



Misión Permanente
de Costa Rica
Ginebra



Climate Vulnerable Forum
Foro de Vulnerabilidad Climática
Forum de la Vulnérabilité Climatique



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



UNIVERSAL RIGHTS GROUP

Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment

PRESS RELEASE

International Human Rights Community urges heightened Ambition at COP21

GENEVA Switzerland, 10 June 2015 - Climate vulnerable states and civil society experts called today world leaders to seize the opportunity of COP21 in Paris to reinforce the protection and fulfillment of human rights.

The [Climate Vulnerable Forum](#), with Costa Rica as the host, brought together today leading states involved in the UN Human Rights Council and the UN climate change negotiations (UNFCCC) alongside experts on international environmental law in an event co-organized with [Universal Rights Group](#) and the Mandate of the [UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment](#). The participants discussed how human rights ties to the 2 degrees temperature goal, which COP21 must decide whether to retain or reinforce in December, emphasizing that more ambitious outcomes from the Paris negotiations would promote greater enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

Leading the discussions, the representative of Costa Rica as host stated that: “Paris is a tremendous opportunity for the international community to reinforce the enjoyment of a wide range of fundamental human rights that are already being affected by the impact of climate change. COP21 provides us a unique chance to step up the global response to the historic challenge of climate change. Greater ambition in Paris, by strengthening the 2 degrees goal, would strengthen the protection of human rights globally.”

The declaration is supported by the report prepared by John Knox, Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment, on “The Effects of Climate Change on the Full Enjoyment of Human Rights”. The report highlights the adverse implications of the current international 2 degrees goal and was submitted as a formal input to the UNFCCC just prior to the Bonn session by the Climate Vulnerable Forum. It is being currently discussed in Bonn in the context of the periodic review of the adequacy of the 2 degrees goal.

For Professor Knox: “Even a two degree increase in temperature would have a grave effect on the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including rights to life and health, and make it more difficult for countries to fulfill their obligations under international law to protect human rights from harm.”

“COP21 in Paris is one of the most important human rights conferences ever held. The UN has repeatedly recognized that climate change has serious negative implications for a range of internationally-protected human rights, especially for people living in already vulnerable situations. An ambitious Paris agreement therefore has the potential to make a major contribution to the full enjoyment of human rights for billions of people around the world, as well as for future generations. Failure to check global warming, on the other hand, will consign a large proportion of the population to a more difficult and dangerous future” added Executive Director of Universal Rights Group, Mr. Marc Limon.

The meeting also spotlighted the February 2015 “Geneva Pledge for Human Rights in Climate Action”, which has been adopted by 20 states and represents a commitment to ensure that the

UNFCCC and climate change policies are informed by human rights perspectives. The UN Special Procedures report on climate change and human rights represents a first initiative by States to ensure formal consideration of human rights in the context of a key UNFCCC decision.

Note to Editors:

UNDP works with developing countries to design and implement climate change solutions. UNDP is the largest service provider in the UN system on climate change and manages a \$1.3 billion climate change portfolio of mitigation and adaptation projects over 140 countries to transition toward low-emission and climate-resilient sustainable development. The portfolio focuses on integrated climate strategies, cross-sectoral climate resilient livelihoods, promoting access to clean and affordable energy services, promoting low emission and climate resilient urban and transport infrastructure and access to new finance mechanisms.

The independent experts are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council](#). Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

The [Climate Vulnerable Forum](#) is an international partnership of 20 countries highly vulnerable to a warming planet. Since 2009 the Forum serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to act together to deal with global climate change.

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