

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 53rd SESSION

Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the adverse impact of climate change on the full realization of the Right to Food

03 - 04 July 2023

Ms. Peggy Hicks, Director, Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development, addressed the Council about the negative impacts of the full and effective realization of the right to food for millions of people. Extreme weather events and natural hazards, drought, and floods are wiping out crops and destroying livelihoods both on land and in water. Rising sea levels lead to displacement and declining crop yields to malnutrition and hunger – hitting those furthest behind hardest. At the same time, industrial food systems are significant greenhouse gas emitters that contribute to climate change in a vicious cycle that can only be ended through a transition to sustainable food systems.

Those most at risk of suffering from climate-related food insecurity and hunger include rural populations, peasants, small-scale farmers and fishers, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, low-income households, women, children, and persons with disabilities – in particular, but not exclusively, in developing countries. These are the people who have contributed the very least to the climate crisis.

The Secretary-General's report presented a transition to sustainable food systems, including agroecological approaches, as a pathway to simultaneously address the climate crisis and safeguard the right to food. That required a transformation of trade regimes, the end of harmful agricultural subsidies, and the promotion of healthy diets and locally grown food varieties. For climate action to effectively contribute to upholding the right to food, it must place rights-holders at its centre, ensuring their effective contribution to planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Interactive dialogue

64 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. The majority of the countries recognized the threats posed by climate change and the necessary steps and actions to address the country's vulnerability and resilience to climate change. Changing seasons and rising temperatures, increases in risks of flood and droughts, and rising sea levels have had adverse impacts on agriculture, fisheries, energy, access to water, and infrastructure. These effects demand immediate attention and urgent collective action. **Sierra Leone** affirmed its challenges linked to the disproportionate impact and threats of climate change that undermine food security and the livelihoods of most of our population. **The Dominican Republic, Marshall Islands, and Samoa** affirmed that climate change is not just an environmental concern; it is also a major driver of humanitarian crises that affect the lives and well-being of millions of people, especially in the SIDS countries. **EU** affirmed that to advance this agenda, civil society must be to ensure transparent, inclusive, safe, and meaningful participation and leadership both online and offline. **UAE** stressed its leading role in prioritizing environmental conservation and the transition to renewable and clean energy, highlighting the organization of COP28.

Russian Federation shared that the environmental agenda and the green transformation are becoming factors that largely determine the vector of development of the global economy. However, affirmed that the linkage of the human rights agenda with the problems of climate change is unreasonable and largely artificial. Remained concerned about the ongoing attempts to transfer the discussion of environmental issues to other non-core bodies.

UNICEF remained deeply concerned that children are among the most affected by the adverse impact of climate change on the realization of their right to food. It called on States to respect, protect and fulfill every child's right to food, to put children's health and nutrition concerns at the centre of climate action, and to regulate and monitor the environmental impact of business activities that might compromise food security. **UNEP** highlighted that the right to food is one of the rights that are adversely affected by climate change and other environmental harms. The realization of the right to food and the realization of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment are inherently interconnected.

NGOs informed about their own programs and projects in order to alleviate the negative impact of climate change on children and vulnerable groups, including Indigenous Peoples, women, and persons with disabilities. Their economic survival suffers dramatically from shifting climate conditions, worsening existing gender inequality, violence, and exploitation. **Earthjustice** affirmed that to guarantee food security, food production must be inserted into ecosystem cycles. The fulfillment of the right to food in the context of climate change requires that urgent and genuine agrarian reforms and effective regulation of agribusinesses are aligned with a just transition for the work force and strong and secure land rights.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (64 country delegations):

Philippines, Dominican Republic, Pakistan, EU, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, Sierra Leone, Samoa, Japan, Costa Rica, Egypt, Israel, Luxembourg, Armenia, Sovereign Order to Malta, Mauritius, United States, France, Maldives, Malaysia, UK, Venezuela, Ireland, Togo, Zimbabwe, Namibia, India, Malawi, Tanzania, China, Gambia, Switzerland, Chile, Marshall Islands, Georgia, Cuba, Russian Federation, Romania, Algeria, Botswana, Bolivia, Cyprus, Nepal, Honduras, Panama, Bangladesh, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Zambia, Cambodia, Iran, Australia, Ukraine, Suriname, Djibouti, Antigua and Barbuda, Capo Verde, Indonesia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Nauru, Belgium, Denmark, Croatia.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (10):

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, World Vision International, Edmund Rice International, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, Earthjustice, Plan International, Franciscans International, Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA).

International organizations (3): UNICEF, UNEP, OIC.

To watch the full meeting refer to UN Web TV, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).