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Promotion and protection of all human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 7 July 2022

50/9. Human rights and climate change

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to leave no one behind, including, inter alia, its Goal 13 on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts,

Reaffirming the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda,

Reaffirming also that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Recalling all previous Human Rights Council resolutions on human rights and climate change,

Reaffirming the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹ and the objectives and principles thereof, and emphasizing that parties should, in all climate change-related actions, fully respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights,

Recalling that the Paris Agreement acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind and that parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations with regard to human rights, including the right to food, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, peasants, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, including people living in small island developing States and least developed

¹ See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.



countries, and in conditions of water scarcity, desertification, land degradation and drought, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,

Reaffirming the commitment to realize the full, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted under the Convention, including in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty and end hunger, in order to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention,

Stressing the importance of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and of pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, while recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impact of climate change,

Acknowledging that, as stated in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions, and acknowledging also that article 2, paragraph 2 of the Paris Agreement states that the Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances,

Noting the importance of the work of the scientific community and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, including its assessment reports and special reports, in support of strengthening the global response to climate change, including considering the human dimension, and indigenous peoples', peasants' and local communities' knowledge,

Acknowledging that, as stated in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, responses to climate change should be coordinated with social and economic development in an integrated manner with a view to avoiding an adverse impact on the latter, taking into full account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth, eradicate poverty and end hunger,

Recognizing that poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is one of the greatest global challenges, and that eradicating poverty and ending hunger are critical to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change resilience and the promotion and protection of human rights, inter alia the full realization of the right to food, particularly of people living in small island developing States, least developed countries and other climate-vulnerable countries, who are disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of climate change,

Stressing that human rights obligations, standards and principles have the potential to inform and strengthen international, regional and national policymaking in the area of climate change, thereby promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes,

Emphasizing that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of implications, both direct and indirect, that can increase with greater global warming, for the effective enjoyment of human rights, including, inter alia, the right to life, the right to adequate food, the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the right to adequate housing, the right to self-determination, the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, the right to work and the right to development, and recalling that in no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence,

Noting with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in

terrestrial ecosystems,² noting also with concern the findings contained in the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate,³ and noting further with concern the findings contained in the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel,⁴

Concerned that the adverse impacts of climate change, including changes in the global hydrological cycle, and natural disasters, are harming agricultural productivity, food production and cropping patterns, thus contributing to food availability shortfalls, and that such impacts are expected to increase in the future with climate change, and recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security, improving nutrition and ending hunger,

Emphasizing that the adverse impact of climate change threatens global food security and nutrition and puts at risk the agrifood systems which currently feed and nourish the great majority of the world population and support the livelihoods of more than 1 billion people,⁵ and stressing that the adverse impact of climate change will increasingly put pressure on food production and access to food, especially in vulnerable regions, undermining food security and nutrition and the realization of the right to food,⁶

Emphasizing also that unequal food systems disproportionately affect women and girls, making them more vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, which is exacerbated, inter alia, by climate change, environmental degradation and disasters,

Noting that the Special Rapporteur on the right to food has asserted that climate change has a long-term and deep impact on global food insecurity, and has recommended that increasing finance to support developing countries in tackling climate change impacts, through adaptation and by averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage, is essential,⁷

Expressing its deep concern at the number and the scale of natural disasters, diseases and pest infestations, as well as the negative impacts of climate change, and their increasing impacts in recent years, which have resulted in substantial loss of life and livelihoods and have threatened agricultural production and food security and nutrition, in particular in developing countries,

Recognizing that women and girls may be disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, inter alia concerning the realization and enjoyment of their human rights, and stressing the importance of the participation of women, including older women, and girls in climate action,

Welcoming the contribution of Working Group II to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, entitled *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, and extremely concerned that climate change poses an existential threat to some countries, with an irreversible adverse impact on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments unless urgent climate action is taken,

Expressing concern that, while these implications affect individuals and communities around the world, the adverse effects of climate change are felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations owing to factors such as geography, poverty, gender, age, indigenous or minority status where applicable, national or social origin, birth or other status, and disability,

Recognizing that climate change, and biodiversity loss and other types of environmental degradation, in particular sea level rise, and ocean habitat degradation, put

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems* (United Nations publication, 2019). Available at www.ipcc.ch/srcccl/.

³ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/66462>.

⁴ See www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/.

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change and Land*.

⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (United Nations publication, 2022). Available at www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/.

⁷ See A/HRC/37/61.

added pressure on the environment, which adversely affect the production and distribution of food from agriculture and fisheries, seriously affecting the availability, accessibility, adequacy and sustainability of food, which are the key elements of the right to food,

Expressing concern that multiple challenges and adverse impacts arising from climate change have serious consequences on the full realization of the right to food for all people, especially with respect to the production, distribution, availability, accessibility, adequacy and sustainability of food,

Emphasizing that sudden-onset natural disasters and slow-onset events cause significant loss and damage to vulnerable populations, especially in developing countries, and seriously affect the access by people in vulnerable situations to food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, health-care services and medicines, social protection, education and training, adequate housing, transportation and decent work,

Reaffirming the need for the continuing implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, and its references to human rights and food security,

Expressing concern that developing countries, particularly least developed countries and small island developing States, lacking the resources to implement their adaptation plans and programmes of action and effective adaptation strategies, may suffer from higher exposure to extreme weather events in both rural and urban areas,

Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities,

Emphasizing the importance of implementing the commitments undertaken under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to mitigation, adaptation and the provision and mobilization of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to developing countries, and emphasizing also that realizing the goals of the Paris Agreement would enhance the implementation of the Framework Convention and ensure the greatest possible adaptation and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the adverse impact of climate change on present and future generations,

Recalling the outcomes, including the Glasgow Climate Pact, adopted at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, held in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in November 2021, and noting the commitments made at both conferences,

Looking forward to the adoption of more ambitious commitments at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022,

Noting the commitments made by Governments and private sector leaders at the virtual Climate Adaptation Summit 2021, hosted by the Government of the Netherlands in January 2021, to accelerate, innovate and scale up global efforts to adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change, and at the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate, held in Washington, D.C., in April 2021, especially its associated Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, which underscored the urgency and economic benefits of stronger global climate action,

Recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change,

Noting the importance of some elements of the concept of “climate justice” when taking action to address climate change,

Noting with appreciation the continued efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in highlighting the need to respond to the global challenge of climate change, including by reaffirming the commitments to ensure effective climate action while advocating for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to food,

Welcoming the convening of a panel discussion on the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by people in vulnerable situations,

Taking note of the report on the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights of people in vulnerable situations, prepared by the Secretary-General pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 47/24 of 14 July 2021,⁸

Noting that the human rights obligations and responsibilities as enshrined in the relevant international human rights instruments provide roles for States and other duty bearers, including businesses, to promote, protect and respect, as would be appropriate, human rights, including the right to food, when taking action to address the adverse effects of climate change,

Recalling the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, focusing on the right to food in the context of natural disasters⁹ and on the impact of climate change on the right to food,¹⁰ the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, focusing on climate change and human rights¹¹ and on air pollution and human rights,¹² and the report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, on climate change and poverty,¹³

Recalling also the establishment of the mandate of Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, and the appointment of the Special Rapporteur,

Welcoming the work of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, which asserts that climate change is a major threat to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and noting its Midnight Climate Survival Deadline for the Climate initiative calling for enhanced nationally determined contributions under the mechanism of the Framework Convention,

Noting the importance of facilitating meaningful interaction between the human rights and climate change communities at both the national and international levels in order to build capacity to deliver responses to climate change that respect and promote human rights, taking into account the Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action and other similar efforts,

Noting also the establishment and work of regional, subregional and other initiatives, such as the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway) on addressing the adverse impact of climate change,

1. *Expresses concern* that climate change has contributed and continues to contribute to the increased frequency and intensity of both sudden-onset natural disasters and slow-onset events, and that these adversely affect the full enjoyment of all human rights;

2. *Emphasizes* the urgent importance of continuing to address, as they relate to States' human rights obligations, the adverse consequences of climate change for all, particularly in developing countries and for the people whose situation is most vulnerable to climate change;

3. *Calls upon* States to consider, among other aspects, human rights within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

4. *Urges* States that have not yet ratified the Paris Agreement to do so;

⁸ A/HRC/50/57.

⁹ A/HRC/37/61.

¹⁰ A/70/287.

¹¹ A/HRC/43/53 and A/74/161.

¹² A/HRC/40/55.

¹³ A/HRC/41/39.

5. *Recognizes* the impact of climate change and of extreme weather and extreme climate phenomena, including the El Niño phenomenon, on agricultural production, food security and nutrition around the world and the importance of designing and implementing actions to reduce their effects, in particular on vulnerable populations, such as rural women, bearing in mind the role that they play in supporting their households and communities in achieving food security and nutrition, generating income and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being;

6. *Also recognizes* the importance for all countries of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow-onset events, and the role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage, and in that regard looks forward to the further operationalization of the Santiago Network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, and encourages the Parties to constructively engage in the Glasgow Dialogue to discuss the arrangements for the funding of activities to avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change, in the context of relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and article 8 of the Paris Agreement;

7. *Calls upon* all States to adopt a comprehensive, integrated, gender-responsive, age-inclusive and disability-inclusive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the objective and principles thereof, to address efficiently the economic, cultural and social impact and human rights challenges that climate change presents, for the full and effective enjoyment of human rights for all;

8. *Calls upon* States to enhance international cooperation and assistance, in particular in financing, the transfer of technology and capacity-building, for mitigation and adaptation measures to assist developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;

9. *Also calls upon* States to better promote the human rights of people in vulnerable situations and their access to livelihoods, food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, social protection, health-care services and medicines, education and training, adequate housing and decent work, clean energy, science and technology, and ensure that services can be adapted to emergency and humanitarian contexts;

10. *Further calls upon* States to develop, strengthen and implement policies for the protection of the rights of people in vulnerable situations in response to climate change, as appropriate, by, among other actions, the inclusion of their rights, specific risks, needs and capabilities in climate action plans and other relevant policies or legislation, the mainstreaming of climate change action into resilient and adaptive social and health care, and the provision of information on climate change and disaster preparedness response and planning through all accessible means of communication;

11. *Urges* States to strengthen and implement policies aimed at enhancing international cooperation based on human rights to realize the right to food for all, despite the adverse effects of climate change, and consistent with national and international efforts to combat climate change, and to pursue the right to development, including by addressing inequalities in food distribution and access, ensuring food security, supporting sustainable agriculture and aquatic food production from the oceans, and enhancing more equitable, predictable, transparent and human rights-based forms of food systems governance at the global and national levels;

12. *Reaffirms* its commitment to advocate for combating climate change and addressing its adverse impact on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights, and recognizes the importance of climate action in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms in a regular, systematic and transparent manner;

13. *Decides* to incorporate into its programme of work for the fifty-third session, on the basis of the different elements contained in the present resolution, a panel discussion focusing on the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food

for all people and ways forward to address the challenges thereto, as well as on best practices and lessons learned, including science-based approaches and local and indigenous knowledge, and also decides that the panel discussion will have International Sign interpretation and captioning;

14. *Also decides* to incorporate into its annual programme of work, beginning in 2023, at a minimum a panel discussion, with sufficient time to discuss different specific themes on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights, including means of implementation for climate action as a mainstreamed element, and further decides that the panel discussion will have International Sign interpretation and captioning;

15. *Invites* the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, within their respective mandates, and other relevant stakeholders with appropriate expertise, including academic experts, and civil society organizations to contribute actively to the panel discussion;

16. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present a report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-fifth session identifying the necessary measures for minimizing the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food, taking into account the panel discussion and the interactive dialogue held at the fifty-third session on this matter, to be followed by an interactive dialogue, and to make the report available in accessible formats, including in plain language and easy-to-read versions;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with and taking into account the views of States, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the Committee on World Food Security, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and other relevant international organizations and intergovernmental bodies, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other stakeholders, to submit to the Council at its fifty-third session a report on the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the right to food, to be followed by an interactive dialogue, and also requests the Secretary-General to make the report available in accessible formats, including plain language and easy-to-read versions;

18. *Requests* the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change to highlight the adverse impacts of climate change on the full realization of the right to food in his work and reports, taking into consideration the challenges of developing countries, including small island developing States, least developed countries and other climate-vulnerable countries;

19. *Encourages* relevant special procedure mandate holders to continue to consider the issue of climate change and human rights, including the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights, particularly the rights of people in vulnerable situations, within their respective mandates;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide all the human, technical and financial assistance necessary for the effective and timely realization of the above-mentioned panel discussion, reports and interactive dialogues;

21. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

39th meeting
7 July 2022

[Adopted without a vote.]