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OHCHR REGISTRY

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Recipients: UH

Mr ULRIK HALSTEEN

Office of the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais des Nations

CH-1211 Geneve 10

Dear Mr Halsteen,

In response to the letter of former High Commissioner for Human Rights, please find attached information that may be useful for preparation of your study on the relationship between climate change and human rights, including on:

- a) Assessments of the impact of climate change (experienced or anticipated) on human lives, on the populations most affected and vulnerable, and on the enjoyment of human rights;
- b) Projects and measures at national or regional levels to mitigate or adapt to climate change, including information on any assessments of their impact on affected population and their human rights;
- c) Support provided to mitigate and adapt to climate change including examples of good practice and assessments of the impact on affected populations and their human rights.

Kindly keep us informed about the results of the study.

Yours sincerely,

Artur RUNGE-METZGER

Copy: A. STANDLEY (DG RELEX), E. LIPIATOU (DG RTD)

ANNEX: Information of potential relevance to the study on relationship between climate change and human rights.

a) Assessments of the impact of climate change (experienced or anticipated) on human lives, on the populations most affected and vulnerable, and on the enjoyment of human rights:

- A research project "Climate change and impact research: the Mediterranean environment"¹ is carried out under Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The project aims to predict and to quantify physical impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean area, as well as to evaluate the consequences of climate change for the society and the economy of the populations located in the Mediterranean area.
- A research project "Projection of Economic impacts of climate change in Sectors of the European Union based on bottom-up Analysis"², coordinated by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, made a multi-sectoral assessment of expected impacts of climate change in Europe for the 2011-2040 and 2071-2100 time horizons. It considered impacts on agriculture, human health, tourism, river basins and coastal systems.
- A joint report³ by the European Commission and the High Representative on the Common Foreign and Security Policy on climate change and international security was presented to the Spring 2008 European Council. A follow up process is currently ongoing based largely on wider consultation on the policy recommendations of the report and on capacity building.
The nexus of climate change and security has bearing on human rights. All analyses converge in arguing that climate change will add pressure to countries in fragile situations and destabilise them further. The potential human rights consequences of such destabilisation have been subject to many studies for instance on governance and human rights or poverty and human rights.
- The impact of climate change on the dynamics of migration is becoming a subject of analysis and policy consideration. A new European Commission Communication on the Global Approach to Migration will propose that a Commission Green Paper be adopted on this nexus. Among the currently ongoing Commission activities in the area, the research programme "Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios" (EACH-FOR)⁴ deserves particular attention.

b) Projects and measures at national or regional levels to mitigate or adapt to climate change, including information on any assessments of their impact on affected population and their human rights:

The following documents analyse the effects of climate change as well as costs and benefits of mitigation. Even though human rights aspects are not the focus of these documents, they serve as a foundation for the EU climate change policy:

¹ <http://www.circeproject.eu/>

² <http://peseta.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.html>

³ www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/reports/99387.pdf

⁴ <http://www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=main>

- Commission Green Paper "Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action"⁵ and its impact assessment⁶;
- Climate and renewable energy package and its impact assessment⁷;
- Commission Communication "Limiting global climate change to 2 degrees Celsius - The way ahead for 2020 and beyond"⁸ and its impact assessment⁹;
- Commission Communication "Energy Policy for Europe"¹⁰;
- Commission Communication "Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change"¹¹.
- The European Commission's response strategy to climate change integrates more and more the potential social and human implications; this approach will be demonstrated by the upcoming White Paper on Adaptation to climate change¹² and the forthcoming communication on Interest and Role of the European Union in the Arctic Region, which will include a section on indigenous communities.
- On a more general note, we are in the process on defining guidelines aiming at better integrating climate change in our cooperation programmes. A first testing exercise will be the midterm review of existing country strategy papers agreed between the European Commission and third countries. This review will take place in 2009 and 2010.
- A research project "Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies: Supporting European climate policy"¹³ is carried out under Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The project assess the extent to which existing and evolving EU (and world) mitigation and adaptation policies can achieve a tolerable transition to a world with a global climate no warmer than 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, and to identify their associated costs and effectiveness.
- A study by the Institute for Environmental Studies (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) "Preparing for a Warmer World – Towards a Global Governance System to Protect Climate Refugees".¹⁴

c) Support provided to mitigate and adapt to climate change including examples of good practice and assessments of the impact on affected populations and their human rights:

For support provided to mitigate and adapt to climate change please refer to EuropeAid work on climate change¹⁵, human rights¹⁶, and security¹⁷.

⁵ COM(2007) 354 final

⁶ SEC(2007) 849

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/climate_action.htm

⁸ COM(2007) 2 final

⁹ SEC(2007) 8

¹⁰ COM(2007) 1 final

¹¹ COM(2005) 35 final

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/stakeholder_consultation.htm

¹³ <http://www.adamproject.eu/>

¹⁴ <http://www.glogov.org/images/doc/WP33.pdf>

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/universal-issues/climate-change/index_en.htm

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/universal-issues/human-rights/index_en.htm

¹⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/security/index_en.htm