

36th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 4 : General Debate

NGO Joint Oral Statement

19 September 2017

Speaker: Valeriane Bernard

Thank you Mr President,

We would like to draw the attention of the Council on the impact of climate change on human rights, especially as we are gearing toward the COP23 in November. We welcome the adoption of the Council Resolution 35/20, including the decision to organise an intersessional panel on "Human rights, climate change, migrants and persons displaced across international borders" in October this year.

We believe that human activities are the greatest contributor to the root causes of current climate change. The energy consumption based on extraction and burning of fossil fuels, industrial-based economies, cash crop, monocultures and meat-based agriculture, deforestation are among the activities which lead to the species extinction, ocean acidification, chemical pollution, and land degradation at levels unprecedented in our human history. Our mainstream economic models are resulting in the destruction of ecosystems and natural resources on which we and other species depend.

We fail to respect the integrity of ecosystems as designed by nature and made abundant for the well-being of all. Our lives are dependent on water, clean air, safe food and complex systems which sustain all of these. Many polluting activities may appear financially lucrative but they are destroying the ability of our children and all future generations to fully enjoy their rights to live on this earth.

We are concerned that our leaders fail to trust their citizens to act for the common good. By not turning to us for help, leaders turn increasingly to technical fixes and geo-engineering which may address some symptoms - often with further ecological and human cost – yet fail to genuinely transform root causes, in turn assaulting natural processes.

Therefore we call the members of the Council to take concrete, urgent and fair actions to address the adverse impact of climate change as a moral obligation. We believe that the intersessional panel in October and the COP23 are the appropriate avenues to address it.

We thank you.