process between countries and within delegations is key to addressing that gap. An international conference should be organized where the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change can speak with human rights experts.

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| **The Secretary of the Council of the ICCA Consortium, Sara Oliveros López** |

Ms. Oliveros López’s main points:

53. Indigenous Peoples, and local communities are among the most vulnerable to climate change’s impacts. Their ancestral ways of living have made sure their communities survive and have preserved biodiversity in their territories of life. Those who defend those territories are in a constant struggle for the recognition of their rights, including the right to participation. She further called to recognize the defenders of territories of life as allies in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

54. Recognising the Indigenous Peoples, and local communities’ right to self-determination will effectively contribute to reducing the vulnerabilities in those communities and increasing their resilience and adaptive capacities concerning climate change, while enhancing ecosystem conservation. She concluded by noting the urgency of making sure that financial resources and support to address climate change reach Indigenous Peoples, and local communities and those in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls who may face barriers to their participation in decision-making processes.

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| **The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for International Environmental Law, Carroll Muffett** |

Mr. Muffett’s main points:

55. A consensus among the panel discussion participants exists on the critical human rights implications of climate change and its acute impact on people in vulnerable situations. The clear implications of that include the urgent need to:

* move away from the fossil fuels that are driving the climate crisis and
* to accelerate finance, not only for climate change mitigation, but also for adaptation and loss and damage.

56. While climate change was a threat in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and an urgent and accelerating threat in the 1980s and the 1990s, it has now grown into a lived reality with an increasing impact on human lives, livelihoods and human rights around the world. That background has created an immediate and urgent responsibility for all duty-bearers - particularly for those countries and corporations that have been most involved in creating the crisis - to address the negative human rights impact that they have created. That requires urgently increasing climate finance focussed on addressing unmet needs to adapt and respond to the increasing loss and damage caused by the climate crisis.

57. Following the concluding remarks, the President of the Human Rights Council closed the discussion.

**Annex 1: Speaking and non-speaking participants in the panel discussion**

**Representatives that made interventions:**

* Angola,
* Bangladesh (on behalf of the core group on human rights and climate change also representing the Philippines and Viet Nam),
* Barbados (on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community in Geneva),
* Costa Rica (also on behalf of Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Fiji, Gambia, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, Principality of Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Yemen),
* Djibouti (on behalf of States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development),
* Egypt (also on behalf of Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Djibouti, Fiji, Gambia, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, Principality of Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and Yemen),
* the European Union,
* Fiji,
* the Gambia,
* Germany (on behalf of the States members of the Geneva Pledge on Human Rights in Climate Action),
* Iceland (on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries),
* Iraq,
* Maldives (including one statement on behalf of a group of small island developing States),
* Mali,
* the Marshall Islands (on behalf of the core group for the creation of the Special Rapporteur’s mandate to protect and promote human rights in the context of climate change),
* Mauritius (on behalf of the informal group of small island developing States in Geneva),
* Morocco,
* Namibia,
* the Philippines,
* Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of),
* Viet Nam, and
* the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta.

**Representatives of the following United Nations agency and national, international and non-governmental organizations that also spoke:**

* Conectas Direitos Humanos,
* Franciscans International (also on behalf of Earth Justice),
* Conselho Indigenista Missionário,
* United Nations Population Fund,
* Women’s Federation for World Peace International (on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva), and
* International Commission of Jurists and International-Lawyers.org.

**Statements by member States and other organisations not delivered owing to a lack of time:**

* Benin,
* Bolivia (Plurinational State of),
* Brazil,
* China,
* Cuba,
* Ecuador,
* Germany,
* Luxembourg,
* Malaysia,
* Pakistan,
* Russian Federation,
* Samoa,
* Senegal,
* Sierra Leone,
* United States,
* the United Nations Children’s Fund,
* the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization,

* the United Nations Development Programme,
* the Anglican Consultative Council,
* Penal Reform International,
* the Next Century Foundation, and
* Réseau unité pour le développement de Mauritanie.