



The links between Human Rights and Climate Change

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Format of presentation

Refresher on the impacts of CC?

Which Human Rights are most affected by CC?

Who are the **rights holders** & **duty bearers** of HRs re CC?

Which groups of **rights holders** are most affected by CC?

What are the Human Rights obligations of States as **duty bearers**?



Introduction

73 years ago yesterday the United Nations launched –
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

To at least – asylum , freedom from torture, free speech,
education, life, liberty, privacy, health, self-determination,
cultural heritage, social development, housing, food, water,
sanitation etc

HRs are universal; equal; interrelated;
cannot be waived or removed **IN LAW**



1 – Refresher on the impacts of Climate Change?

Changed weather systems

heatwave, hurricane, typhoon, drought, torrential rain, shifting weather patterns

Changed natural systems

degraded soil, animal/plant/insect migration esp to higher latitude, habitat change, biodiversity loss/extinctions, coral bleaching, ecosystem service depletion, oceanic inundation, coastal erosion, etc

Changed human systems

civil unrest; war between nations; land grabs;
interrupted opportunities to share knowledge, effort, skills globally; etc

2 – Which human rights are most affected by CC?

	Human impact of CC
Threat to the HR to HEALTH	<p>undrinkable water; interrupted energy supply; food insecurity; damaged health services infrastructure</p> <p>disease vectors crossing the human/animal barrier</p> <p>unavailability of ecosystem services</p>
Threat to the HR to SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT	<p>challenge of human groups forming societies if they are physically divided by the changes to the weather/natural/human systems we reviewed earlier</p>

Human impact of CC

Threat to the HR to FOOD

accessibility – stable price; can it be transported to where it is needed; can it be grown locally

acceptability – cultural

sustainability – do we still have food security for the future

Threat to the HR to WATER & SANITATION

unpredictable availability

impediments to water/sanitation resources

potability of water

3 – Who are **rights holders** & **duty bearers** of HRs re CC?

RIGHTS HOLDERS

Individuals & groups

entitled to protection from CC impacts

climate action to be consistent with HR obligations, standards, principles esp to protect those most affected by CC

who are often those who contributed least to CC

meaningful participants in climate action & remedies

DUTY BEARERS

States

obliged to take individual & collective action to protect HRs, including of populations outside their territories

accountable for negative impacts of any activity by any person/organisation that exacerbates CC

obliged to mitigate CC & ensure life-forms have capacity to adapt to its consequences

Video – Human Rights & Climate Change

2:15

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdiwv8xmQrk>

Graphical explanation of HR and CC

BY

insightshare.com

4 – Which groups of **rights holders** are most affected by CC?

Impact of CC on INDIGENOUS PEOPLE's Human Rights

extreme weather events & subsequent environmental degradation >

loss of their lands & ecosystem services which threatens –

- cultural survival
- traditional livelihoods

therefore, their choice, evaluation, implementation & monitoring of climate action policies is hampered

WORLD LOSES – benefit of their often more holistic view of community & environment



Impact of CC on WOMEN's Human Rights

intense threats to land, water & food security > loss of livelihoods >

especially rural women migrating to urban areas

increased gender-based violence – rape, domestic abuse

WORLD LOSES – their knowledge of changing weather systems over time,
local agricultural experience of conserving & managing natural resources for
different climate conditions

Impact of CC on DISPLACED PEOPLE's Human Rights

displacement across country borders
risks associated with barriers to international migration > gross HR violations

internal displacement
World Bank/- by 2050, 216m people internally displaced by
water shortages, crop failure, rising sea levels

WORLD LOSES –
opportunity for humanity to learn new ways to adapt to/mitigate the impact of CC



FUTURE GENERATIONS

Some 'rights' defns mention future generations

BUT no formal declaration of HRs for them

BUT

gaining ground in 'sustainable development' discussions –

'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'

Sustainability – refers to future, long-term goals

Sustainable development – refers to processes & pathways to achieve it

5 – What are Human Rights obligations of States as **duty bearers**?

Create a sustainable environment

Provide safe, clean, healthy, sustainable environment
Hold all actors accountable for their contribution to CC,
incl by businesses

Provide conditions to adapt to/mitigate worst excesses of CC

Mobilise \$100bn/yr **ETC** for development, adaptation to &
mitigation of CC for LDCs



Protect Human Rights of rights holders

Taking Human Rights seriously – ensure that –

- climate action benefits those most affected by CC
- climate justice prevails – LDCs benefit most/pay least
 - remedies are demanded for violated HRs
- national HR institutions contribute to implementing climate commitments, laws, policies
 - HR defenders are safe, incl climate activists



POEM – ‘It seems’

3:33

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vbz7H0F3qTA>

BY

Niamh McNally



QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?