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**Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

## **Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change**

### **Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Elisa Morgera, in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution [48/14](#).

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\* [A/79/150](#).



## **Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change**

### **Access to information on climate change and human rights**

#### *Summary*

The present report explores the specificities, challenges and good practices related to access to information on climate change and human rights. It clarifies States' international obligations, individually and as part of international cooperation, as well as the responsibility of businesses. The report offers concrete recommendations for States, businesses and the United Nations system to enhance access to information as a prerequisite for the transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness of decision-making processes on climate change at all levels.

## I. Introduction

1. The present report explores the specificities, challenges and good practices related to access to information on climate change and human rights. It clarifies States' international obligations, individually and as part of international cooperation, as well as the responsibility of businesses. Access to information is a prerequisite for enhancing the transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness of decision-making processes, including by preventing intersectional discrimination, and better protecting the human rights that are being, and can be, negatively affected by climate change and climate change response measures (see [A/HRC/56/46](#)). The Special Rapporteur is grateful for the more than 90 responses to a questionnaire inviting contributions to the report.<sup>1</sup>

2. The clarifications in the report should inform the interpretation and application of the Paris Agreement, which requires States to cooperate to enhance public awareness, public participation and public access to information (art. 12) and provides for a transparency framework regarding States' compliance with their climate change obligations (art. 13), and the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment and its action plan. The clarifications should also inform broader action for the realization of Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14 (see Human Rights Council resolution [48/14](#)).

## II. The importance of access to information

3. The right of access to information (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 19, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 19) is a precondition for the protection and exercise of other human rights. It forms part of the right to freedom of expression and is linked to the right to take part in public affairs (International Covenant, art. 25). It encompasses the right of individuals to request and receive information of public interest and information that may affect their individual rights (see [A/68/362](#)). It enables individuals to understand how environmental harm may undermine their human rights and supports the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association, participation and remedy in environmental matters (see [A/HRC/37/59](#) and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011)).

4. Access to information is also linked to the human right to science: it helps to guarantee the right to life, property, health and public participation according to the best science available (see [A/74/161](#) and [A/HRC/55/44](#) and [A/HRC/55/44/Corr.1](#)). Information on climate change and human rights must be “quality, trustworthy and evidence-based”, due to increasing concerns about misinformation, that is, the dissemination of misleading or false information.<sup>2</sup> The quality of information is essential to ensure understanding of the foreseeability and preventability of the full range of negative human rights impacts of climate change and response measures.

<sup>1</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-inputs-access-information-climate-change-and-human-rights-deadline-has](http://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-inputs-access-information-climate-change-and-human-rights-deadline-has).

<sup>2</sup> OHCHR, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Representative on Freedom of the Media, Organization of American States, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression, available at [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/expression/statements/20240503-statement-freedom-expression-climate-change-EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/expression/statements/20240503-statement-freedom-expression-climate-change-EN.pdf).

5. The right of access to information entails State obligations to regularly and proactively collect and disseminate information on the causes and consequences of climate change to the public, as well as provide accessible, affordable, effective, understandable and timely access to this information to any person upon request, without the need to show a legal or other interest. States should also provide guidance to the public on how to obtain such information. In cases of imminent threat of harm to human health or the environment, States must disseminate immediately all information that would enable the public to take protective measures (see [A/74/161](#) and [A/HRC/37/59](#), annex, principle 7). Failing to provide adequate access to information, whether due to institutional deficiencies, ineffective public policies or undue constraints on the media, is a violation of the right of access to information,<sup>3</sup> undermines the exercise of the right of access to justice and effective remedy and aggravates the risks of negative human rights impacts.

6. The right of access to information is also tightly connected with the right to education. States should incorporate quality, trustworthy and evidence-based information on climate change and human rights into educational curricula at all levels, with additional measures to fulfil children's right of access to information, while preventing and responding to eco-anxiety.<sup>4</sup>

7. States must take enhanced measures to ensure access to information for those most affected by climate change and related decisions, in particular Indigenous Peoples, with a view to fulfilling obligations related to their free, prior and informed consent, peasants and local knowledge holders, with a view to ensuring recognition and respect of their knowledge systems and territorial connections, and those who face intersectional discrimination (see [A/HRC/37/59](#), annex, principle 15, and [A/HRC/56/46](#)), including in the context of displacement and planned relocations (see [A/HRC/56/47](#)).

8. More detailed obligations apply to States parties to the two regional treaties on access to information in environmental matters. Regional human rights commissions and courts have also provided important clarifications on access to information in environmental matters that are relevant in the context of climate change.

### **III. The information needed to prevent negative impacts on human rights arising from climate change and climate change response measures**

9. Access to the following information is needed: (a) the causes, extent and effects of climate change, to ensure the public understands whether climate-related conditions are improving or worsening; (b) potential and actual negative impacts of climate change on human rights, to support the public's resilience and adaptive capacities to respond to these impacts; and (c) proposed and ongoing climate response measures and their impact on human rights, to empower the public to assess the adequacy of State action to combat climate change and promote, protect and fulfil human rights.

10. First, States should collect and share information with the public on the causes, extent and effects of climate change, encompassing greenhouse gas emission levels

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; see also Daniel Ospina Celis and others, *Access to Environmental Information in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Synthesis of Decisions Adopted by Oversight Bodies and Selected Judgements* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> See [A/74/161](#) and Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023); see also [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI\\_KeyOutcomes\\_inf.3\\_fnl.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI_KeyOutcomes_inf.3_fnl.pdf), and submission by Terre des Hommes.

(through their greenhouse gas emission inventories) and high-emitting activities from both State and non-State actors,<sup>5</sup> including emissions from methane and other short-lived climate pollutants,<sup>6</sup> as well as demand for and continued or new production of fossil fuels and critical minerals.<sup>7</sup> Climate change projections and future scenarios based on different greenhouse gas emission trajectories should also be shared,<sup>8</sup> and should be based on transparent data collection, analysis and dissemination.<sup>9</sup> In addition, States should gather and share information on weather, climate and natural disaster patterns, including temperature changes, precipitation patterns, sea level rise and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, based on observation over space and time of climatic and non-climatic stressors.<sup>10</sup>

11. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea indicated in its advisory opinion for Case No. 31 that under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea States have obligations to: (a) observe, measure, evaluate and analyse the risks or effects of pollution of the marine environment from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions; (b) keep under continuing surveillance the effects of activities they have permitted, or in which they are engaged, in order to determine whether such activities are likely to pollute the marine environment through anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions; (c) publish the results obtained from monitoring the risks or effects of pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions or communicate them to the competent international organizations for their dissemination; and (d) conduct environmental impact assessments.

12. Secondly, States should collect and share information with the public on the short- and long-term<sup>11</sup> risks and negative impacts of climate change on human rights. Several submissions underlined the importance of sharing information from climate vulnerability assessments, which should consider climate hazards, species sensitivity and the socioeconomic vulnerability of sectors and regions, including displacement and migration patterns, and human health impacts. They also consider ecosystems, livelihood assets and productive infrastructure, plant and animal health, effects on agriculture, fisheries and other climate-sensitive industries, including changes in productivity and income levels, and landscape degradation, in order to identify the most suitable adaptation actions for different regions and sectors.<sup>12</sup>

13. States should pay specific attention to collecting and sharing information on climate change impacts on the right to health, such as the prevalence of climate-sensitive diseases and the effects of extreme weather events and extreme heat on mental, physical and reproductive health, including data disaggregated by sex on climate-induced mortality<sup>13</sup> and malnutrition rates and access to health-care

<sup>5</sup> Submission by the London School of Economics; submission to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. This and other cited submissions to the Inter-American Court are available at [www.corteidh.or.cr/observaciones\\_oc\\_new.cfm?nId\\_oc=2634](http://www.corteidh.or.cr/observaciones_oc_new.cfm?nId_oc=2634).

<sup>6</sup> Submission by Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL); and submission to the Inter-American Court by Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development.

<sup>7</sup> Submissions by Milieudéfense and UNEP children and youth major group.

<sup>8</sup> Submission by FIAN Zambia.

<sup>9</sup> Submission to the Inter-American Court by Intendencia de Montevideo, Uruguay.

<sup>10</sup> Submissions by Guatemala, Mexico and the Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment.

<sup>11</sup> Submission by UNEP children and youth major group.

<sup>12</sup> Submissions by Czechia, Guatemala, Qatar, Slovenia, Council of Europe, Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental, Acasia Broomes, FIAN Zambia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and One Ocean Hub.

<sup>13</sup> Submission by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and United Nations Population Fund, “Navigating megatrends: The ICPD programme of action for a sustainable future – The ICPD and climate action”, ICPD30 think piece.

services,<sup>14</sup> as well as climate anxiety.<sup>15</sup> Such information should include the lived experiences of affected communities.<sup>16</sup>

14. In addition, information is needed to understand the impacts of climate change on social, economic and cultural rights and on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Information on the correlation between average annual temperature changes and precipitation, driving more frequent droughts, extreme storms and flooding, and economic growth indicates that worldwide income may fall by 19 per cent by 2049 due to climate change.<sup>17</sup> Information on the cost of climate action needs to disclose whether the economic models leave out the cost of inaction.<sup>18</sup> Information on different types of climate stressors and their effects on people's incomes, labour allocations and adaptive actions, depending on their wealth, gender and age characteristics, helps to explain changes in the livelihoods and economic behaviours of vulnerable rural people, together with the drivers of rural transformation and adaptive actions across different segments of rural societies and in different agroecological contexts.<sup>19</sup> States should proactively generate, disseminate and update information on the degradation or loss of biodiversity and ecosystems that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as glaciers, forests and coral reefs.<sup>20</sup>

15. Thirdly, States should share their plans to implement climate change and development policies, explaining how they are consistent with the best available science and international human rights obligations, with an assessment of risks to human rights associated with proposed climate change responses, and loss and damage (see [A/76/154](#)). This should include information about mitigation targets, due also to the global stocktaking process for nationally determined contributions,<sup>21</sup> including information on economic modelling associated with them (see [A/78/255](#)), as well as information on how to seek protection and take risk reduction actions (see [A/64/255](#)). The European Court of Human Rights clarified that States should inform the public about which climate measures are prioritized, the risks associated with the timing of emission reductions and mitigation technologies that are being relied upon and the conclusions of relevant studies and all information enabling the public to take measures to prevent or mitigate harm to human health.<sup>22</sup> Information should also cover progress in protecting, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.<sup>23</sup>

16. States should ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of stand-alone climate actions and actions integrated into sectoral plans and strategies, to track

<sup>14</sup> Submission by Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>15</sup> Submission by AcclimaTerre 360.

<sup>16</sup> Submissions by Mexico and Global Platform for the Right to the City.

<sup>17</sup> Maximilian Kotz, Anders Levermann and Leonie Wenz, “The economic commitment of climate change,” *Nature*, vol. 628 (April 2024).

<sup>18</sup> Amy Westervelt and Kyle Pope, “How to spot five of the fossil fuel industry’s biggest disinformation tactics,” *The Guardian*, 14 April 2024.

<sup>19</sup> FAO, *The Unjust Climate: Measuring the Impacts of Climate Change on Rural Poor, Women and Youth* (Rome, 2024).

<sup>20</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and others, Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression (see footnote 2); and submissions by CEJIL and Ruta del Clima.

<sup>21</sup> Submissions to the Inter-American Court by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law.

<sup>22</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland*, Application No. 53600/20, Judgment, 9 April 2024.

<sup>23</sup> CEJIL and others, submission to the Inter-American Court.

implementation<sup>24</sup> and impacts on human rights, natural resource tenure,<sup>25</sup> and cultural heritage (see [A/75/298](#)), with transparent and accessible reporting and compensation mechanisms for affected individuals and communities.<sup>26</sup>

17. States should gather and share information on the quantity and priorities of climate finance projects (see [A/HRC/54/31](#)) and just transition programmes, including deep-sea mining activities,<sup>27</sup> with accessible, accurate, credible and timely data to evaluate the effects of these programmes on climate change and human rights, and enable access to remedy and combat corruption (see [A/78/155](#)). More generally, States should gather and disclose information on public budgets allocated to the fight against climate change, as well as subsidies to fossil fuels<sup>28</sup> and other high-emitting activities.

18. Access to information is acutely needed on carbon credits (see [A/HRC/54/31](#)), including: calculations of carbon capture; expected local impacts on land and waters, tenure rights and other human rights; confirmation of consent of all affected communities, including free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples; revenue throughout the project life cycle, including the sale price of carbon credits; distribution of revenue and other benefits to the project developer, national and local governments and affected communities; and the identity and purpose of those buying credits associated with the project, including whether credits are being used to offset preventable emissions.<sup>29</sup> States should collect and share this information systematically to allow credit buyers to easily understand the potential risks of the credit they are purchasing. Equally States should monitor the use of technologies (remote sensing, artificial intelligence and digital platforms) to measure carbon storage, and to issue and trade carbon credits, because they collect and use data from communities beyond their control.<sup>30</sup>

19. Access to information is also acutely needed about the experimenting, testing and deployment of climate mitigation technologies, notably geoengineering,<sup>31</sup> and about the early identification of potential risks to human life or health, serious and effectively irreversible impacts on the environment, and inequitable impacts on present or future generations.<sup>32</sup> Risk assessments should account for the limited existing research on the social and cultural impacts of carbon capture, storage or removal technologies, with marine carbon dioxide removal lagging behind in particular, and for the dependence of cost-benefit analysis on access to expensive global climate change monitoring and modelling.<sup>33</sup>

20. States should collect information on carbon finance, just transition, carbon credits and climate technologies from environmental and human rights impact assessments (see [A/62/214](#)), accounting for cumulative, indirect and interconnected

<sup>24</sup> Submissions by Canada, Mexico, Spain, national human rights institution of El Salvador and FAO.

<sup>25</sup> International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, *Land Squeeze: What is Driving Unprecedented Pressures on Global Farmland and What Can Be Done to Achieve Equitable Access to Land?* (May 2024).

<sup>26</sup> Submissions by Mexico and Henrique Napoleão Alves.

<sup>27</sup> Submission by Solomon “Uncle Sol” Kaho’Ohalahala, Hinano Murphy and Te Ipukarea Society.

<sup>28</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and others, Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression (see footnote 2); and CEJIL and others, Submission to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

<sup>29</sup> Submission by Namati; and Human Rights Watch, *Carbon Offsetting’s Casualties: Violations of Chong Indigenous People’s Rights in Cambodia’s Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project* (February 2024).

<sup>30</sup> FIAN International, “Coffee and carbon in Colombia: human rights concerns at the intersection of food systems, climate change and data-based technologies”, June 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Submission by Centre for International Environmental Law; see also [A/HRC/56/46](#) and [A/HRC/54/47](#).

<sup>32</sup> Committee on Economic and Social Rights, general comment No. 25 (2000), para. 56.

<sup>33</sup> Submission by Ocean Conservancy.

impacts at all levels and over time, and intersectional analysis of differentiated impacts on vulnerable groups.<sup>34</sup> In its advisory opinion on Case No. 31, the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea underscored the obligation to report environmental impact assessment results for any planned activity, either public or private, which may cause substantial greenhouse gas emissions, for the State under whose jurisdiction or control the planned activity will be undertaken. States should ensure that human rights are integrated into these environmental impact assessments, enabling the meaningful participation of rights holders<sup>35</sup> and consideration of past, ongoing and expected damage from climate change to cultures, tangible and intangible cultural heritage and cultural rights (see [A/75/298](#)).

21. In addition to environmental impact assessments, States should take measures to improve timely access to information in the context of strategic assessments of draft decisions, plans, programmes, policies and legislation in the climate context.<sup>36</sup> The latter is an obligation under the Convention on Biological Diversity (art. 14 (1) (b)), which has been interpreted by 196 parties to that Convention to include consideration of sociocultural impacts and impacts on human health, including in the context of climate change.<sup>37</sup> This obligation can support the integrated strategic assessment of environmental and human rights impacts of proposed policies, programmes and legislation related to climate change.

22. Obligations to ensure access to information apply extraterritorially, to activities outside a State's territories that are within the State's influence or control (see [A/76/154](#)), including information on international cooperation on climate change and human rights.<sup>38</sup> To that end, States should conduct comprehensive and independent assessments of the environmental, social and human rights impacts of transboundary policies and projects. The outcomes should be publicized to ensure full and effective participation of potentially affected human rights holders in multiple countries (see [A/HRC/48/56](#)).

## A. General challenges

23. A significant challenge in providing the information outlined above is the availability of historical data on climate change.<sup>39</sup> The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), for instance, has underscored the chronic lack of weather and climate information in Latin America and the Caribbean, the world's second most disaster-prone region, and called for more investment in national meteorological and hydrological services and the integration of meteorological data into health surveillance.<sup>40</sup> FAO has also underscored the need for meteorological stations to collect time-series data for the climate-related variables applicable to food and agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Submissions by Mexico and Santa Clara University; and submission to the Inter-American Court by Intendencia de Montevideo, Uruguay.

<sup>35</sup> Submission by the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

<sup>36</sup> See [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI\\_KeyOutcomes\\_inf.3\\_fnl.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI_KeyOutcomes_inf.3_fnl.pdf); and submission to the Inter-American Court by Earth Justice.

<sup>37</sup> Julia Nakamura, Daniela Diz and Elisa Morgera, "International legal requirements for environmental and socio-cultural assessments for large-scale industrial fisheries", *Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law*, vol. 31, No. 3 (November 2022).

<sup>38</sup> Submission by Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, El Salvador.

<sup>39</sup> See [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI\\_KeyOutcomes\\_inf.3\\_fnl.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI_KeyOutcomes_inf.3_fnl.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> WMO, *State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023* (Geneva, 2024).

<sup>41</sup> Submission by FAO.



24. In many countries, data collection is inconsistent,<sup>42</sup> which prevents understanding the long-term impacts of climate change and identifying at what point human rights are breached in the context of slow-onset events.<sup>43</sup> There is also little information on rapid-onset events.<sup>44</sup> Accessing detailed and specific data on vulnerable groups, private-sector impacts and long-term climate studies can be challenging due to privacy concerns, resource limitations, logistical barriers and overly strict regulatory restrictions.<sup>45</sup>

25. In addition, vulnerability assessments, human rights and environmental impact assessments do not include local data, do not identify all environmental impacts, notably biodiversity, on which human rights depend, and do not undertake appropriate consultations with human rights holders or fully consider the human rights that can be negatively affected by climate change and response measures, also because of overly restrictive timelines for inputs, consultation and review.<sup>46</sup> There are also significant exclusions from the scope of required environmental impact assessments, such as projects declared of national interest, or entire sectors that contribute to climate change, such as large-scale fisheries.<sup>47</sup> In addition, assessments often do not include sufficient data on climate change-induced destruction of culture and cultural heritage (see [A/75/298](#)).

26. Further challenges arise also from disinformation campaigns on misleading and false solutions for a just transition: using natural gas to replace other fossil fuels, regardless of methane emissions; blue and grey hydrogen that increase greenhouse gas emissions due to the amounts of energy production required; and incineration of plastics, which adds to the greenhouse gas emissions of the chemical industry (see [A/HRC/54/25](#)). Obstacles to accessing information are often coupled with the lack of clear legal requirements on the transparent reporting and verification of energy transition programmes, which is combined with lack of accuracy and consistency in reporting standards by businesses. Communities face particular challenges in gaining access to information in the location where extractive projects are developed.<sup>48</sup>

27. Additional challenges arise during armed conflict, when only remote sensing and indirect data are available and it is harder to track all climate impacts due to the complexity of supply chains and secrecy of information.<sup>49</sup> This is compounded by the fact that military emissions remain insufficiently accounted for, because their reporting is voluntary under international climate change law and the overall datasets are poor.<sup>50</sup>

28. Finally, climate change itself is posing new risks to information systems themselves: extreme weather events have caused irreversible loss or damage to information archives.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Submission by FIAN Zambia.

<sup>43</sup> Submission by Oksana Tarasova.

<sup>44</sup> Submission by KRuHA (People's Coalition on the Rights to Water).

<sup>45</sup> Submission by Czechia.

<sup>46</sup> Submission to the Inter-American Court by Defensoría del Pueblo, Ecuador; and submissions by national human rights institution of El Salvador, The Green Connection and Vigo Avocats.

<sup>47</sup> Nakamura and others, "International legal requirements".

<sup>48</sup> Submission to the Inter-American Court by Defensoría del Pueblo, Ecuador.

<sup>49</sup> Submission by European Environmental Bureau.

<sup>50</sup> Submissions by Conflict and Environment Observatory, and London School of Economics.

<sup>51</sup> Submission by RealKM Cooperative Limited.

## B. Challenges related to intersectionality

29. States should gather disaggregated data on climate change impacts, as well as the impacts of response measures and just transition programmes, to understand and address differentiated human rights impacts in planning and capacity-building (see [A/78/155](#) and [A/HRC/56/46](#)). However, social, economic, cultural and health data, community feedback, Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge in remote or marginalized areas with limited resources and infrastructure<sup>52</sup> remain underrepresented in information-gathering efforts. In addition, victims of human rights violations often do not report incidents due to fear of retribution or a lack of trust in authorities.<sup>53</sup>

30. States must improve assessment and data collection at national and local levels on gender-related dimensions of climate change impacts, including gender-based violence and gender-based differences in vulnerability to infectious and non-infectious diseases occurring in situations of disaster and as a result of climate change, as well as on the development and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes designed to address gender inequalities, reduce disaster risk and increase resilience to climate change. States should also ensure that women and girls have equal access to information, including scientific research, and education regarding disasters and climate change (see Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 37 (2018), [A/77/189](#) and [A/76/222](#)). Information should include climate change impacts on child marriage rates, maternal mortality and unpaid care work, which should be collected at the individual rather than household level.<sup>54</sup> States should ensure that women and girls, particularly those who are marginalized and discriminated against on intersecting grounds, have access to information on how to access protection, assistance and remedies (see [A/77/136](#)).

31. States should also gather disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in the context of climate change (see [A/HRC/31/30](#)), and data on older persons, particularly in disaster-prone areas, including information on age, sex, race, ethnicity, housing circumstances, health needs, disability status and socioeconomic status (see [A/78/226](#)). States should strengthen the collection and use of disaggregated data on persons with albinism in the context of climate change, including regarding violence and discrimination (see [A/78/167](#)).

32. States should also share accurate, reliable and age-appropriate information and education that is accessible according to the different stages of children's development on: the causes of climate harm and its effects; adaptive responses; relevant legislation, policies and plans; findings from impact assessments; sustainable lifestyle choices; and the consideration of children's views in the outcomes of climate-related consultations and complaint procedures (see Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023)). States should prioritize data-gathering on impacts on children's health and development at different ages, with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations, including displaced children, children affected by conflict and crisis, children on the move, those living in low-lying coastal areas, children living in extreme poverty,<sup>55</sup> child trafficking<sup>56</sup> and on gender-disaggregated impacts on child labour.<sup>57</sup> There is limited education on climate change

<sup>52</sup> Submission by Commission for Children and Young People – Scotland.

<sup>53</sup> Submission by FIAN Zambia.

<sup>54</sup> Submission by UN-Women.

<sup>55</sup> Submissions by Terre des Hommes and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change.

<sup>56</sup> Submission by Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>57</sup> Submission by Accountability Counsel.

for primary school-age children.<sup>58</sup> A lack of social workers further exacerbates information challenges and limits the documentation of children's needs in the context of climate change.<sup>59</sup>

33. Furthermore, States should provide specific information to climate-related internally displaced persons on: the conditions in the place of origin and reasons and procedures for the displacement; possible risks and imminent threats; the place of relocation, including local integration and compensation; opportunities for participation in the decision and planning of the relocation, access to remedy (see [A/66/285](#) and [A/75/207](#)), and the available support and mental health care (see [A/78/245](#)).

34. Finally, States should provide information to workers and trade unions on the types of climate-driven occupational safety and health hazards occurring by sector, as well as on the existence of and compliance with protective legislation on climate change-induced extreme heat.<sup>60</sup> States should consider that informal workers and migrant workers are underrepresented in national databases, and their health and safety needs are not adequately monitored in the context of climate change.<sup>61</sup> International cooperation is needed to share information for migrant workers between countries of origin and receiving countries, including as part of pre-departure training in migration agreements.<sup>62</sup> Rural communities, women and Indigenous Peoples also experience insufficient access to information on climate change impacts on farming and climate-smart agriculture (see [A/70/287](#)) and on small-scale fisheries.<sup>63</sup> Undocumented or inaccessible communities are also often left out of information-gathering processes.<sup>64</sup>

### C. Impacts of inadequate access to information

35. Without adequate access to information on States' plans to prevent and minimize the human rights impacts of climate change and response measures, there can be no meaningful public participation to ensure the respectful integration of Indigenous knowledge, based on free, prior and informed consent, as well as of local knowledge into assessment, planning and monitoring processes. These inputs are essential to ensure holistic and effective responses<sup>65</sup> that prioritize the protection of those in situations of vulnerability.<sup>66</sup>

36. Lack of or inadequate information has led to casualties and long-lasting negative impacts on human lives and health.<sup>67</sup> Lack of timely access to information for climate-displaced individuals undermines their efforts to seek protection and reach or remain in safety.<sup>68</sup> According to WMO, the gaps in meteorological data in Latin America and

<sup>58</sup> Submission by Commission for Children and Young People – Scotland.

<sup>59</sup> Submission by Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>60</sup> Submission by Coalition on Labor Justice for Migrants in the Gulf.

<sup>61</sup> Submissions by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action; and Coalition on Labor Justice for Migrants in the Gulf.

<sup>62</sup> Submission by Coalition on Labor Justice for Migrants in the Gulf.

<sup>63</sup> Submission by FAO; and FAO, Duke University and WorldFish, *Illuminating Hidden Harvests: The Contributions of Small-scale Fisheries to Sustainable Development* (Rome, 2023).

<sup>64</sup> Submission by Slovenia.

<sup>65</sup> Submissions by Guatemala and by Acasia Broomes.

<sup>66</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/climate-change-3-final.docx](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/climate-change-3-final.docx); and submission by Mexico.

<sup>67</sup> Submission by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action.

<sup>68</sup> Submission by the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies.

the Caribbean are one reason for the devastating effects of some of the 2023 climate shocks in the region.<sup>69</sup>

37. Inadequate access to information in planned relocation processes for climate-related internally displaced people has led to unrealistic expectations and an inability to provide culturally appropriate rehousing (see [A/HRC/56/47](#)). Limited access to information on climate change and human rights may increase risks of exploitation, including human trafficking of women and girls (see [A/77/170](#)), environmentally detrimental practices by rural communities (see [A/70/287](#)) and increased reliance on child labour as a coping strategy.<sup>70</sup> Limited access to information affects women's ability to access climate financing (see [A/77/136](#)) and further excludes children from climate decision-making processes,<sup>71</sup> while exposing them to criminalization, abuse of power, harassment, hate speech, cyberbullying and violence, as well as other negative impacts on their mental health and general well-being.<sup>72</sup>

38. Inadequate information undermines the development of capacities and the offer of technical assistance among communities, civil society organizations and local governments to enhance climate resilience and ensure intersectoral contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation. Overall, insufficient information leads to poor planning and lack of early warning systems,<sup>73</sup> preventing opportunities to build social consensus for a just transition.<sup>74</sup>

#### D. Good practices

39. All relevant public authorities should collaborate in gathering and sharing information on climate change and human rights. States should support continuous improvement and interoperability of centralized and decentralized data, providing local governments with resources and authority to collect and manage data relevant to their regions.<sup>75</sup> National human rights institutions can facilitate access to information: in Chile, they created a map of socioenvironmental conflicts for strategizing solutions to human rights abuses in energy transition projects; and in Kenya, they documented patterns of human rights violations as a result of deforestation in various sectors, including energy (see [A/78/155](#)). In addition, national human rights institutions can conduct national fact-finding investigations and enquiries to fill information gaps on climate change and human rights.<sup>76</sup>

40. Given the need to connect various areas of information, the Special Rapporteur recommends that national and local authorities and national human rights institutions reach out to independent expert advisory bodies on climate change,<sup>77</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change national focal points and WMO integrated health focal points, who can also help in garnering media attention and informing public debate, while contributing to the gathering and sharing of information.

41. In addition, it is good practice to partner with non-State actors that have access to relevant information. Internationally funded projects can contribute to fill critical

<sup>69</sup> WMO, *State of the Climate*.

<sup>70</sup> Submission by Accountability Counsel.

<sup>71</sup> Submission by Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>72</sup> Submission by Plan International.

<sup>73</sup> Submission by Global Platform for the Right to the City.

<sup>74</sup> See [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI\\_KeyOutcomes\\_inf.3\\_fnl.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/8TFAI_KeyOutcomes_inf.3_fnl.pdf).

<sup>75</sup> Submissions by Canada, Maldives, FAO, Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental and Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action.

<sup>76</sup> Submission by Ombudswoman of Croatia.

<sup>77</sup> Submission by London School of Economics.

data gaps, such as disaggregated information on disproportionate consequences of climate change,<sup>78</sup> and publish in open access formats.<sup>79</sup> Community-based initiatives supported by civil society can gather culturally appropriate and locally meaningful information on climate change risks and impacts leading to the development of early warning systems in local languages through the use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook).<sup>80</sup> Relevant methodologies include community surveys, discussion groups, participatory risk mapping, and community monitoring of loss and damage, ensuring that the data collected is grounded in lived experiences.<sup>81</sup> All these approaches can be integrated into broader climate and human rights monitoring frameworks.<sup>82</sup>

42. Community-led initiatives, in turn, can be supported by enhanced collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations and international bodies on standardized data collection, including leveraging satellite imagery and remote sensing,<sup>83</sup> and facilitating inter-professional meetings with labour unions and health services to understand risks and impacts across sectors.<sup>84</sup> In addition, States, civil society and research institutions should support participatory research methodologies by providing training, capacity-building and other support to community members and recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge in informing local and national climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.<sup>85</sup>

43. The role of education cannot be overstated in this context. States, educational and research institutions and non-governmental organizations should prioritize integrating climate change and human rights education into: school curricula co-developed with children, employing hope-based communication and focusing on resilience and child participation in climate action; popular campaigns; and training for policymakers, journalists and community leaders.<sup>86</sup> International cooperation must support training of local leaders and organizations, strengthening their information and counter-information networks.<sup>87</sup> Climate literacy is surprisingly low in different regions,<sup>88</sup> so the Special Rapporteur recommends that education programmes specifically include the information identified in the present report with regard to human rights and climate change, including in the context of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) activities on education that target children and the World Programme for Human Rights Education targeting youth (see [A/HRC/51/8](#)).

#### IV. Barriers to obtaining access to information

44. To give effect to the right of access to information, States should set presumptions in legislation about the obligation for public bodies to publish and

<sup>78</sup> Submission by Vani Bhardwaj, Gender and Climate Justice Circle, Society of Gender Professionals.

<sup>79</sup> Submission by OpenClimateCampaign.

<sup>80</sup> See Article 19; and submission by Sheikh Inam Ul Mansoor.

<sup>81</sup> Submissions by Global Platform for the Right to the City and Ruta del Clima.

<sup>82</sup> Submission by Global Platform for the Right to the City.

<sup>83</sup> Submission by Sheikh Inam Ul Mansoor.

<sup>84</sup> Submission by AcclimaTerre 360.

<sup>85</sup> Submissions by Mexico, Sheikh Inam Ul Mansoor and Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action.

<sup>86</sup> Submissions by Spain, national human rights institution of El Salvador, Terre des Hommes, Sheikh Inam Ul Mansoor, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action and Media Monitoring Africa.

<sup>87</sup> Submission by FASE Solidarity and Education.

<sup>88</sup> UNICEF, "Harnessing the transformative potential of education for climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience building in Europe and Central Asia", September 2023; Nicholas P. Simpson and others, "Climate change literacy in Africa", *Nature Climate Change*, vol. 11, No. 11 (November 2021); and Daniel Bedford, "Does climate literacy matter? A case study of U.S. students' level of concern about anthropogenic global warming" *Journal of Geography*, vol. 115, No. 5 (2016).

disseminate documents of significant public interest, subject only to reasonable resource and capacity limitations.<sup>89</sup> States should enact clear procedures to provide for the timely processing of requests for information, including appeals in case of refusal or failure to respond to requests.<sup>90</sup> States should also identify any laws that are inconsistent with the right of access to information on climate change and human rights and amend or repeal them. States should further ensure access to information on the availability and accessibility of legal mechanisms for individuals and communities to seek redress for human rights violations in the context of climate change.<sup>91</sup> States should identify and rectify barriers to obtaining access to information on climate change and human rights in relation to accessibility, use of technology, timeliness, use of grounds for non-disclosure and data silos.

45. With regard to accessibility, information on climate change and human rights must be available in local languages and in formats and content that is genuinely accessible, despite technical complexity, and taking into account gender, age and disabilities (see [A/78/226](#), [A/HRC/50/57](#) and [A/HRC/31/30](#)), through methods aimed at overcoming illiteracy, distance and limited access to information and communications technology.<sup>92</sup> In addition, even when information is available, lack of connectivity, poverty and lack of access to education, including as child-specific limitations, prevent meaningful access to such information.<sup>93</sup> States must ensure that information is accessible to persons living in informal settlements, persons in situations of homelessness, LGBTQI persons, minorities, Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (see [A/HRC/52/28](#)), taking into account low wages, expensive living conditions, transport costs and lack of affordable electricity.<sup>94</sup> Systemic problems in providing information in a timely manner have also been identified, which prevent the public from expressing views on plans, participating in consultations and having their views considered.<sup>95</sup>

46. Considering the challenges of the digital divide,<sup>96</sup> with an estimated 2.7 billion people worldwide not being able to go online and only 36 per cent of the population in least developed countries and landlocked developing countries using the Internet (see [A/HRC/53/25](#)), States should make use of diverse methods of communication on climate change and human rights, particularly early warning systems (see [A/78/226](#), [A/77/189](#) and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, general recommendation No. 37 (2018)), to prevent discrimination resulting from the exclusive use of electronic media (Escazú Agreement, art. 4 (9)). In addition, caution is necessary in using artificial intelligence,<sup>97</sup> considering concerns related to data sovereignty, data privacy, bias mitigation, transparency and academic integrity, as well as gaps and inequalities in access to and use of artificial intelligence due to socioeconomic backgrounds or geographical location, particularly in the context of international or foreign-developed artificial intelligence tools.<sup>98</sup>

47. States should set out the grounds for refusal of a request for access to information clearly and construe them narrowly (see [A/HRC/37/59](#), annex, principle 7), in accordance with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>89</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Expression/Factsheet\\_5.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Expression/Factsheet_5.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> See Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011).

<sup>91</sup> Submission by FIAN Zambia.

<sup>92</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, general comment No. 26 (2023).

<sup>93</sup> Submission by Child Rights International Network.

<sup>94</sup> Submission by Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment.

<sup>95</sup> Submission by A Sud Ecologia e Cooperazione.

<sup>96</sup> Submissions by Maldives, national human rights institution of El Salvador and DuClima Institute.

<sup>97</sup> Submission by ReaKM Cooperative Limited.

<sup>98</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-contributions-artificial-intelligence-education-and-its-human-rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2024/call-contributions-artificial-intelligence-education-and-its-human-rights).

<sup>99</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 19 (3).

Restrictions based on national security reasons must also comply with these conditions,<sup>100</sup> keeping in mind concerns that the securitization of climate change may divert attention away from the root causes of climate change and portray the victims of climate change as risks or threats.<sup>101</sup>

48. Authorities should provide reasons for any refusal to provide access to information.<sup>102</sup> This is particularly important as States may restrict access to this information to avoid scrutiny or criticism,<sup>103</sup> or on the basis of an undue presumption in favour of non-disclosure to protect intellectual property rights<sup>104</sup> or commercially sensitive information in public-private partnerships.<sup>105</sup>

49. Lack of inter-institutional coordination contributes to data silos, inconsistent data quality, data incompatibility due to conflicting formats and the lack of comprehensive data quality control and assurance,<sup>106</sup> and inadequate public participation on adaptation and mitigation across the areas of displacement, health and waste management.<sup>107</sup> States should develop and implement public policies that support the generation and sharing of information across different public sectors (climate, broader environmental issues, health, socioeconomic rights, labour, cultural heritage and climate-sensitive productive sectors and infrastructure), as well as levels of government, with public participation.<sup>108</sup>

50. States should also gather and share information on threats of violence or attacks against environmental human rights defenders<sup>109</sup> and available protection measures and challenges faced in accessing justice, including for children.<sup>110</sup> Intimidation or harassment of environmental human rights defenders by public administration bodies, business and other actors can have a deterrent effect on requesting information.<sup>111</sup>

## V. Improving current practices

51. The Special Rapporteur considers that current practices to ensure access to information on human rights and climate change can be improved in the light of the human right to science.<sup>112</sup> This right entails the fair sharing of the benefits of science by everyone without discrimination; the opportunity for all to contribute to scientific research; the obligation to protect all persons against negative consequences of scientific research or its applications on their food, health, security and environment; and the obligation to ensure that priorities for scientific research focus on key issues for the most vulnerable (see [A/HRC/20/26](#)). The right to science gives rise to State obligations to ensure access to the applications of scientific progress that are critical to the enjoyment of the right to health and other economic, social and cultural rights, to prioritize the allocation of public resources to research in areas where there is the

<sup>100</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Expression/Factsheet\\_5.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Expression/Factsheet_5.pdf).

<sup>101</sup> See [www.tni.org/en/publication/primer-on-climate-security](http://www.tni.org/en/publication/primer-on-climate-security).

<sup>102</sup> Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 34 (2011).

<sup>103</sup> Submissions by FIAN Zambia and Acasia Broomes.

<sup>104</sup> Submission by Abbe Brown and Erin Ferguson.

<sup>105</sup> Submissions by Curating Tomorrow and Open Secrets and Access to Information Coalition.

<sup>106</sup> Submission by Maldives.

<sup>107</sup> Article 19.

<sup>108</sup> Submission to the Inter-American Court from Ministerio Público de la Defensa, Argentina; and submission by Mexico.

<sup>109</sup> Submissions by Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment and Human Rights Myanmar.

<sup>110</sup> Submission by Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>111</sup> Submissions by Slovak National Center for Human Rights, Milieudéfense and Vigo Avocats.

<sup>112</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 15.

greatest need for scientific progress in health, food and other basic needs related to economic, social and cultural rights, and to ensure the well-being of the population, especially with regard to vulnerable and marginalized groups.<sup>113</sup>

52. States should therefore identify the greatest need for progress in science to support basic economic, social and cultural rights, and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in the context of climate change, and prioritize the gathering and sharing of that information. In addition, States should protect the public against disinformation campaigns and misleading information due to vested interests in the development of harmful climate technologies or political, ideological or economic interests in polluting energy and industrial production and consumption patterns. To that end, States should ensure that the public can benefit from independent technical experts for the realization of the rights of access to information and participation (see [A/HRC/54/25](#)).

53. States should fund and support participatory research and information-gathering practices by local grass-roots organizations and networks of frontline communities, particularly when these practices ensure consideration of intersectionality (see [A/77/229](#)), as well as community-based monitoring initiatives,<sup>114</sup> women-designed and women-led initiatives,<sup>115</sup> child participatory research and art-based methods for intergenerational and intercultural learning,<sup>116</sup> as opportunities for all to contribute to science and quality information on climate change and human rights.

54. States have heightened obligations to protect climate activists, scientists and journalists as environmental human rights defenders (see [A/HRC/54/25](#)). Instead, 70 per cent of environmental journalists are being attacked for their work<sup>117</sup> and there are an increasing number of cases of vilification, smear campaigns and disinformation about climate activists (see [A/76/222](#)). States should urgently develop, in coordination with civil society, positive narratives on the contributions of environmental human rights defenders to the protection of human rights in the context of climate change (see [A/HRC/56/50](#)).

55. In addition, States should not restrict climate activists' access to online platforms or media outlets, which limits the sharing of information and the joining up of international solidarity initiatives. States and donors should provide civil society with funding to facilitate fair access to digital platforms, prioritizing marginalized women, girls, children, youth groups, minorities and Indigenous Peoples who are at risk of systematic silencing within the public and digital spheres, and may be prevented from communicating with political or judicial institutions (see [A/HRC/56/57](#)).

56. States should support, monitor, evaluate and learn from data-sharing collaborations between different government entities and civil society on human rights and climate change, with a view to addressing siloed information and difficulties in accessing comprehensive data sets, as well as improving standardization and interoperability of information systems.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Committee on Economic and Social Rights, general comment No. 25 (2000).

<sup>114</sup> Submission by Sheikh Inam Ul Mansoor.

<sup>115</sup> Submission by Vani Bhardwaj.

<sup>116</sup> Submissions by Commission for Children and Young People – Scotland, Terre des Hommes, and Child Friendly Justice European Network and Défense des enfants international – Belgique.

<sup>117</sup> See [www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-report-reveals-70-environmental-journalists-have-been-attacked-their-work](http://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-report-reveals-70-environmental-journalists-have-been-attacked-their-work).

<sup>118</sup> Submissions by Acasia Broomes, FIAN Zambia, Maldives and the European Union.



## VI. International cooperation

57. International cooperation, including through regional and international organizations, should be leveraged to secure and promote access to information on climate change and human rights, to enhance protection for affected communities and to hold States and businesses accountable (see [A/78/155](#)). The International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea has indicated that States must cooperate to promote studies, undertake scientific research and encourage the exchange of information and data on marine pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, its pathways, risks and remedies, including mitigation and adaptation measures, on the basis of which States should then cooperate in the formulation and elaboration of rules, standards and recommended practices and procedures in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, as well as other forums (advisory opinion in Case No. 31).

58. The Special Rapporteur considers that such international collaboration should extend also to information on critical biodiversity and ecosystem services that contribute to mitigation and adaptation (see [A/HRC/56/46](#)), and to health, food and other basic needs related to economic, social and cultural rights and the well-being of the population, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized situations.<sup>119</sup> States should ensure that these obligations are upheld in the context of relevant international organizations, particularly those for which concerns have been raised about limited access to information on decision-making and the underlying evidence base, such as the International Seabed Authority,<sup>120</sup> the International Maritime Organization<sup>121</sup> and the International Civil Aviation Organization.<sup>122</sup>

59. In addition, States should support and fund international organizations that contribute to connecting, comparing and complementing areas of information on climate change and human rights. FAO brought together responses from 109,000 households in 24 countries in five regions of the world and 70 years of georeferenced rainfall and temperature data to measure the impacts of climate change on the rural poor, women and youth in different agroecological contexts, with global evidence helping to identify shared vulnerabilities and priority actions for scaling up effective responses.<sup>123</sup> FAO has also developed the climate risk toolbox to mainstream climate resilience within agricultural investment projects, policy, plans and decision-making processes; legislative guidance on the human rights-based approach into climate action and disaster risk reduction in small-scale fisheries, including on access to information; and projections of medium- and long-term effects of climate change on global marine ecosystems and fisheries.<sup>124</sup>

60. While WMO has not developed information tools on climate change and human rights as such,<sup>125</sup> it has collaborated with the World Health Organization through a health, environment and climate cooperation framework in 2018, which emphasized access to information; with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in developing technical guidance on the application of climate information for comprehensive risk management, helping to manage uncertainty in both past and

<sup>119</sup> Committee on Economic and Social Rights, general comment No. 25 (2000).

<sup>120</sup> Submission by Solomon “Uncle Sol” Kaho’Ohalahala, Hinano Murphy and Te Ipukarea Society.

<sup>121</sup> Submission by Opportunity Green; see also [A/HRC/54/25/Add.2](#).

<sup>122</sup> Submission by Opportunity Green.

<sup>123</sup> Submission by FAO.

<sup>124</sup> Submission by FAO. See also FAO, *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards Blue Transformation* (Rome, 2022) and FAO, “Climate change risks to marine ecosystems and fisheries: projections to 2100 from the Fisheries and Marine Ecosystem Model Intercomparison Project, 2024.

<sup>125</sup> Submission by Oksana Tarasova.

present climate analyses and future climate projections in the context of planning; and with the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative.

61. While it is not feasible to do so in the present report, the Special Rapporteur considers it essential to map out major climate-related information initiatives of relevant international organizations to ascertain to what extent they are satisfying the needs for effective information on climate change and human rights identified in the previous sections of the report, including through integration and interoperability, and to what extent they are gender-responsive, age-sensitive and disability-inclusive. Donor States should prioritize funding towards ensuring integration, interoperability and accessibility to these international sources of information and filling gaps that are critical to the protection of human rights, especially for those in vulnerable situations, with particular attention to sudden- and slow-onset disasters that lead to displacement (see [A/66/285](#)). States should then request that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change rely on such an integrated international evidence base, with a view to responding to demands for its reports to consider more systematically impacts on human rights.<sup>126</sup> The role of the Early Warnings for All initiative and the One Health approach, and cooperation between the two, should also be explored in this connection.

62. Integration, interoperability and accessibility of information on climate change and human rights should also be ensured across all sources of international climate finance, both so that communities that may be affected by specific projects can participate in the design, development, implementation and monitoring of projects (see [A/76/154](#)), and because lessons learned from these projects and their grievance and redress mechanisms<sup>127</sup> should be shared internationally and connected with other sources of information. Access to information should not only concern the Green Climate Fund and other United Nations-mandated funds, but also international development banks,<sup>128</sup> financial intermediaries<sup>129</sup> and climate-related private philanthropy.

63. Connecting satellite data with online information platforms on climate change can enhance access to information, subject to regulations to ensure accessibility to those in situations of vulnerability, the provision of technical support to utilize the data, and monitoring.<sup>130</sup> There are concerns that existing platforms do not support safe communication and networking on climate change and human rights for civil society, youth and children to share experiences and coordinate international and intersectoral projects through proactive, clear, searchable and secure disclosures (see [A/72/350](#)). The Special Rapporteur recommends that donor States support the establishment of online information platforms on climate change and human rights through international cooperation, inclusion of civil society and integration of the lived experiences of human rights holders most affected by climate change (see [A/HRC/56/46](#)), so as to identify good practices, gaps and the need for new initiatives that could be led by or co-developed with civil society to enhance the scope and accessibility of information sources.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Submission by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action.

<sup>127</sup> See <https://accountability.worldbank.org/en/iamnet>.

<sup>128</sup> Submissions by London School of Economics and Milieudefensie.

<sup>129</sup> Submissions by Accountability Counsel and Milieudefensie.

<sup>130</sup> CEJIL and others, Submission to the Inter-American Court.

<sup>131</sup> Submissions by Canada and AccessNow.

## VII. The responsibility of businesses

64. Businesses should accurately report and disclose their climate impacts in an accessible manner that is sufficient to evaluate the adequacy of their efforts to prevent climate change-related human rights harms. Companies should share the climate footprint of their products and services; technical and physical characteristics and impacts of high-emission projects, and available technologies;<sup>132</sup> as well as broader sustainability efforts, compliance with environmental regulations and investments in renewable energy and eco-friendly technologies.<sup>133</sup> Companies engaged in projects to address climate change should share information prior to starting these projects (see [A/76/154](#)).

65. Reliable information on the climate impacts of individual businesses is not readily available or included in financial statements, so States should adopt and enforce regulatory measures on the mandatory disclosure of accurate information on the climate and human rights performance of business (see [A/HRC/55/43](#)).<sup>134</sup> There is a lack of standardized reporting frameworks and metrics for businesses to disclose information on climate change and human rights risks, leading to inconsistencies in reporting practices and difficulties in comparing performance across companies and sectors.<sup>135</sup> It has been suggested that corporate climate disclosure mechanisms should include: a 1.5°C Paris Agreement-aligned emissions target; detailed and disaggregated information on greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3);<sup>136</sup> current production capacity and expansion plans and their exposure to climate risks;<sup>137</sup> the company's transition plan to align its business with global climate goals;<sup>138</sup> and compliance with public participation requirements, according to intersectional indicators (see [A/78/155](#)).

66. Businesses should also regularly disclose accessible information relevant to climate change and human rights contained in contracts, concessions, agreements or other documents involving public resources.<sup>139</sup> Businesses should ensure effective communication, including translation into local languages and culturally appropriate engagement methods, drawing on external expertise and offering potentially affected communities legal and technical support to understand the project components. State-owned enterprises that are active in the oil, mining, transport, logistics and storage sectors, should take a leading role in establishing positive practices in transparency and disclosure of information.

67. Business should share information about lobbying related to climate policies. Furthermore, businesses should refrain from supporting public misinformation campaigns that harm the ability of States and the public to make informed decisions

<sup>132</sup> Submissions by Finnwatch, Curating Tomorrow, Henrique Napoleão Alves and Global Network for Human Rights and the Environment.

<sup>133</sup> Submission by AccessNow.

<sup>134</sup> Submission by Center for International Environmental Law.

<sup>135</sup> Submissions by Mexico and by Natasha Gomes-George.

<sup>136</sup> Scope 1 emissions: direct emissions from owned or controlled sources; Scope 2 emissions: indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy; Scope 3 emissions: all indirect emissions (not included in Scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting company, including both upstream and downstream emissions (see [www.unepfi.org/themes/climate-change/how-can-policy-makers-support-finance-industry-action-on-net-zero-establishing-an-appropriate-emission-scope/](http://www.unepfi.org/themes/climate-change/how-can-policy-makers-support-finance-industry-action-on-net-zero-establishing-an-appropriate-emission-scope/)).

<sup>137</sup> Submissions by Center for International Environmental Law and Milieudefensie; and ClientEarth, "Guardrails to address greenwashing of climate transition finance", 2024.

<sup>138</sup> ClientEarth, "Guardrails to address greenwashing".

<sup>139</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and others, Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression (see footnote 2); and submission by Mexico.

regarding climate change.<sup>140</sup> “Climate-washing” challenges the accuracy of corporate climate commitments or claims about product attributes, overstated investments or support for climate action and failure to disclose climate risks (see [A/78/255](#)). Such conduct can include factually incorrect or unfounded net-zero statements and targets, and unfounded “carbon neutral” labels.<sup>141</sup>

68. The Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes found that the fossil fuel, chemical, mining, nuclear, plastic and waste industries are advancing false or misleading climate solutions and spreading disinformation on climate technologies, and are downplaying their adverse human rights and climate impacts (see [A/HRC/54/25](#)). Heightened concerns have arisen about access to information on geoengineering research, experimentation and deployment,<sup>142</sup> which, as the Special Rapporteur has already underscored, should ensure compliance with the law of the sea and international biodiversity law (see [A/HRC/56/46](#)). Carbon credits bought on voluntary carbon markets can contribute to climate-washing at the point of credit issuance and when advertising a company or product/service due to high uncertainty and lack of transparency over the quality of credit issuance. As a result, it is challenging to measure companies’ profits from their false advertisements and solutions.<sup>143</sup>

69. Many businesses operate within global supply chains, making it difficult to track and communicate risks related to climate change and human rights, particularly in countries with weaker regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms.<sup>144</sup> The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises recommended that investors request human rights due diligence for all investees, relevant to their size, scale and sector, as well as to asset class and type of investment, on their actions to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for potential and actual adverse human rights impacts linked to climate change, including in conflict-affected and high-risk areas; and ensure access to effective remedies for potential or actual adverse human rights impacts linked to climate change that result from their investment decisions (see [A/HRC/56/55](#)).

70. Companies providing digital platforms and information/media services should refrain from creating or disseminating false or misleading information and take appropriate and proportionate measures to mitigate risks arising from misinformation, disinformation and other forms of information manipulation. These companies should provide quality, trustworthy and evidence-based information on climate change and human rights, and on promoting a free, safe and diverse information ecosystem, which can support civil society in participating in international or regional solidarity actions relating to climate change (see [A/HRC/56/57](#)). Companies providing digital platforms and information/media services should thus cooperate with civil society and States to enable the fair access by vulnerable communities to information and communications technologies on climate change and human rights, and comply with non-discrimination standards in their moderation of online communications (see [A/HRC/56/57](#)).<sup>145</sup> These companies should share information about their content-moderation practices regarding climate issues, including all removal requests, and conflicts of interest with

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<sup>140</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/KMBusiness.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/KMBusiness.pdf).

<sup>141</sup> Australian Securities and Investments Commission, “ASIC Greenwashing Antidote”, July 2023; and submission by Vigo Avocats.

<sup>142</sup> Submission by Center for International Environmental Law.

<sup>143</sup> Submission by FASE Solidarity and Education.

<sup>144</sup> Submissions by Natasha Gomes-George and Acasia Broomes.

<sup>145</sup> Submission by AccessNow.

public and corporate actors.<sup>146</sup> They should also cooperate with those verifying information and offer tools to identify sources on climate change.<sup>147</sup>

71. Finally, business should refrain from using defamation and strategic lawsuits against public participation,<sup>148</sup> ensuring that groups in vulnerable situations and climate activists are not subjected to any form of retaliation for combating climate disinformation (see [A/HRC/54/25](#)). States should enact legislation providing tools for the rapid dismissal of strategic lawsuits against public participation, penalties for businesses bringing such cases, sanctions for lawyers representing those businesses and protection for whistle-blowers, including substantial monetary rewards for information about serious climate and human rights harms (see [A/HRC/55/43](#)).

## VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

72. **Timely access to high-quality, trustworthy, evidence-based and accessible information on climate change and human rights is essential to ensure that public authorities understand the foreseeability and preventability of negative human rights impacts of climate change and response measures and make holistic, effective and inclusive decisions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The public must be informed about the magnitude of actual and potential negative human rights risks and impacts of climate change and response measures, and about the adequacy of States' and businesses' responses to effectively protect and respect human rights in the context of climate change. This is necessary to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of people in vulnerable situations to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change.**

73. **It is thus essential to fill gaps and connect sources of information across different sectors and levels of government, as well as across civil society, the research community and international organizations. Information is needed on climate change sources and effects, including on biodiversity and ecosystem services, weather and natural disaster patterns, as well as on impacts on human health, mobility, labour, social, economic and cultural rights, and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in terrestrial, freshwater and marine contexts. It is imperative to identify and respond – locally, nationally, regionally and internationally – to the greatest need for progress in knowledge production and information- and data-sharing, in order to protect the human rights of those in vulnerable and marginalized situations in the context of climate change.**

74. **To that end, States should regularly collect, disseminate and increasingly improve quality, trustworthy and evidence-based information on:**

(a) **The causes and consequences of climate change, including emission levels and high-emitting activities from both State and non-State actors, as well as future climate change projections based on different greenhouse gas emission trajectories and transparent models, and detailed weather, climate and disaster patterns;**

(b) **Short- and long-term risks and negative impacts of climate change on human rights, integrating the outcomes of climate vulnerability assessments,**

<sup>146</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and others, Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression (see footnote 2).

<sup>147</sup> CEJIL and others, Submission to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

<sup>148</sup> Submissions by Ombudswoman of Croatia and AccessNow.

strategic environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments, as well as the lived experiences of affected communities;

(c) The environmental effectiveness and the human rights impacts of mitigation and adaptation plans and activities, climate finance projects, just transition programmes and projects, carbon markets and climate mitigation technology research and deployment;

(d) Public budgets allocated to the fight against climate change, as well as subsidies to fossil fuels and other high-emitting activities;

(e) Disaggregated data on human rights impacts of climate change and response measures on individuals and groups in situations of heightened vulnerability and marginalization;

(f) Activities that are within the State's influence or control and have impacts outside a State's territories, and international cooperation having an impact on human rights in the context of climate change.

75. States should also:

(a) Identify and fill gaps in information on historical climate and meteorological data and in disaggregated data on individuals and groups that are in situations of heightened vulnerability in the context of climate change;

(b) Provide accessible, affordable, effective, understandable and timely access to information on climate change and human rights to any person upon request, taking into account gender, age and disabilities;

(c) Take enhanced measures to ensure access to information for those most affected by climate change and related decision-making, in particular Indigenous Peoples, with a view to fulfilling obligations related to their free, prior and informed consent, as well as peasants and local knowledge holders, with a view to ensuring recognition of and respect for their knowledge systems and territorial connections, and those who face intersectional discrimination;

(d) Enact clear procedures for timely processing of requests for information, and amend or repeal laws that are inconsistent with the right of access to information on climate change and human rights;

(e) Provide guidance to the public on how to obtain such information, clarifying that there is no need to show a legal or other interest to make a request, and procedures to obtain remedies in case of refusal or failure to respond to requests;

(f) Disseminate immediately all information that would enable the public to take protective measures in case of imminent threat of harm to human life, health or the environment;

(g) Carry out integrated strategic assessments of the environmental and human rights impacts of proposed policies, programmes and legislation related to climate change;

(h) Develop, in coordination with civil society, and effectively communicate positive narratives on the contributions of environmental human rights defenders to the protection of human rights in the context of climate change;

(i) Incorporate information on climate change and human rights into the educational curriculum at all levels;

(j) Fund and support participatory research and information-gathering practices, particularly when community-led, women-led or co-developed with children or local grass-roots organizations, and when they ensure consideration of intersectionality;

(k) Support development and access to digital platforms on climate change and human rights, with special funding directed towards empowering marginalized women, girls, children, youth groups, minorities and Indigenous Peoples;

(l) Support, monitor, evaluate and learn from inter-institutional coordination and data-sharing collaborations between different government entities and civil society, towards improving data quality, standardization and interoperability of information systems;

(m) Protect the public against disinformation campaigns and misleading information on climate change and human rights, ensuring public access to independent technical experts;

(n) Adopt and enforce laws that impose specific transparency obligations on businesses, including publicly owned enterprises, on their climate change and human rights impacts and their risk-mitigation efforts;

(o) Enact legislation providing tools for the rapid dismissal of strategic lawsuits against public participation, penalties for businesses bringing such lawsuits, sanctions for lawyers representing those businesses, and protection for whistle-blowers.

76. In terms of international cooperation, donor States should prioritize funding towards:

(a) Accessibility, integration and interoperability of international sources of information on climate change and human rights;

(b) Filling of critical information gaps for the protection of human rights of those in vulnerable and marginalized situations;

(c) International organizations that contribute to connecting, comparing and complementing information on climate change through explicit analysis of human rights impacts;

(d) The establishment of online information platforms on climate change and human rights with the inclusion of civil society and the integration of the lived experiences of human rights holders that are most affected by climate change.

77. In addition, all States should cooperate in:

(a) Undertaking scientific research and exchange of information and data on climate change, climate change measures and their impacts on human rights, and on critical biodiversity and ecosystem services that contribute to mitigation and adaptation;

(b) Utilizing such information as a basis for the development of international rules and standards in relevant international organizations;

(c) Ensuring public access to information on decisions and the underlying evidence base in the context of international organizations whose mandate affects climate change and/or contributes to protecting human rights in the context of climate change;

(d) **Enhancing the transparency of international climate finance across United Nations-mandated funds, international development banks, financial intermediaries and philanthropic sources, and sharing lessons learned in the context of redress mechanisms on human rights impacts.**

**78. Businesses should:**

(a) **Accurately report and disclose their climate impacts in an accessible manner that is sufficient to evaluate the adequacy of their efforts to prevent climate change-related human rights harm;**

(b) **Ensure effective communication on these efforts, including by providing translation into local languages and culturally appropriate engagement methods, drawing on external expertise, and offering communities independent legal and technical support to understand these efforts;**

(c) **Share information about lobbying related to climate policies;**

(d) **Refrain from supporting public misinformation campaigns and from engaging in strategic lawsuits against public participation.**

**79. The United Nations system should:**

(a) **Map out major international climate-related information initiatives to ascertain to what extent they are collectively satisfying the needs for effective information on climate change and human rights in a gender-responsive, age-sensitive and disability-inclusive manner;**

(b) **Identify gaps, opportunities for further integration and interoperability and areas for collaboration, including with civil society and the research community, on information on climate change sources and effects, including on biodiversity and ecosystem services, weather and natural disaster patterns, as well as on impacts on human health, mobility, labour, social, economic and cultural rights, and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in terrestrial, freshwater and marine contexts;**

(c) **Enhance collaboration between the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Early Warnings for All initiative and the One Health approach on an integrated evidence base to consider more systematically and explicitly the impacts of climate change and proposed and ongoing response measures on human rights;**

(d) **Support the integration of the information identified in the present report in United Nations-led education initiatives.**