



## 57th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

### Item 3: Interactive Dialogue on the Report of Secretary-General on the impact of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights

13 September 2024

*Delivered by Blair Matheson, Franciscans International*

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Mr President,

The Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights (GIF)<sup>1</sup> welcomes the report of the Secretary General on loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change to the full enjoyment of human rights. We commend your recommendations on the obligation of States to ensure access to justice and effective remedy.

The losses and damages caused by climate change go far beyond material destruction, deeply affecting human dignity, cultural identity, and emotional well-being, which is referred as Non-Economic Loss and Damage (NELD). From faith communities' perspectives, these impacts are closely intertwined with spiritual and cultural dimensions, exacerbating human vulnerability in ways that are often overlooked. Displacement, trauma, and weakened support networks pose fundamental challenges to the rights of individuals and communities, particularly in regions already suffering from violence, corruption, and lack of government support.

Marginalized populations with limited access to resources, education, and justice struggle to cope with the emotional, psychological, and social consequences of these extreme events. Faith communities, with their credibility and deep-rooted presence, are uniquely positioned to respond to these challenges. They offer psychological first aid, create safe spaces for children and adults, and mediate conflict, while providing spiritual solace in times of despair.

However, despite their critical role, faith leaders often operate in hostile environments with minimal institutional support, limiting their capacity to advocate for transparency in climate policies. Integrating the insights and leadership of faith communities into public policy would significantly strengthen international human rights frameworks, ensuring NELD is addressed in a more holistic, culturally sensitive, and human-centered manner. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> The Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights (GIF) is composed of the following faith-based NGOs: ACT Alliance, Anglican Communion, Brahma Kumaris, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, Franciscans International, Lutheran World Federation, Soka Gakkai International and World Council of Churches