**Statement by Ian Fry for Human Rights Panel on the adverse effects of climate change on the human rights of people in vulnerable situations**

28 June 2022

Distinguished President

Excellencies

Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to speak on this panel and to follow the High Commissioner in this important topic.

I would like to briefly address each of the four objectives for this panel:

**With respect to enhancing understanding** of the impacts of climate change on the rights of people in vulnerable situations, there are far too many examples to draw upon.

In 2018, it is estimated that 19.2 million people were newly displaced as a result of disasters linked to so called natural hazards, a majority of which were weather- and climate-related. This number is likely much higher when accounting for people compelled to move due to slow-onset events linked to climate change.

In 2019 this figure rose to 24.9 million new displacements across 140 countries and territories.

In 2020, some 30 million people were displaced by extreme weather events made worse by climate change—three times more than the number displaced by violence or conflict.

In 2021 there were 59.1 million internally displaced people globally. 5 Million were from India, alone. Every year human displacement is growing due climate change. More people are being displaced by climate change than armed conflict, although in many cases, the two are closely linked.

A recent Oxfam report found that UN humanitarian appeals for extreme weather disasters, such as floods and droughts, rose by more than 800% between 2000 and 2021. Since 2017, donor nations have met 54% of these appeals on average, leaving an estimated $28-33bn shortfall.

We are facing a growing tide of people displaced by the impacts of climate change. This is an intolerable human rights tragedy.

Tragically there are people, due their particular circumstances, cannot escape these disasters. These are ones trapped and left behind.

Within these alarming numbers that are many stories of particular vulnerability. It is evident that people who are disproportionately at risk from the adverse impacts of climate change. Many people face multiple forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and classism. These intersectional factors may combine, or overlap, to create extreme difficulties for persons in vulnerable situations.

Overall, we are created a climate crisis for our youth, children and future generations.

**Turning to the second objective on highlighting the benefits of inclusive climate action,** for people in vulnerable situations, I want to draw on a recent meeting I had in Bonn, with a group of gender and climate justice activists under the banner of the Women and Gender Constituency. Each one of these women, who came from a variety of backgrounds, had a story to tell. One young woman from Uganda told me how she was working at the community level to provide clean energy and healthy food for women. I also heard how women in Cameroon are working to resolve differences between the French and English-speaking communities and to overcome deep-seated patrimonies that hinder action to address the impacts of climate change.

These are the stories we need to hear. But, resources for supporting these activities are extremely limited. It is challenging for women in remote rural areas to access to the necessary funding to support their projects. We must refocus, national adaptation plans t recognise the needs of people in vulnerable situations and acknowledge that many solutions can be found at the local level.

**With respect to identifying good practices and share lessons learned**, it is very evident that from the stories I have heard that we need to listen to the views of people in vulnerable situations. The Anglican Consultative Council in their submission to the Human Rights Council meeting noted that while Indigenous voices are increasingly being recognised in climate discussions, their ability to participate meaningfully in and influence decision-making remains limited.

This is also the case for children and youth. We need to be find opportunities for children and youth in vulnerable communities to share their experiences and share lessons learned. We need an information sharing platform that is cheap and easy to use and available in multiple languages.

**On identifying opportunities for collaboration and action by States through international** cooperation to implement an inclusive approach to climate action, it is important that we acknowledge that major greenhouse gas emitting countries must take much greater action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

At the last climate change meeting in Bonn there was considerable push back in supporting a new financial facility for loss and damage. This makes no sense. Supporting people recover from the impacts of climate change averts tensions and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict. I would strongly encourage everyone to support a new finance facility for loss and damage.

The corporate sector has a significant role to play as well.

At the recent Major Economies Forum, the UN Secretary General António Guterres

said that fossil fuel companies and the banks that finance them “have humanity by the throat.”

Businesses must change. We need to develop a model of corporate that is far more responsible for the rights of everyone. Business accountability is one of these themes I will be considering in my mandate. If the corporate sector does not take urgent action and responsibility for growing greenhouse gas emissions more people will suffer.

Consequently, it is inevitable that more members of corporate boards will face legal cases for their inaction. It would make sense to pre-empt this wave of litigation and act responsibly towards humanity.

We have the opportunity to act. We must do this urgently

I thank you.