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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development

Panel discussion on ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change for achieving progressively the full realization of all human rights and ways forward to address the challenges thereto on the basis of equity and climate justice

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 53/6, contains a summary of the annual panel discussion on human rights and climate change, which focused on ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change for achieving progressively the full realization of all human rights and ways forward to address the challenges thereto on the basis of equity and climate justice. The discussion was held on 1 July 2024.



I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to its resolution 53/6, the Human Rights Council held its annual panel discussion on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights on 1 July 2024, during the fifty-sixth session of the Council. The panel discussion focused on the theme of ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change for achieving progressively the full realization of all human rights and ways forward to address the challenges thereto on the basis of equity and climate justice.
2. The panel discussion, which was chaired by the Vice-President of the Human Rights Council, was opened with a statement from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
3. The panel discussion provided an opportunity for States, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to discuss ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change. The panel discussion was made accessible to persons with disabilities through the provisions of international sign interpretation and real-time captioning combined with other accessibility measures.
4. The panellists included the Assistant Secretary and Deputy Executive Director of the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines, Romell Antonio O. Cuenca; the Deputy General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Eric Mwezi Manzi; the Associate Professor of Sustainability Law at the University of Amsterdam and Counsel at Blue Ocean Law, Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh; and the Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Kaveh Zahedi.

II. Opening remarks

5. The High Commissioner, in his opening remarks, highlighted the profound danger in which climate change placed the planet, human rights and the future. Glaciers were melting, oceans were warming, rainforests were burning, rivers and lakes were drying up and lives and livelihoods were being decimated by the adverse impacts of climate change. Moreover, sudden disasters, such as floods and fires, were increasingly more intense as the effects of climate change took hold. They also included slow-onset events, such as sea-level rise, the degradation of lands and forests, the shrinking of water sources and barren soils that could not grow food. There was an 80 per cent chance that in one of the upcoming five years, the global annual average temperature would surpass 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial baseline.
6. The High Commissioner emphasized that loss and damage resulting from climate change was affecting people in vulnerable situations, with developing countries, which had contributed the least to it, suffering the most. He underscored the reality of ecosystem degradation that Indigenous Peoples and other people dependent on the land and environment for livelihoods faced, including the displacement of millions of people whose lands could no longer sustain them.
7. He noted that climate change was increasingly affecting human rights, including the rights to: food; a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; an adequate standard of living; and life itself. It also affected workers' rights with projections indicating that, by 2030, over 2 per cent of total working hours worldwide would be lost annually owing to heat stress. Currently, over a third of heat-related deaths worldwide could be attributed to climate change. The economic cost of climate change was significant, with some research estimating that the world suffered at least \$2.8 trillion in loss and damage from climate change between 2000 and 2019, equivalent to \$16 million per hour.
8. The High Commissioner called for increased efforts to respond to current and future loss and damage, including ensuring livelihood resilience measures for individuals and communities directly affected by climate change. Universal social protection systems had to be part and parcel of all government policies to protect livelihoods in the face of climate risks and to assist those impacted by measures to transition to green economies. It was also

important to ensure adequate support to developing countries to strengthen such systems. There was a need for a complete overhaul of the fossil fuel-powered economic model and a just transition to a human rights economy that was fair, equitable and inclusive, created decent work opportunities, reduced inequalities and poverty and invested in the well-being of people and the planet. It was necessary to empower and protect people and ensure their access to justice and effective remedies for human rights violations stemming from loss and damage. That meant holding the authorities and businesses responsible for climate change accountable.

9. The High Commissioner highlighted the obligation of those countries most responsible for climate change to provide adequate, grant-based climate financing to remedy harms to human rights resulting from climate-related loss and damage. Such financing should match the scale of harm and be directly accessible to the affected communities. He called upon States to integrate human rights and loss and damage into their climate policies, including nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans. He further called upon States to ensure that people could recover financially from loss and damage and to advance a just transition, anchored in human rights, including by investing in sustainable and regenerative agriculture, healthy ecosystems, social security, capacity-building and training.

10. In closing, the High Commissioner urged States to consider new international mechanisms to secure human rights and ensure accountability in the face of the climate crisis. He referred to commitments to future generations and to the Summit of the Future and emphasized the urgency of action today in order to prevent an apocalyptic future.

III. Summary of the panel discussion

11. The Vice-President of the Human Rights Council opened the panel discussion and invited the panellists to make their statements.

A. Contributions of panellists

12. Romell Antonio O. Cuenca, Assistant Secretary and Deputy Executive Director of the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines, stated that the issue of loss and damage was particularly dire in the Philippines, one of the most disaster-prone countries, which has been experiencing an average of 20 typhoons annually. He cited recent devastating typhoons as examples of the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, which put lives, livelihoods and the nation's collective future at stake. For example, in 2023 Typhoon Mawar affected more than 3 million people, disrupting lives and education.

13. Mr. Cuenca emphasized that climate change impacts were disproportionate, differentiated and compounding, affecting those least responsible and least equipped to adapt, placing the rights to a healthy environment, adequate housing and secure livelihoods increasingly under threat. He stressed that the Philippines was championing human rights-based climate action informed by science and evidence.

14. In addition, Mr. Cuenca noted that addressing climate change was also a matter of ensuring climate justice and social equity, with human rights at the foundation of climate policies. He noted that the aim of such policies was to protect the most vulnerable populations, who were disproportionately affected by the impact of climate change. The protection of human rights, as both an objective and an instrument of transformative climate action, constituted more than a treaty obligation, it was a moral imperative, linked to intergenerational equity.

15. He stated that the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, climate justice and equity, rooted in the best available science and Indigenous knowledge, should guide efforts to ensure inclusiveness and responsiveness to the needs of people in vulnerable situations, including women, children and the elderly. He stressed the commitment of the Philippines to a just transition towards the development of low-emission technologies, referring to the Philippine Green Jobs Act, which promotes jobs that are decent and contribute

to environmental preservation. Noting the call on all parties, especially developed nations, to fulfil their commitments and moral obligations, Mr. Cuenca referred to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, providing means of implementation to developing nations and supporting climate resilience initiatives of developing nations as examples of steps towards collective prosperity and justice.

16. He emphasized that the concept of loss and damage went beyond economic metrics to encompass social, cultural and psychological impacts that eroded the fabric of affected communities. He noted that it was crucial to recognize livelihood resilience as a continuous process, involving the participation of communities, and to root discussions in the experiences of those most affected by climate change. He closed his remarks by emphasizing the potential of collective efforts to forge pathways to resilience aligned with human rights and dignity.

17. Eric Mwezi Manzi, Deputy General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, emphasized the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in the world of work and described a just transition as being at the intersection of the climate emergency, human rights and labour rights. Workers and trade unions were well aware of the escalating risk posed by climate change. Climate change had already caused job losses, deaths, occupational diseases and occupational accidents. The impact of recent unprecedented temperatures on workers, families and communities was enormous. According to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), worldwide in 2020, there were 20,000 deaths due to heat exposure in the workplace. Climate change also led to massive international and internal labour migration, which could exacerbate prejudices and add to human rights violations already experienced by migrant workers, such as those concerning the right to work and the right to join and form unions. Workers possessed the right to work under just and favourable working conditions and the right to a healthy environment. The collective participation of directly affected workers and their organizations in climate change-related decision-making processes was crucial in efforts to combat climate emergencies.

18. Mr. Manzi stressed that promoting and protecting human and labour rights were core to ensuring a just transition. Trade unionists were also human rights defenders. A just transition meant addressing climate impacts with workers and communities, while transitioning away from unsustainable industries that harmed the climate, workers and human and labour rights. This required responsible policies and public and private resources to be invested in, inter alia, clean energy, resilient agriculture and the care sector. Considering the expectation that many jobs could be lost in the future, appropriate policies to protect workers and their right to decent work and to guarantee the livelihoods of workers and their families would be needed to minimize and address losses and damages.

19. Mr. Manzi noted that many jobs would be created in the transition to clean energy and climate-resilient economies, in which fundamental rights needed to be respected. Those rights included freedom of association and collective bargaining, non-discrimination regarding employment and occupation, freedom from forced and child labour and a safe and healthy working environment. It was necessary to have a rights-based just transition that created decent work. However, trade unions representatives were witnessing the replacement of decent jobs with unfavourable jobs that provided low salaries and unacceptable working conditions.

20. Mr. Manzi stated that climate-related impacts disproportionately affected women, people in situations of poverty and other marginalized groups. Their specific concerns and the proposed solutions had to be featured properly in mitigation and adaptation policies, including in addressing harm caused by loss and damage. The just transition had to have justice, equality and equity at its core. Underlying a rights-based just transition, were the obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including labour rights. Such obligations required States to prevent third parties, such as employers, from violating labour rights and to develop normative frameworks addressing climate change and its impacts to ensure a clean, healthy and safe environment in the workplace.

21. Mr. Manzi reiterated that, in a just transition, workers and their representative organizations needed to have full enjoyment of the right to freedom of association, collective

bargaining, social dialogue and the right to strike. Without this, it would be impossible to respect, protect and fulfil the right to a healthy environment and the right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work. He concluded by reaffirming States' human rights obligations related to loss and damage, referring to the ILO guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all and State commitments to implement climate plans with reference to labour rights, social dialogue and social protection. These obligations cannot be empty promises while people were dying owing to devastating climate impacts.

22. Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh, Associate Professor of Sustainability Law at the University of Amsterdam and Counsel at Blue Ocean Law, reaffirmed the urgency of ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of loss and damage and identifying equitable approaches to achieve it. The impacts of climate change on human rights were profound and far-reaching. Her remarks focused on the legal dimensions of the crisis, particularly the evolving landscape of climate litigation and its potential to address loss and damage and enhance livelihood resilience. The recent advisory opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea marked a significant milestone in the evolving legal landscape by affirming that anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases constituted marine pollution, serving as a reminder that oceans were not merely carbon sinks but also vital ecosystems to be protected and preserved. Crucially, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea recognized that compliance with the Paris Agreement alone was not sufficient for compliance with international law relating to climate change. Domestic courts and regional human rights bodies had also made recent pronouncements with similar conclusions.

23. Ms. Wewerinke-Singh underscored the timeliness of the advisory opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, given the pending advisory proceedings before the International Court of Justice, as referenced by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 53/6. The International Court of Justice had been requested to determine the legal consequences of State conduct that had, over time, caused significant harm to the climate system and other parts of environment. That provided an unprecedented opportunity to clarify State obligations regarding loss and damage in the context of human rights. Young people from around the world, who had been calling for that advisory opinion, were now urging all States to recognize their duty to make reparations as a legal consequence of the conduct that had caused climate change. Clarifying State obligations related to climate change as a matter of law rather than charity, aimed at restoring the rights of those most affected, including with respect to financing for livelihood resilience. Similarly, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights was considering a request for an advisory opinion on the climate emergency and human rights. As articulated in submissions to the Inter-American Court by youth groups and several States, loss and damage from climate change engaged the responsibility of States under human rights law, carrying legal consequences.

24. As stated by Ms. Wewerinke-Singh, the acts and omissions causing and exacerbating loss and damage could be attributed to specific actors, extending back to the onset of industrialization. By the 1960s, the causal link between anthropogenic emissions and climate change had been firmly established. As clarified by International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, that scientific consensus had led to a higher, more stringent standard of due diligence and States that had failed to meet the requisite standard should be held accountable. By clarifying the legal framework for doing so, judicial processes could help give effect to States' human rights obligations, such as the obligation to mobilize resources for livelihood resilience in the face of loss and damage. These obligations could be operationalized through innovative financing measures, including carbon taxes, levies on sectors like fossil fuels, aviation and shipping and increased business accountability for climate harms. International law required equitable action guided by the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and polluter pays. Such principles should inform action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as the Santiago Network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and the new collective quantified goal on climate finance.

25. Ms. Wewerinke-Singh stated that civil society organizations had been calling for climate reparations both within and beyond the context of the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change. Those calls emphasized the need for comprehensive rights-based redress, including compensation for losses, rehabilitation of affected ecosystems and communities and guarantees of non-repetition through rapid and equitable emissions reductions, criminalization of ecocide and bans on speculative and dangerous responses, such as geoengineering. Such measures were crucial for protecting livelihoods and ensuring resilience. Equally imperative under human rights law were measures to eliminate systemic discrimination and barriers that limited the adaptive capacity of disproportionately impacted groups. Respect for the sovereign rights of Indigenous Peoples and full reparations for historical injustices had to be central to approaches for minimizing and addressing loss and damage and protecting livelihoods. She concluded that the legal framework, scientific understanding and moral imperative to ensure livelihood resilience for all in the face of loss and damage were already in place. Political will, which was needed for delivery of rights-based responses, could be advanced through constructive engagement with the pending advisory opinion proceedings and other legal initiatives, a focus on rights and justice in the Framework Convention negotiations and affirmative measures at the domestic level.

26. Kaveh Zahedi, Director of the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment at FAO, stressed that States were confronting cascading crises, conflict, economic stagnation, growing inequalities and climate extremes, which, combined, were increasing food insecurity. Over 700 million people were currently still living in hunger. In the light of that situation, the adoption of an approach to the discussion that focused on agriculture had merit. In 2023, nearly 72 million people faced acute food insecurity, primarily due to climate-related shocks, up from 57 million people in 2022. By 2030, climate change could push over 100 million people into extreme poverty. Record-breaking temperatures and climate-induced disasters, along with slow-onset events, had plunged countries into a relentless battle against loss and damage.

27. Mr. Zahedi stressed that agricultural losses constituted almost a quarter of the total economic impact of climate and other disasters across all sectors. Over 65 per cent of losses caused by droughts were experienced in the agricultural sector. Over the past 30 years, an estimated \$3.8 trillion worth of crops and livestock production had been lost due to disasters, including climate-related events, corresponding to an average loss of about \$123 billion per year, which was likely an underestimation of the real impact. This meant that around 3.8 billion people, whose livelihoods were dependent on agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, were shouldering a heavy burden from climate change. Almost 80 per cent of people in situations of poverty and food insecurity globally lived in rural areas, most of whom were small-scale farmers. According to the latest findings of FAO, poor rural households lost an average of 5 per cent of their total income annually due to heat stress, relative to better-off households. Heat stress also widened the income gap between female-headed and male-headed households by almost \$40 billion per year. Such extreme events were increasing.

28. Mr. Zahedi also noted that non-economic loss and damage could not go unnoticed. Non-economic loss and damage had affected the food and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples, who had sustainably managed natural resources and conserved biodiversity, the health of agricultural workers who had been exposed to extreme heat and losses related to climate-induced migration and displacement, which included the loss of traditional ways of living and cultural heritage. The effects of climate-related loss and damage on sustainable, inclusive and equitable agrifood systems and on rural people, especially women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other groups in vulnerable situations, required special attention.

29. To address such mounting challenges, Mr. Zahedi suggested three action pathways. First, he put forward the promotion of cross-sectoral laws and policies to avert and minimize economic and non-economic loss and damage in agrifood systems. The FAO analysis found that over one third of countries had explicitly mentioned loss and damage in their climate plans, known as the nationally determined contributions. In those countries, agriculture had been the single most impacted sector. Yet rural people and their climate risks were often overlooked in national climate policies. It was therefore imperative to enhance people-centred vulnerability and climate risk and impact assessments to better account for the economic and non-economic impacts on agriculture and rural livelihoods. The protection of the right to adequate food and other human rights needed to be firmly embedded in national

climate policies and the upcoming nationally determined contributions of all countries, or the “nationally determined contributions 3.0”, which FAO and many United Nations agencies had been supporting. Nationally determined contributions represented a critical opportunity to achieve the goal of embedding the right to adequate food in climate policies.

30. As a second pathway, Mr. Zahedi noted equity-based and people-centred solutions that could strengthen inclusivity, sustainability and resilience in agrifood systems. The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including a safe and stable climate, provided the foundation for sustainable food production. A transition to sustainable, equitable and climate-resilient agrifood systems, guided by human rights and the right to food for all, could address both climate and food insecurity. Such a transition could build on numerous agrifood solutions that provided multiple benefits in terms of climate and food security, including agroforestry, improved cropland management, regeneration of soils, sustainable livestock, aquaculture and fisheries and ecosystem restoration. Investing in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction practices, including early warning systems, could also play a role in this regard, as could shock-responsive and climate-sensitive social protection policies and climate risk insurance.

31. Mr. Zahedi identified as a third pathway increasing climate finance to avert, minimize and address economic and non-economic loss and damage in agrifood systems. With over 70 per cent of people with agriculture-based livelihoods living in developing countries, investing in inclusive and climate-resilient agriculture and agricultural livelihoods and related local food systems could leverage long-term and multiple benefits. However, climate finance allocated to agrifood systems was small-scale and on the decline. A declining trend in climate finance for agriculture was a missed opportunity both for climate and food security. It was essential that the newly established Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage direct funds to people and communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis whose livelihoods depended on agriculture and food.

32. Mr. Zahedi concluded that investment in inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems would help to address loss and damage. Concerted efforts for a just agrifood systems transformation would ensure improvements in production, nutrition, the environment and lives of present and future generations.

B. Interactive discussion

33. During the interactive discussion, interventions were made by the representatives of: the United Republic of Tanzania (Minister on Constitutional and Legal Affairs); the European Union; Egypt (on behalf of Group of Arab States); Viet Nam (on behalf of the core group on human rights and climate change, also representing Bangladesh and the Philippines); the United Arab Emirates (on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries); Barbados (on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Geneva); Mexico (on behalf of a group of countries also representing Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Türkiye); Benin (on behalf of a group of countries also representing Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guyana, Maldives, Mali, Somalia, Suriname and Vanuatu (14 beneficiary countries of the Special Voluntary Trust Fund for Facilitating Participation of Developing Country Parties, in Particular the Least Developed and Small Island Developing States amongst them, and Parties with Economies in Transition)); Vanuatu (on behalf of Cabo Verde and Vanuatu); Azerbaijan; Lithuania; Bangladesh; Maldives; Gambia (on behalf of the African Group); the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Mauritius; Colombia; Timor-Leste; Cameroon; Oman; Burkina Faso; Malawi; the Dominican Republic (on behalf of an informal group of small island developing States); the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Sri Lanka; and Antigua and Barbuda.

34. Representatives of the following United Nations agencies and national, international and non-governmental organizations also spoke: the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations Population Fund; the International Service for Human Rights; the Center for International Environmental Law; Centre Europe - tiers monde; Terre des hommes fédération internationale (on behalf of a cohort of youth advocates, supported by the She Leads

consortium); Servas International; the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women; Institute for Human Rights; Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan; the Legal Analysis and Research Public Union; Associazione Comunita' Papa Giovanni XXIII; India Water Foundation; and the Organisation pour la communication en Afrique et de promotion de la coopération économique internationale.

35. Statements by the following member States were not delivered owing to lack of time: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, the Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kenya, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).¹

36. For the same reason, statements by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Development Law Organization were not delivered.²

37. Speakers elaborated on the significant threat and adverse impact of loss and damage from climate change to the enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, work, food, water, adequate housing and development, resulting from impacts such as sea-level rise, longer and more frequent droughts, irregular rainfall, water scarcity, cyclones and hurricanes, repeated floods and landslides, soaring temperatures, soil degradation and biodiversity loss. The consequences of climate inaction in the form of loss and damage adversely affected livelihoods in relation to diverse economic sectors, ecosystems, agriculture and crops, fisheries and catch, critical infrastructure and homes. Loss and damage resulted in the erosion of access to and means of realizing human rights, endangering development progress and poverty eradication efforts and food, energy, water, health and economic security.

38. Speakers emphasized the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries, which were the least responsible for it yet the hardest hit by its impacts, including least developed countries and small island developing States. The economic strain imposed by loss and damage on the fiscal space of such countries threatened their sustainable development and contributed to unsustainable levels of successive debt-to-finance recovery efforts, coupled with high costs of external debt repayment. Speakers highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change, particularly on marginalized groups and on the livelihoods of people in situations of vulnerability and poverty, including women, children, youth, Indigenous Peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities and peasants and other people working in rural areas. For example, pregnant women faced barriers in accessing health services disrupted by climate change, while unstable environments heightened the risk of violence, rendering women and girls especially vulnerable.

39. To avert, minimize and address loss and damage while fostering resilient livelihoods, speakers emphasized the necessity of adopting human-rights based approaches and integrating human rights principles into climate policies and actions. They stressed safeguarding the dignity and human rights of people, including cultural rights, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and rights to traditional knowledge, lands, territories and resources. It was noted that policies should consider pre-existing inequalities, guarantee means of subsistence, involve human rights impact assessments and support people and communities, including through resources and education. Speakers stressed the importance of the participation of and protection and support for civil society, environmental human rights defenders, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, persons with disabilities and persons in vulnerable situations in climate-related processes, leaving no one behind. With regard to rising climate-induced displacement, it was vital to ensure that the needs and rights of affected people were met, including through humanitarian assistance and durable solutions.

40. Gender equality was underlined as a priority, necessitating inclusive and gender-responsive climate action and enhancing the voices and full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and young persons. Speakers also highlighted the need

¹ Statements received by the Secretariat are available on the Human Rights Council extranet.

² Ibid.

to prioritize the resilience of people whose livelihoods were highly dependent on natural resources, such as Indigenous Peoples and people dependent on agriculture and fishing for livelihoods, who often protected biodiversity and employed sustainable agricultural practices. They were at the frontlines of the climate crisis and frequently faced climate-related income loss, while lacking adequate means of adaptation, including inadequate housing conditions and working extensively outdoors. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas was also mentioned as relevant to guiding climate policies.

41. The need for approaches reflecting States' obligations under international human rights law in the design and implementation of climate policies and measures, in alignment with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, was underscored. The right to remedy for the human rights impacts of climate change was likewise noted. Climate justice was identified as intrinsically linked to development, resilience and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The need for human rights economies and enhanced business responsibility and accountability were also stressed. Speakers stressed the importance of international legal processes towards clarifying obligations regarding climate change and human rights and referred, in particular, to General Assembly resolution 77/276, in which the Assembly requested an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change, as well as the related advisory opinions of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Seeking justice and accountability for environmental harm in general was highlighted as critical, including with reference to appropriate uses of criminal law.

42. Investment in climate risk prevention measures, including through multi-hazard early warning systems and access to appropriate technologies, was considered essential to bringing about improved living standards, fighting inequalities and protecting people. There was an urgent need to strengthen climate resilience and sustainable practices in agrifood systems and fisheries to enhance food security and resilient livelihoods. Speakers stressed the role of social protection systems to support climate adaptation and loss and damage response and, as necessary, to bolster the resilience of vulnerable populations. They noted the need to accelerate a just transition that averted adverse impacts on human rights, reflecting equity and providing decent work opportunities. Some speakers called for decarbonization of economies and the phasing-out of fossil fuels, which contributed to climate change, including with reference to the findings of Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts on the negative human rights impacts of fossil fuels. Recognition of sexual and reproductive rights in relation to climate vulnerability, as well as the impact of polluting mining activities on livelihoods, were also mentioned.

43. Speakers underscored the need for greater international cooperation and significantly increased, sustainable and predictable climate financing to avert, minimize and address loss and damage in developing countries, which was also important for ensuring sustainable development. In this regard, reference was made to equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, as well as the responsibilities of developed countries to provide climate finance. Speakers urged an equitable outcome on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance and some recommended including loss and damage within that goal. Speakers recalled the decisions related to the establishment the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to assist developing countries at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and its operationalization at the twenty-eighth session. They called for the effective and rapid operationalization of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to ensure necessary financial resources for affected and vulnerable communities, especially in developing countries. In this regard, speakers also referred to funding pledges and the need to scale up the capitalization of the fund. The importance of advancing equitable access to climate finance from a human rights perspective to meet specific needs of developing countries, such as through concessional climate financing, was underscored, as well as maintaining people's sovereignty over local development. The need for transparency, accountability and meaningful participation of those affected in funding-related governance and decision-making and of adopting gender-responsive and child-responsive approaches to finance were also mentioned.

44. Expanding action and mobilizing new and additional financing with respect to adaptation, loss and damage and resilience, including in the context of the global goal on adaptation, was underlined as essential. A number of speakers also called for the restructuring and reform of the global financial architecture to better benefit developing countries, in line with human rights and equity. For example, they highlighted the need for greater access to climate finance, natural disaster clauses in loan agreements, investments in climate-smart agriculture and technologies and debt swaps for climate action. CARICOM called for the global community to adopt the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0, which was aligned with existing United Nations processes, including the financing for development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus called for by the Secretary-General, as well as implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States. The importance of scaling up technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity-building were also highlighted, including in terms of investment in climate-smart infrastructure and technologies and promotion of renewable energy. International cooperation was likewise noted as crucial to enhancing disaster prevention, preparedness and response, including in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Bali Agenda for Resilience.

45. A number of speakers specifically condemned the situation in Gaza, including with regard to irreversible damage caused to agricultural land, infrastructure, ecosystems and energy and water facilities, which affected the ability of people to enjoy various human rights.

46. A number of good practices regarding ensuring livelihood resilience in the context of the risk of loss and damage relating to the adverse effects of climate change were shared. The United Republic of Tanzania had implemented various climate-related strategies and regulations, which included prohibition of plastic carrier bags, control and management of hazardous waste and control and management of carbon trading. The European Union had pledged initial funding for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to support vulnerable countries. The African Union was implementing the 2022–2032 climate change and resilient development strategy and action plan to define a continental framework for collective action. Bangladesh had adopted transformative plans, including the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and a climate prosperity plan aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. Malawi had taken legislative and policy steps to address climate change and invested in renewable energy projects, early warning systems and sustainable agricultural practices to build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, as part of the Chairmanship of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in 2024, had included climate resilience as part of its priorities on areas of cooperation.

47. To increase its resilience, Burkina Faso was implementing transitional plans for sustainability and development, including regarding the green economy, climate change and environmental governance. To bolster local action for adaptation resilience, Burkina Faso had also put in place projects for health resilience and adaptability of vulnerable communities. The Democratic Republic of Congo had endeavoured to engage in smart agricultural practices and use of resources. To ensure resilient livelihoods of those impacted by climate change, Mauritius had introduced a corporate responsibility levy on companies and had collaborated with FAO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Atomic Energy Agency on climate-smart agricultural practices. Maldives had launched a 5 million tree planting programme to enhance green cover and reduce carbon emissions and had adopted a national road map for the Early Warnings for all initiative. Cameroon had launched the Sahel Vert programme, which aimed at combating desertification and guaranteeing food security.

48. Speakers raised a number of questions to the panellists. Panellists were asked to elaborate ways to better integrate a human rights-based approach when developing climate policies and actions. They were invited to answer what more could be done to ensure that international organizations working on climate change did not work in silos. They were also invited to elaborate on the best mechanisms to ensure the mobilization of funds to support the resilience of livelihoods in the context of climate change, as well as additional strategies or innovative solutions that had been successful in small island developing States for enhancing livelihood resilience, and to provide insights on the colonial legacies of climate

change related loss and damage. Speakers also asked panellists what measures could be taken to ensure not only mitigation but also promotion of social and economic equity in climate action.

C. Responses and concluding remarks

49. After the interactive discussion, the Vice-President of the Human Rights Council invited panellists to give their concluding remarks.

50. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Cuenca, stated that the interventions had demonstrated how climate change threatened not only the environment and economies but also the very fabric of human rights. He submitted that the approach of the Philippines to climate change was fundamentally grounded in human rights. While many climate actions were based on technology, engineering and infrastructure-oriented solutions, he stressed the need to forge a narrative focused on international cooperation and the futures and lives of humanity and society.

51. Mr. Cuenca recalled that the issue was global, systemic and historic and that there had been agreement on common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as well as sustainable, just and inclusive transition pathways. Mr. Cuenca suggested the implementation of concrete and evidence-based actions as solutions. He concluded his closing remarks by expressing his desire for the interactive dialogue to inspire transformative policies and actions that upheld the rights and dignity of all, both today and for the generations to come.

52. In his closing remarks, Mr. Mwezi Manzi noted a reassurance with respect to the awareness of speakers on responsibilities regarding climate action, which could be advanced through climate policies, including nationally determined contributions. With reference to interventions made, he echoed that there could be no climate justice without human rights. He emphasized the importance of protecting means of subsistence through social protection and employment. He pointed out negative impacts of job losses and low quality of jobs, stressing the centrality of human rights in this regard, in particularly the right to work.

53. Mr. Manzi stated that fundamental rights at work should be respected, including freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination in employment, the banning of forced labour and child labour and the right to work in a safe and healthy environment, in addition to a just transition based on the right to work and the creation of decent work. He emphasized the important role of employers, who must not shirk their responsibilities or violate the rights of workers, for example, under the pretext of emergency situations. Workers had to be able to exercise their rights to trade union freedoms and collective bargaining, as part of a constructive social dialogue. Mr. Manzi concluded by stressing States' obligations, including those adopted under the auspices of ILO regarding a just transition, and guidelines thereon.

54. In her closing remarks, Ms. Wewerinke-Singh stated that it was evident that many States and non-State actors were already taking broad measures to enhance livelihood resilience and address loss and damage. Despite such actions, she noted that the impacts of loss and damage on human rights were severe, perpetuating pre-existing inequalities at both local and global levels. Regarding the question posed about addressing climate change at the same time as addressing inequalities, she stated that tackling climate change and correcting inequalities should be pursued together, with responses targeting both issues equally, without prioritizing one over the other.

55. Ms. Wewerinke-Singh submitted that such action required attention to the root causes of climate change, including the historical context of climate change and colonial legacies. It also necessitated attention to the financial system, which, in many instances, contributed to the problem of climate change, including through extraction activities, damage to ecosystems and associated inequalities. Reform of the financial system, as the representative of Barbados had stated, was required for human rights-based climate action. Regarding the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, she echoed the importance of ensuring its adequate resourcing through new and additional financing, rather than diverting existing funds meant

for mitigation and adaptation. She suggested innovative and new sources of finance, such as levies on fossil fuel production, aviation and shipping. She stated that the advisory proceedings of the International Court of Justice provided an opportunity to communicate to the Court an understanding of such aspects being required as a matter of international law. Ms. Wewerinke-Singh concluded her remarks by expressing her hope for further progress on the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.

56. In his final remarks, Mr. Zahedi, expressed appreciation for the depth of knowledge on climate change in the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council. He shared three areas of action to forge a path ahead. He stressed the importance of capitalizing on making the right to food and the right to clean, healthy and sustainable environment the central components of the next round of nationally determined contributions, which would set the path for future climate action. The second point concerned ways to ensure that those most vulnerable and affected, including agricultural communities, gain greater access to climate finance, including from the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, and participation in related deliberations. Third, he highlighted the potential of solutions within agrifood systems to address multiple priorities, including on climate change, biodiversity, food security and human rights. Many such solutions had been tested, such as agroecology, agroforestry and ecosystem restoration. In his conclusion, Mr. Zahedi expressed the view that, given the multiple related sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in 2024, on climate change, biodiversity and land degradation, finding solutions with multiple benefits was important. He also voiced support for the prioritization of agriculture and agricultural communities by the Presidency of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

57. Following the concluding remarks, the Vice-President of the Human Rights Council closed the discussion.

IV. Recommendations

58. Throughout the panel discussion, speakers urgently recommended adopting comprehensive human rights-based approaches to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage from climate change while fostering resilient livelihoods. The panel discussion emphasized how such approaches required integrating human rights across climate policies and actions, including on loss and damage, with particular attention to the rights of people in situations of vulnerability and poverty. Those approaches should safeguard human rights, including the rights to life, health, work, food, water, adequate housing, development and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as well as cultural rights and rights regarding traditional knowledge and lands, territories and resources.

59. Social protection systems that enhance resilience and the adaptive capacities of people, including as part of loss and damage response, should be strengthened. Social protection should be designed to reach those in situations of vulnerability and poverty, particularly in developing countries.

60. States should accelerate the implementation of a just transition that averts adverse impacts on human rights and creates decent work opportunities, while protecting people's livelihoods and means of subsistence. States should protect and promote workers' rights, including workers in the informal sector and workers at-risk from climate impacts. They should also guarantee fundamental rights at work, such as freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination and occupational safety and health, particularly as climate change exacerbates work-related risks.

61. To promote food security and sustainable livelihoods, States should strengthen the resilience of agrifood systems through rights-based approaches. Special attention should be paid to guaranteeing the rights and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

62. International cooperation, including finance and technology transfer, to avert, minimize and address loss and damage should be significantly scaled up. Those efforts

should be guided by, *inter alia*, equity, climate justice, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. States should ensure the rapid and effective capitalization of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage in order to promote adequate, sustainable and predictable funding, matching the scale of climate impacts.

63. States should ensure that climate finance is accessible, reaches affected communities directly, supports locally led solutions, enhances resilience and respects human rights. The global financial architecture should be reformed to better support developing countries and needed investments in loss and damage response, including through measures promoting debt relief. Investments should also be made in climate risk prevention measures, including multi-hazard early warning systems.

64. The full, equal, informed and meaningful participation of all stakeholders in loss and damage related decision-making, including women, children, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, persons with disabilities, civil society, workers and environmental human rights defenders, should be prioritized. Gender-responsive and child-responsive approaches should also be mainstreamed into climate action.

65. States should advance accountability regarding climate change, including by protecting environmental human rights defenders, ensuring business responsibility and providing access to justice and effective remedies for loss and damage.
