

UN Human Rights Council, 33rd session
20 September 2016,
Agenda item 5: General Debate
Oral Statement delivered by Budi Tjahjono

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Thank you Chair,

This intervention is made on behalf of the Center for International Environmental Law, Earthjustice and Franciscans International.

This Council, since 2008, has acknowledged in several Resolutions “ (...) *that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of implications, which can increase with greater warming, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights,*” and “(...) *that climate change poses an existential threat for some*”, with “(...) *an adverse impact on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*”¹

The Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment has also dedicated several reports to the human rights impact of climate change, as well as other Special Procedures and increasingly treaty-bodies, who have dealt with this issue within their mandate.

On the side of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement, adopted at the COP 21, last December, entails explicit human rights references, including to the rights of migrants. The Paris Agreement does not, however, provide commitments regarding the protection of these rights in the context of climate change.

In complementarity to all these endeavors, the Advisory Committee is relevantly proposing to conduct a study on what remains an unexplored issue: the impact of slow onset events on the enjoyment of human rights, especially on the rights of those who will be displaced.

So far, cross-border displacements have attracted the most attention, for example, through the Nansen Initiative, which is supported by a number of the Members of the Council. However, the increasing challenges linked to climate change that States are facing internally need more attention.

The same applies to what is called “slow onset events” vis-à-vis “sudden onset events”. Indeed, sudden onset, that is to say single, distinct catastrophic, events, by their (increasing) magnitude, mobilize national and international solidarity. In contrast, slowly unfolding but persistent changes, which can over time dramatically affect the life of people, draw much less attention.

Therefore, it is urgent and crucial to identify and address the specific impacts on human rights that slow onset events generate, not least in the perspective of adequate and effective prevention of threats and violations to human rights and for the protection of sectors of the populations who are particularly at risks.

There is a need to assess how legal systems can capture these emerging new realities and to develop appropriate policies that can protect human rights.

Therefore we call this Council to support the Research Proposal of the Advisory Committee on the theme “*Climate-induced displacement and human rights*”. There is a wealth of academic and NGOs’ expertise on this matter and we look forward to contributing to this timely and very relevant research issue.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ A/HCR/32/33