



On the occasion of the 30th session of the Human Rights Council
On the 22 September 2015 – 10:00 - 12:00

A group of civil society organisations in Geneva working on climate change and human rights organised a Side Event
**From Geneva to Paris:
One voice on rights for a just climate agreement**

In its last Resolution on climate change the HRC has “expressed concerns that climate change has contributed to the increase of both sudden-onset natural disasters and slow on-set events, and that these events have adverse effects on the full enjoyment of all human rights”. Incorporating an effective human rights dimension in the universal and legally binding Agreement under negotiation at COP21 in Paris is now of crucial importance. This side event offered an opportunity to hear the joint call of constituencies of the civil society to include strong and effective human rights language in the Agreement in Paris and views of the States leading the UNFCCC process.

The opening remarks on video by:
Human Rights Council President H.E. Ambassador Rücker

One voice on rights:

- ❖ Gender and climate change - Elisabeth Rufinengo, Women in Europe for a Common Future
- ❖ Call for a Just Transition – Sharan Burrow, International Trade Union Confederation
- ❖ Rights of Indigenous Peoples - Ghazali Ohorella, International Indian Treaty Council
- ❖ Threat to Food security – Fanny Petitbon, CARE
- ❖ Call of Faith based organisations - Valériane Bernard, Brahma Kumaris / Geneva Interfaith Forum
- ❖ For a coherent rights base approach – Richard Pearshouse, Human Rights Watch

Current state of the negotiations: Sébastien Duyck, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

State parties to the COP on the way to Paris:

- ❖ H.E. Ambassador José Enrique Chávez Basagoitia, Permanent Representative of Peru, Chair of COP20 in Lima
- ❖ H.E. Ambassador Élisabeth Laurin, Permanent Representative of France, Up-Coming Chair of COP21 in Paris

Moderation: Yves Lador, Earthjustice

Valeriane Bernard delivered a statement on behalf of the Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights and Brahma Kumaris.

The Geneva Interfaith Forum (GIF) on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights is a group of faith-based NGOs that gathers to reaffirm the responsibility of each faith and spiritual tradition to care for the earth. Since 2010, the Geneva Interfaith Forum called and continues to call for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur at the Human Rights Council (HRC) to study and help in tending to the human rights needs of the victims of climate change. We welcome the initiative of the HRC to organize panels in 2015 and 2016 to analyze the consequences of climate change on human rights.

Climate change is already affecting human beings and nature. The scientific consensus on climate change stresses that vulnerable communities are and will be most affected by effects of climate change, it is already too late for 1 billion people so we need to act now.

We need to learn to develop restorative narratives about the traumatic events and reflective capacity to support the reconstruction of the inner sense of self, cultivate resilience and the ability to rebuild again.

For Brahma Kumaris and the Geneva Interfaith Forum, making ethical decisions for present and future generations, is an absolute necessity in all discussions to take place in Paris this December. Humanitarian ethics, emerging from the highest possible awareness, must be reflected in any Agreement that emerges.

In Paris,

a) We are seeking a legally binding Agreement where the rights of Mother Earth, human rights and the dignity of all human persons (especially for women and migrants) sit at the heart of the new protocol. Any loss and damage suffered by victims will be honoured and compensated with fairness and respect.

b) We demand that the target of 'two degrees' of global warming be reexamined and reset to 1.5 degrees to protect Mother Nature and human beings from the dangers associated with climate change.

We assert the all nations according to their historical responsibility for global warming must assure that maximum efforts to foster, share and cooperate in financing a new clean economy in harmony with nature, sits as the number one national and international priority.

To close, we appeal for the promotion of a transitional economy that protects the commons by not seeing them as resources to be taken advantage of but to be respected, understanding that our ecosystems hold the original seeds of civilization.