

46th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Agenda Item 4, General Debate
15 March 2020

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR MANDATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President,

On behalf of the Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights (GIF)¹, we would like to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the importance of the establishment of a Special Rapporteur mandate on human rights and climate change.

We commend the Member States of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and Pacific Island States who reiterated this call during the 44th session of the Human Rights Council for the mandate to be instituted without delay to assist, identify and better protect those most affected by the climate crisis and by the wrong solutions to it.

We express deep concern over the suffering of both people and Mother Earth as a result of the intertwined climate and global health emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing patterns of inequalities. There is now an increased urgency for the Council to address the climate crisis in a more permanent, systematic and sustained manner, to protect people from its adverse impacts, promote the respect for, and protection of human rights in all climate responses, and ensure access to justice and empowerment.

Resolutely adopting a human rights-based approach is key to secure the respect for the dignity of life, particularly of those in vulnerable situations who feel more acutely the impacts of these crises and inadequate responses to them.

We therefore urge the Council to consider the establishment of this new mandate without delay.

We thank you.

¹ The World Council Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Franciscans International, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, and Soka Gakkai International.