

1 October 2010 - NGO Declaration on “Climate Change & Human Rights”

The below listed organizations,

Reminding the participants of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s 3rd Social Forum that, if the international scientific community is still debating the timeline, the **reality of climate change** and its already visible consequences on the livelihood of populations are beyond discussion;

Acknowledging the negative effects on vulnerable populations, especially indigenous peoples, women and children, and the poor;

Concerned about the adverse impact of climate change on **access to water, food, housing and eventually life** and therefore on the of human rights of local populations to water, food, housing and life;

Concerned about the effects of climate change on the very survival of some cultures and nations, and on the situation of statelessness and internally displaced peoples;

Recalling in this context Article 27 of the 1966 International covenant on civil and political rights, the 1961 United Nations Convention on Statelessness and the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

Recalling the 2008 Human Rights Council Res.7/23, which recognizes that climate change is a global problem and that it requires a global solution;

Recalling the 2009 Human Rights Council Res. 10/4, which stresses that climate change-related impacts have a range of implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights including, inter alia, the right to life, the right to adequate food, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to adequate housing, the right to self-determination and human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and recalling that in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence;

Recalling the 2008 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the relationship between climate change and human rights (A/HRC/10/61);

Recommend to the Social Forum:

1. To identify, with concrete examples and testimonies, the impacts of climate change on the lives and human rights of individuals and peoples;
2. To request the Human Rights Council to continue to hold an annual discussion to the track the rapidly evolving impacts of climate change on human rights;
3. To recommend to the Human Rights Council the establishment of **a new special procedure** with an independent expert. The mandate of the **“Independent Expert on the Impact of Climate Change on the enjoyment of Human Rights”** should in particular entail:
 - A study on the responsibilities of States in the area of climate change adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and funding, both at national and international levels, derived from their respective international human rights law commitments. The study should in particular research on the reality of climate displaced peoples, and suggest steps for the management of internally and internationally displaced persons as a result of climate change;
 - A close coordination and collaboration with the Human Rights Council Special Procedures and subsidiary bodies, in particular the Special Rapporteur (SR) on the right to food, the SR on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the Right to non-discrimination in this context, the SR on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Independent Expert (IE) on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, the IE on the question of human rights and extreme Poverty and other related relevant Special Procedures mandates.
 - A close coordination and collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as other relevant United Nations specialized agencies and programs, in particular UNEP, UNHABITAT and UNWOMEN, in order to facilitate exchange of information in the area of human rights and climate change.

This declaration has been finalized and adopted by the participants of the conference “Human Rights? An approach to respond to the challenge of Climate Change”, which took place on Friday 1st October 2010 at the WCC in Geneva.

The following organizations endorse this declaration:

- International Catholic Center of Geneva
- International Environment Forum
- WaterLex
- World Council of Churches