

Human Rights

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# Manifesto!

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## Human Rights 1/3

### Position :

Climate change and human rights are inextricably connected. Generally, when we speak about climate change, we rather tend to see its impacts on environment, biodiversity, atmosphere, etc., but we often neglect its human dimension.

Climate change has disastrous environmental effects but also adverse social, economic and geopolitical effects. Indeed, climatic phenomena such as sea-level rise, increase in temperature, extreme weather events, including storms, floods, droughts and cyclones, have impacts on human populations and livelihood, cause displacements, water shortage, loss of land, threats for food security, spread of diseases, death of livestock, destruction of houses and infrastructures, etc.

In this sense, climate change may affect a broad range of human rights : the right to life, the right to food, the right to work, the right to health, the right to access clean water, the right to breath fresh air, the right to shelter and housing, the right to development, the right to security, the right to a healthy environment, the right to land, the right to education, as well as cultural and indigenous people's rights.

For instance, the right to have access to food is threatened when climate change impacts agricultural activities. Especially when droughts hit certain areas where agriculture is the main economic activity. Moreover, changing precipitation patterns and the melting of glaciers affect access to water, which in turn can affect the ability to irrigate lands and secure access to food, and ultimately leads to starvation. Climate change also affects human shelter through various natural disasters such as floods, droughts and storms in different parts of the world. In case of natural disasters, we have witnessed shelters being damaged which leads to population displacements and even forces people to become refugees in other countries. By affecting access to resources, impacting livelihood, and causing forced displacements, climate change can ultimately trigger conflicts and threaten human security around the world. Negative impacts of climate change are disproportionately borne by poor and vulnerable persons and communities, including women. People living in delicate ecosystems, those living in exposed zones, such as in low-lying areas or next to polluting factories and those whose way of life is tied to nature are also particularly affected by climate change.

Climate change can thus be considered as one of the threats that will determine the continuity of life on earth as it affects everyone life and fundamental rights partially or completely.

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### Recommendations :

- ▶ Governance mechanisms should recognize the multidimensional importance of climate change. As we are fighting so hard to reverse the effects of climate change, we should bear in mind that hesitation to take actions to address this issue would not only affect the environment but also the fundamental rights and lives of human beings.
- ▶ States should take measures to protect all citizens, including affected people, and provide effective remedy for human rights violations already caused by climate change.
- ▶ Measures and actions taken by international organizations, States and corporations to address the impacts of climate change should incorporate human rights principles. In other words, human rights must be at the heart of climate change policy making at the local, national and international levels.
- ▶ Countries who have contributed more to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions need to ensure they pay for the damage caused by their previous development and the current impact on human rights.
- ▶ States should integrate in their Constitution the respect for nature and environment; they also should create a special agency or institution in charge of climate change questions, if it does not exist already. These institutions should ensure that climate change-related policies respect human rights; they should also be in charge of education to environment.
- ▶ Multinational corporations should actively participate in the fight against climate change and the protection of related human rights. They should be held accountable for the impacts of their operations on human rights and the environment occurring in their direct production and their supply chain. States and the UN should develop an international convention imposing direct obligations upon corporations. Finally, multinational corporations should face prosecutions in case of pollution, environmental damage or ecocide.
- ▶ Climate change decision making should be looked at with the lens of vulnerable people. In taking adaptation and mitigation measures, States should take into account the voices of vulnerable individuals and communities, including women, children, minorities, and indigenous peoples, through effective participation processes. We remind that the existing intergovernmental documents have officially recognized the procedural requirements of the participation of individuals in the environmental policy-making.

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- ▶ The UN should expand its definition of “refugee” and recognize the status of “climate refugee”. They also should recognize a “right to live in a viable land”.
- ▶ More generally, all local, national and international stakeholders must respond with intelligence, compassion, commitment and wisdom to address this threat which endangers the sustainability of human race and our planet.

### Actions :

- ▶ Establish a UN Special Procedure on Climate Change and Human rights to provide coherence within the human rights regime and among other relevant international institutions in the arena of public policy; incorporate human rights standards in the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) reviewing process of the NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions).
- ▶ -Implement in each country a civil society-led committee in charge of following up the implementation of the UN and regional human rights mechanisms’ recommendations related to human rights and climate change, and develop advocacy activities on the issue
- ▶ Educate people about their rights to defend themselves, by setting up accessible workshops and training courses on the adverse impacts of climate change and on how to face, adapt and combat them.
- ▶ Create global platforms, build civil society alliances and write petitions to raise awareness on climate change-related human rights violations worldwide among decision-makers and global citizens.
- ▶ Restrict the construction of polluting factories near cities and prevent the burial of their wasting around populated areas; focus on trees and green belts to protect against drought; encourage agro-ecological practices and changes in populations’ consumption patterns.