

## Report of panel during the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council

### Human Rights and Climate Change: An Ethics Perspective

A panel discussion was set up as a side event to the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, on Thursday, 19 June 2014, at the Palais des Nations, by the Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights

Guillermo Kerber from the World Council of Churches and Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights moderated the panel. He introduced the panel, speaking about the importance of having an ethics perspective on climate change and the importance of a human rights approach to climate change led by a Special Rapporteur.



### Dr. Renate Christ, Secretary of the IPCC

Dr Renate Christ provided a presentation that illustrated how the IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report indicates that many adverse effects of climate change on peoples' most basic rights are unavoidable. Nevertheless, she indicated, that the AR5 argued that mitigation is still important because if we do not mitigate the unavoidable damage, it will become impossible

to address. She suggested that climate action based on the science can help protect the basic human rights of individuals both in this generation as well as in the future.

### Mr Daniel Murphy, Earth Justice Foundation

Mr Daniel Murphy showed how climate change is seriously affecting the human rights of people all over the world. He indicated that one small step toward recognizing the effect of climate change on human rights and the need to protect people would be for the UN Human Rights Council to name a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change.

### Sister Jayanti, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

Sister Jayanti spoke about individual initiatives such as the creation of one of the largest solar energy ranches in India. She said however, that it is the ethics behind such initiatives-- that of fairness and justice-- that makes them valuable contributions. This requires a change of conscientiousness in which we are aware that we are all part of a global family. She also led a spiritual meditation exercise.



### Questions from the floor:

Papua Guinea: described the effects of climate change on his Island.

INTLawyers: Asked if we have enough scientific evidence to attribute CC to certain States.

Quakers: Ask whether CC will lead to conflict or cooperation. (RC: too political to answer)

NGO rep.: reminded people about the Peoples' Climate Summit and March in New York in September.

NGO rep.: How do we engage businesses? (EJF does not engage private actors on CC, but on side issues to this, but that it was an important issue.)

Guillermo Kerber closed the meeting with and update on some upcoming efforts and meetings and thanked the guests

### **Co-sponsors:**

Franciscans International (FI), World Council of Churches (WCC), Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU), Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council, Southern Diaspora Research and Development Center, Edmund Rice International (ERI), International-Lawyers.org, International Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN), Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and Earthjustice.