

44th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 3: Joint Oral Statement - Delivered by Mr. Yves Lador, Earthjustice - 9 July 2020

Interactive Dialogue with the International Expert on International Solidarity

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

This is a joint statement of Earthjustice, Franciscans International (FI), the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Soka Gakkai International (SGI), Food Information Action Network (FIAN) and the Global Initiative for Economic Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR).

We welcome the Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, highlighting how much a human rights-based international solidarity is needed to face the challenge of climate change. We welcome in particular the recommendation to States to cooperate in guaranteeing access to justice as it applies to marginalized groups directly affected by climate change. If the effects of climate change are felt globally, they disproportionately affect people who have least contributed to the crisis, such as people living in poverty, people discriminated for their gender, culture or origin, persons with disability, children, older persons and other groups in vulnerable situations.

Climate change is an unprecedented threat to human rights urging for immediate action to keep the global warming below a 1.5°C increase, as reminded in the IE's report and as agreed by the international community in the Paris Agreement. States need to contribute to the international solidarity by increasing the ambition of their mitigation and adaptation objectives and by illustrating their human rights commitments in the new or enhanced National Determined Contribution (NDC) to be presented this year under the Paris Agreement. In addition, developed countries and other States in position to do so must urgently scale up the provision of climate finance to remedy to the many shortcomings identified in the Independent Expert's report with regards to the quantity and quality of climate funding.

The Human Rights Council and the OHCHR have made real achievements in their work on climate change up to today, but as climate urgency increases, they need now to address the issue in a more permanent and sustainable manner in order to strengthen international cooperation. We therefore call the Council to establish a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change, which shall serve as a focal point for the Council on climate change and for a regular dialogue with Member States. The voices of affected communities need to be better heard in this Council and such a mandate could support States in the fulfilment of their common human rights obligations in this context.

Such efforts will be strengthened by the long overdue recognition by this Council of States' responsibility to ensure the full enjoyment by all of the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and the access to effective remedies for affected communities. To date, over 110 States have recognized this right in their Constitution. This clearly reflects the growing consensus of the international community on the pressing need to address the relationship between the health of the planet and the human rights of all people, for the present and future generations.

I thank you for your attention.