



44th SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity

9 July 2020

In this summary:

- Presentation of the **report** by the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity¹
- Presentation of the report on a **country visit**² and the reply of the country concerned (**Qatar**)³
- **Interactive Dialogue** (Questions and Answers)

Mr. Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity (by live video)

2019 report was on the issue of the enjoyment, or lack thereof, of human rights-based international solidarity in **global refugee protection** (with country visits to Costa Rica and Bolivia).

2020 report focuses on key issues that lie at the intersection of human rights-based **international solidarity and climate change**.

The asymmetrical distribution of **wealth** through the global economy reinforces the profoundly unfair reality that those who have contributed the least to the problem at issue tend to feel its greatest effects. Climate change exacerbates **social vulnerabilities** based on gender, ability, poverty, age, place of birth, indigeneity.

The principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities** and respective capabilities grounds each State's pledge under the Paris Agreement – known in that treaty as a “nationally determined contribution”.

Of relevance to human rights-based international solidarity, the developed countries should **provide finance** to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation, as well as **technological support**. The developed countries should take the **lead in reducing emissions**. Human rights-based international solidarity also demands that countries go further by **tackling structural inequities** connected to climate change.

There is still a deep chasm between States' behaviour thus far (including their pledges) and what is needed to prevent further climate change and to avoid the grave dangers that this portends.

Although current State efforts to redress climate change are inadequate, some countries are setting **examples** of positive expressions of human rights-based international solidarity. In 2019, 73 States announced that they were working to achieve **netzero emissions by 2050**. A number of regional laws and practices as well as extensive global laws and practices that manifest human rights-based international solidarity in the context of climate change. Regular global summits generate momentum for cooperative actions among the diverse actors: States, indigenous peoples, regions, cities, youth, civil society groups, and United Nations bodies, among others.

Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the intensity in our time of our interconnectedness as human beings and societies, including the sheer depth of our mutual vulnerability, one to the other. This reality firmly underlines the absolute necessity of expressing and ramping up our practice of international solidarity and cooperation, among State and non-state actors alike. The Independent Expert urged States at this honourable Council to adopt the draft **UN Declaration on Human Rights and International Solidarity**, presented in 2017 by his predecessor. This would help to focus minds on the absolute necessity of practicing international solidarity in the struggle to realise human rights for everyone.

¹ Report [A/HRC/44/44](#) **International solidarity and climate change** – Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity”

² Report [A/HRC/44/44/Add.1](#) **Visit to Qatar** – Report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity

³ Report [A/HRC/44/44/Add.2](#) **Comments by the State of Qatar** on the report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity on his country visit



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Presentation of the Report on Country Visit to Qatar:

The Independent Expert's visit to Qatar took place **from 2 to 10 September 2019**.

The report focuses on **three main thematic areas**:

1. development and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,
2. climate change and water management, and
3. cross-border migration.

Qatar demonstrates **robust support** for international development and cooperation, which concretely reflects the State's commitment to international solidarity.

Qatar should do more to take **climate change into account in its development practices**, in order to better safeguard the human rights of the most vulnerable populations in Qatar and abroad. In so doing, Qatar will strengthen the commitments laid out in the Qatar National Vision 2030 programme.

Qatar (country concerned):

*Qatar is the first country in the Gulf region to extend **a standing invitation** to Special Procedures. Qatar has taken note of the recommendations of the Independent Expert, with some of these **recommendations already being implemented**, including those related to strengthening the work of civil society organizations, continuing efforts related to achieving sustainable development, and introducing human rights education. The state will continue its efforts to promote and **protect workers' rights**, taking into account what was recommended by the independent expert in this regard.*

*The State of Qatar has adopted over the past decades a **foreign policy based on strengthening and promoting international cooperation and solidarity** with all countries and international and regional organizations in order to achieve world peace and contribute to efforts to achieve development in various fields, including by helping developing countries achieve development goals. This policy was reinforced by the **Qatar National Vision 2030**.*

*With regard to **national efforts** to address and reduce the negative effects of climate change, Qatar has worked to implement many projects and initiatives aimed at reducing air pollutants, reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and increasing dependence on renewable energy sources.*

Interactive Dialogue

States: European Union, Burkina Faso (on behalf of the African Union), Holy See, Togo, Cuba, Russian Federation, Djibouti, Angola, Libya, China, Ecuador, Malaysia, Venezuela, Tunisia, Philippines, Jordan, Indonesia, Morocco, Iraq, Egypt, Nigeria, Bahamas, Algeria, Chad.

Observers: UN Women.

Civil Society: Earthjustice (joint statement), Terra de Direitos, Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (joint statement), China Society for Human Rights Studies, Conselho Indigenista Missionário Cimi (joint statement), International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, South Youth Organization, Iraqi Development Organization, Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (Point of Order), Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement (Point of Order)

UN Women requested that increased funding and technical support be made available to enable women's access to climate technologies, to empower women as equal leaders for climate action and to increase women's climate resilience. UN Women further noted the need for increased financial and technological support for the poorest and most vulnerable States and peoples to support their climate change adaptation plans.



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Questions asked during the Interactive Dialogue (First Round):

- How can the international human rights mechanisms including this Council and its Special Procedures assist States in implementing this recommendation to States to **protect environmental defenders** from criminalization? What more can be done to protect human right defenders from persecution in cases when state authorities either fail in their protective role or even initiate and lead attacks or threats against human rights defenders? (*European Union*)
- What do you think on the role of international solidarity in the current crisis that is aggravated by **Covid-19**? (*Cuba*). Cuba will be presenting a draft resolution with a primary goal of renewing the mandate of the Independent Expert.
- As for the **civil initiatives** for the respect of commitments, how much is the question of international solidarity included in pursues for greater cooperation and international solidarity? How can the **gender aspect** be taken into account more? How can the **restrictions** imposed across the world due to **Covid-19** have positive impact on consumption patterns and lead to positive ways to deal with climate change in the future? (*Djibouti*)
- Can you give us concrete examples of projects aimed at ensuring a **viable transition** for countries with economies mainly based on fossil fuel revenues? How could we **get States to act** in a concerted manner against the effects of climate change to better guarantee fundamental rights? (*Angola*)
- We note with appreciation the Independent Expert's recommendation to address human rights implications faced by **marginalized groups** uniquely affected by climate change. Could the Independent Expert share some best practices on this matter? (*Malaysia*)
- What is the role of **civil society** in forging solidarity between developed and developing countries, and addressing climate change with collective result? (*Philippines*)

Mr. Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity (by live video)

- Independent Expert reaffirmed the importance of the common, shared responsibilities but also of **differentiated responsibilities**, because of the existing asymmetries (causation and impact).
- In response to the question by the EU, the work of the Special Rapporteurs and human rights defenders is relevant to that and is ongoing. Institutions, regional courts, human rights groups, civil society are working on this and the Council should continue to support these efforts.
- On the question by Cuba, the role of the international solidarity in facing the **Covid-19** crisis is absolutely critical. The Independent Expert hopes to work on the report dedicated solely to this question.
- On the question by Malaysia, some of the **best practices** are Green Climate Fund which is good initiative that requires improvement, Green Development Mechanism, as well as regional associations and groups (e.g. association of small island states, regional group of European countries), civil society cooperation.

Questions asked during the Interactive Dialogue (Second Round):

- How can the principle of international solidarity be further advanced by the Council particularly in relation to providing better **protection for small stakeholders** such as farmers in local communities? (*Indonesia*)
- What are the **key issues for Africa** linked to climate change and what role will be played by international solidarity to solve these problems? (*Morocco*)
- How can we promote international solidarity in the area of the distribution of **water**? How can we make **transnational corporations** accountable for their role in respect of the emissions? How can we defend **environmental defenders** in the framework of international solidarity? (*Iraq*)
- Could the Independent Expert suggest further measures to be adopted in alleviating the human rights suffering caused by the climate change taking into account the imperative of international solidarity? (*Nigeria*)
- How can international solidarity assist small states when **skilled metrics** are used to measure wealth? (*Bahamas*)



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- On the question raised by Morocco, to support **African countries** there is a need in financial assistance to ensure mitigation and adaptation and a need for shared technology for mitigation and adaptation.
- On the question raised by Nigeria, the preventive measures would be key at better international regulation of the **TNC activity**, as well as more participation by the affected communities in the decision-making.
- The concern of **Bahamas** should be highlighted and given more attention.
- **Transnational coalitions** of the youth, of the indigenous peoples, of civil society are extremely important for international solidarity in this area.
- There is a need for **robust accountability mechanisms** for ensuring that international solidarity actually happens in practice, beyond the conceptual textual agreements.
- We need to pay more attention to distributive and re-distributive impacts of **fossil fuels distribution**.
- **Finance and technology** will be important.