

## **Joint Oral Statement – 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council 27 June 2018**

### **Item 4: General Debate - Human Rights Situation that needs Council's attention**

**Speaker: Valeriane Bernard**

#### **Mr. President,**

We (Franciscans International, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, the World Council of Churches and Geneva Interfaith Forum on Human Rights Climate Change and Environment) welcome the OHCHR Report on Addressing human rights protection gaps in the context of migration and displacement of persons across international borders resulting from the adverse effect of climate change and supporting the adaptation and mitigation plans of developing countries to bridge the protection gaps<sup>1</sup>.

We strongly endorse the conclusions of the report which urges the UN member states to take ambitious actions to mitigate, adapt and build resilience to climate change, especially in the context of climate-induced migration and displacement.<sup>2</sup> We further support the call for states to account for differences and to protect the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups – particularly children, the elderly, people with disabilities, women, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, minorities and the impoverished – who are in the frontline of climate change impacts. Member states should seriously take into consideration the recommendations of this report, especially during the current negotiation of the UN Global Compact on Migration and Refugees.

Equally, we commend CEDAW General Recommendation No. 37 on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.<sup>3</sup> We support CEDAW's view on ensuring the participation and leadership of women in decision-making activities relating to disaster risk reduction and climate change.<sup>4</sup> The General Comment should also be taken into consideration in the current negotiation of the UNFCCC toward the adoption of the Guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement to be adopted during the COP24 in Katowice, Poland.

#### **Mr. President,**

As faith-based organizations working on climate change from a human rights perspective, we place the utmost importance on human dignity.<sup>5</sup> We affirm the Paris Agreement view that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet Earth which forms the basis of human sustenance.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we urge governments to put people and our planet at the center of climate policy and actions in this Council, in UNFCCC processes, as well as in our day to day life. We believe that everyone has the capacity to contribute to overcoming climate change and to choose sustainable lifestyles. We are convinced that climate policy should enable us to be respectful of the dignity of the person and of the integrity of our planet.

In light of the fact that climate change endangers the fulfilment of many human rights, now and even more so in the future, we strongly recommend that the Human Rights Council considers the creation of a special mechanism to focus exclusively on how the impact of climate change on human rights can be addressed. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> See A/HRC/38/21

<sup>2</sup> See A/HRC/38/21 para 66

<sup>3</sup> See CEDAW/C/GC/37

<sup>4</sup> See CEDAW/C/GC/37 para 36

<sup>5</sup> As it is stipulated in the article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights stipulates that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.

<sup>6</sup> See the preambular paragraph of Paris Agreement.