



48th Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
Agenda Item 2, General Debate  
14/15 September 2021

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR MANDATE ON  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE &  
GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

Madam President,

On behalf of the Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights (GIF)<sup>1</sup>, we thank the High Commissioner for her oral update highlighting the increased severity of the climate crisis and the need to put human rights at the center of climate action.

The latest IPCC report<sup>2</sup> is clearly showing that: “Recent changes in the climate are widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and unprecedented in thousands of years”. This increasingly puts the right to a dignified life particularly for those in vulnerable situations at risk.

Since 2010, the GIF has advocated for the establishment of a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change. We believe that this mandate should be established at this 48th session, to, among other things, identify the adverse impacts of climate change on peoples’ rights and dignity, consult affected communities, and contribute to strengthen an international ethical response to climate change in compliance with human rights.

In this regard, we look forward to the engagement of States in further discussions pursuant to OP15 of the Resolution on Human Rights and Climate Change ([A/HRC/47/L.19](#)) during this session.

We also strongly believe that the time is now for the global recognition of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It is time for the Human Rights Council to take action.

We thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> The World Council Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Franciscans International, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Soka Gakkai International, and ACT Alliance.

<sup>2</sup> The Sixth Assessment of the IPCC, AR6 Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Accessible at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/>