



General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 February 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 January 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



A Call for Increased Global Action to Protect and Maintain Human Rights in the Least Developed Countries amid the Climate Crisis

1. In the face of the continuing global challenges that Least Developed Countries (LDCs) confront, it becomes imperative for the international community not just to recognise but to prioritise the unique struggles they face in the context of human rights discussions. At the heart of these challenges lies the interconnected web of issues stemming from climate change, which, in its various manifestations, not least significantly hinders the progress of LDCs towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Climate change serves as a multi-faceted adversary, incrementally and increasingly expeditiously impacting LDCs across various sectors, and worsening pre-existing vulnerabilities. One of the most immediate and profound consequences continues to be felt at the grassroots level, where climate change has not abated in the disruption of what was once traditional weather patterns, leading to even more erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events. This, it is already understood, directly impacts agriculture, rendering once-fertile lands less productive. Small-scale farmers, often the backbone of LDC economies, are still dealing with unpredictable growing seasons and diminishing yields. The scarcity of water sources exacerbates this issue, and the dual threat to food security has only become more magnified since this was first acknowledged in the policy making circles. The resultant lack of access to reliable food and water sources has not only jeopardised local livelihoods but has set the stage for a cascade of challenges that, while has resonated globally, is far from being fully understood.
3. At a macroeconomic level, the lack of climate resilience in LDCs restricts their ability to participate fully in the global economy. Agricultural systems, often the backbone of LDC economies, face further instability due to erratic weather patterns. This volatility, combined with inadequate infrastructure and limited technological resources, hampers efforts to establish robust and diversified economies. Moreover, LDCs continue to find themselves on the fringes of global trade due to these climate-induced vulnerabilities. At a recent meeting at the World Economic Forum 2024, on “How North-South cooperation can be recalibrated to deliver win-win solutions to our most pressing issues rather than exacerbating them”, it was stated explicitly that there has to be a full acknowledgement that there are parts of the world that have not benefited from trade advances: “(i)f we look at least developed countries, their share of trade has been 1% and has remained stagnant” (Ngozi Okonju-Iweala - Director General of the World Trade Organization)
4. LDCs grapple with the harsh reality that climate change, exacerbated by historical emissions from developed nations, hinders their economic development and perpetuates a cycle of poverty. The global community must recognise this inequity and work towards inclusive frameworks that enable LDCs to overcome these barriers and participate meaningfully in the global economic landscape.
5. The lack of climate resilience and economic access creates a breeding ground for instability, human rights abuses, and conflict. When communities are unable to meet their basic needs due to climate-induced disruptions, desperation sets in. This desperation, coupled with resource scarcity, often leads to internal conflicts over dwindling resources. The cycle intensifies as these conflicts, fueled by climate-related pressures, force vulnerable populations into displacement, creating a refugee crisis since communities facing the brunt of climate-related challenges find themselves with little choice but to migrate in search of better opportunities and safety. This influx of climate refugees not only strains the resources of neighbouring regions but also perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability and displacement.
6. Crucially, this instability and conflict also create feedback loops that perpetuate the cycle of suffering. Displaced populations, often already marginalised, face heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The breakdown of governance structures, a common consequence of climate-induced conflict, paves the way for human rights abuses. Vulnerable populations, especially women and children, are disproportionately affected,

facing issues like displacement, gender-based violence, and limited access to education and healthcare. The international community must recognise the intricate web of interconnected challenges faced by LDCs and address the root causes rather than focusing on the immediate consequences.

7. The global community bears a collective responsibility to bolster the climate resilience of LDCs. This involves not only mitigating climate change by reducing emissions but also providing robust support for adaptation strategies in vulnerable regions. It requires a shift towards sustainable and equitable development that considers the specific needs and challenges faced by LDCs.
8. To break this cycle therefore, and to address the persistent human rights issues, a profound change in the collective sense of global responsibility when it comes to climate change resilience is imperative. We request that the Human Rights Council formally recognise the interconnectedness of these challenges in a way that requires collaborative action within the international community to implement comprehensive solutions. This involves:
 - I. Sustainable agriculture practices: promoting sustainable agricultural practices that are resilient to climate variations can bolster food security. This includes investing in drought-resistant crops, efficient irrigation systems, and promoting a more robust system of providing farmers with the knowledge and tools needed to adapt to changing climatic conditions.
 - II. Economic diversification: the LDCs continue to lack the resources to implement any adaptation plans; encouraging economic diversification beyond agriculture is crucial, as is more visible investing in industries such as renewable energy, technology, and services which can create new avenues for economic growth, reducing reliance on climate-sensitive sectors.
 - III. Conflict resolution and Human Rights protection: addressing conflicts and human rights abuses requires a multi-stakeholder approach. International bodies, governments, and NGOs must collaborate to promote conflict resolution, protect human rights, and ensure that vulnerable populations are safeguarded.
 - IV. Global solidarity and empowerment: aiding LDCs in building resilience requires global solidarity. Developed nations, international organisations, and private entities should contribute financial resources, technology transfer, and capacity-building initiatives. Empowering local communities to participate actively in decision-making processes is essential for ensuring sustainable, context-specific solutions.
9. Amid these complex challenges, it is crucial to amplify the voices of those directly affected. Real-life narratives from the front lines of climate change must be elevated, allowing those experiencing these challenges firsthand to speak for themselves. Their stories serve as a poignant reminder of the human faces behind the statistics and underscore the urgency of concerted global action. To break the cycle of adversity, a holistic and collaborative approach is paramount, one that recognises the multi-faceted nature of the challenges and works towards building climate change resilience at every level. It's a call to action for the global community to address the root causes and empower those on the front lines to shape their own narratives of resilience and sustainable development.
10. In conclusion, as we advocate for the continued elevation of LDCs on the global stage, let us recognise the intricate connections between climate change, economic access, instability, together with, and how they are fundamentally linked to, human rights abuses. The international community must unite in a commitment to address these challenges comprehensively and through tangible, measurable action, acknowledging that the well-being of the most vulnerable populations is intertwined with the collective future of our planet.