



Statement

Meeting with the Special Rapporteurs on the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment and on Climate Change and Human Rights

Thank you to the partner organizations that made possible this important dialogue to meet, strategize and together contribute to inform the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as well as on climate and human rights.

The coordination of the work of these two mandates is key to addressing the multiple intersecting environmental crises putting at risk the conditions sustaining life in the planet, and thus all possibilities to realize the full range of human rights internationally recognized.

As we know, we are in a critical moment where the actions undertaken in this decade will be decisive to prevent the worst effects of the planetary crisis in the future to come. We have a very small window of opportunity to significantly raise ambition and tackle the most pressing challenges posed by the overall degradation of our ecosystems.

Achieving this requires recognizing that the planetary crisis stems from a flawed economic system marked by unfair economic policies, which leads to the overexploitation of natural resources and rapid environmental degradation, while also widening social and economic inequalities. This economic model benefits a small global elite at the expense of the environment and the rights of the majority. To make rapid and sustained progress in advancing environmental goals, it is imperative to tackle the economic policies that are at the root of the environmental breakdown.

This includes the transformation of tax policies to foster the redistribution of wealth and the investment in climate mitigation and adaptation, combating the privatization and commodification of natural resources and public services, supporting and recognizing the care economy, measuring social and economic progress with indicators that go beyond GDP growth, among many other efforts, that allow placing human rights at the center of economic policy. This is key to generate conditions of wellbeing for all without overshooting the capacities of our ecosystems.

To achieve this economy-wide transformation, the concept of a just transition provides a comprehensive framework to embed social and economic justice in climate and broader

environmental policies. Born from the labor movement of the 1970's, the concept and social movements on just transition seeks to ensure environmental protection is advanced through democratic means and contributes to tackle socio-economic inequalities and foster the realization of human rights.

We invite the Special Rapporteurs to explore the potential of just transition approaches to debunk harmful myths that hinder the implementation of environmental commitments, such as the belief that poverty eradication and combating inequalities are incompatible with environmental protection, or that climate action obstructs development and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Fostering synergies between environmental protection and economic and social justice, as part of Just Transition frameworks, is key to creating social support for ambitious and effective environmental action.

GI-ESCR has, for instance, documented how transition frameworks can foster climate policies that support the care economy. As care responsibilities are heightened by the impacts of the climate emergency, investing in the expansion of social security, renewable energy and other public services significantly contributes to reduce, revalue and redistribute care responsibilities, while combating the climate emergency. This is critical to protect and realize women's rights in the context of the environmental breakdown and contributes to the transformation of our economic model.

In that sense, we suggest the UN Special Rapporteurs to:

- Address more systematically economic policy, the combating of inequalities and the realization of economic, social and cultural rights as part of their mandates.
- Adopt a just transition framework to analyze the human rights implications and the policy recommendations that should be advanced to foster economy-wide transformations as a key strategy to tackle the root causes of the multiple intersecting environmental crisis.
- Engage in dialogue with States, civil society organizations, businesses and other interested stakeholders to implement just transition frameworks in national policies.
- As part of these efforts, consider developing a thematic report that documents the human rights implications of the energy transition, encompassing the questions associated with transition minerals, the construction and operation of renewable energy projects and the inequalities reproduced in the distribution and consumption of sustainable energy.