

45th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Agenda Item 4, General Debate
25th September 2020

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

Madam President,

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

We commend the joint statement delivered by the Republic of the Marshall Islands² during the 44th session in June and its call to the Council to strengthen its engagement in this critical global issue through the creation of a new Special Procedures mandate on climate change and human rights.

While acknowledging the on-going efforts of the Council in responding to the climate crisis, it currently lacks the means to address it in a comprehensive way, including clarifying States' legal obligations or providing effective support to States and affected communities. The current climate crisis has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is an increased urgency for the Council to address the issue in a more permanent and sustained manner.

A new Special Procedures mandate would ensure a long-term focus on climate change issues at the Human Rights Council and bring a human rights dimension into climate change policies. It would contribute to enhancing complementarity between the climate change legal framework and the international human rights regime. Here, independent human rights monitoring bodies can play a valuable and more important role. Moreover, the creation of a new mandate would strongly convey the message that human rights must be integral to climate change discussions.

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

Thank you.

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

² Joint Statement for delivery by the Marshall Islands during HRC44 <https://www.docdroid.net/Q1a31FF/hrc44-jst-on-climate-short-check-against-delivery-pdf>