**50th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women**

**Panel 1: Exploring the nexus between climate change and violence against**

**women and girls through a human rights lens**

*Concept note (as of 20 June 2022)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date and venue:** | **Monday, 27 June 2022, 10 a.m. to noon (UTC+2)**  **Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)** *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | To increase awareness of the human rights framework applicable to the nexus between climate change and violence against women and girls and to discuss challenges and promising practices in this regard. |
| **Chair:** | H.E. Mr. Andranik Hovhannisyan, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Moderator:** | **Ms. Reem Alsalem,** Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences  All panellists will be invited to integrate an intersecting approach to ensure that no one is left behind (women of African descent, Roma, indigenous women, women from religious minorities, women with disabilities, LGBTI women, rural women etc.) and to include information on promising practices of prevention. |
| **Panellists and themes:** | * **Ms. Melania Chiponda**, Climate Justice and Gender Advisor FEMNET   *Gender-based violence against women leaders and environmental human rights defenders*   * **Ms. Astrid Puentes Riaño,** independent consultant on human rights and climate change   *Climate-induced displacement and migration and the risks of violence against women*   * **Mr. Rajib Ghosal,** Regional Senior Technical Advisor, Save the Children International, Climate Change and Child Poverty Focal Point in the Asia-Pacific region (*video message*) * **Esmeralda**, girl advocate (*video message*)*Climate-induced problems in agriculture (poor harvest, livestock loss, land loss, loss of livelihoods, etc.) and the risks of domestic violence, child early and forced marriage, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution.* |
| **Outcome:** | The panel discussion will contribute to the following outcomes:   * Increased understanding of the human rights framework applicable to the nexus between climate change and violence against women and girls; * Enhanced cooperation among Member States, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders; * Strengthened commitments to effectively prevent and address violence against women and girls in the context of climate change.   A summary report of the panel discussion will be prepared by OHCHR and presented at the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council. |
| **Mandate:** | In its [resolution 6/30](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/HRC/resolutions/A_HRC_RES_6_30.pdf), the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the principle of gender equality and the need for the full implementation of the human rights of women and decided to hold an annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women. The first panel of the 2022 annual discussion will explore the interlinkages between climate change and violence against women and girls through a human rights lens. |
| **Format:** | The total duration of the annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women will be four hours, divided into two panels of two hours each. In this panel, the opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by an interactive discussion divided into two segments. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including the opening statement, panellists’ presentations and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and two non-governmental organizations.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Accessibility:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, the panel will be webcast and made accessible. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning in English will be provided. During the event itself, participants can access live English captioning on the StreamText web page (<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG>). Hearing loops are available for collection from the Secretariat desk. Oral statements may be embossed in Braille from any of the six official languages of the United Nations, upon request and following the procedure described in *The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities* (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>). |
| **Background:** | Climate change exacerbates the risks of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. Environmental degradation, natural resources scarcity, as well as environment-related emergencies deepen poverty, which is a serious aggravator of sexual and gender-based violence. Stigmatization and discrimination of women, in particular women in situations of vulnerability, means they may be excluded from recovery, relief and response efforts.  Climate change exacerbates gender-based violence against women leaders and environmental human rights defenders. In this context, it is important to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the design and implementation of climate response actions to ensure the equal sharing of benefits. Women possess unique knowledge and experience, particularly at the local level; hence, their inclusion in decision-making processes is critical to effective and sustainable climate actions. Studies have found that increasing women’s representation in national parliaments leads to the adoption of more stringent climate change policies and [better resource governance.](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3807177?ln=en) It is important to create and ensure safe and enabling spaces for women’s activism, including effective protection systems to safeguard women activists.  Climate-induced displacement and migration also exacerbate the risks of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in emergency shelters, camps and temporary settlements. LGBTI women may also face exclusion and discriminatory attitudes when trying to access safe shelters that fulfil their needs. Women in evacuation centres, including relief workers, may be subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination, and/or have limited access to reproductive and other health services. Women IDPs, migrants and refugees are also vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.  Climate-induced problems in agriculture, including poor harvest, livestock loss, land loss, and loss of livelihoods exacerbate the risks of domestic violence, child early and forced marriage, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution. Climate change may lead to poor harvests, livestock loss, lower earnings and food insecurity. In families where men have to leave home to seek a living elsewhere, women and children are left alone which can make them more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Climate-induced loss of livelihoods, reduction of income, or deterioration of working conditions in agriculture make women more vulnerable to gender-based violence and limit their opportunities to leave violent partners. Stress caused by the detrimental consequences of climate change may increase domestic violence. Child, early and forced marriages can also occur as harmful coping strategies among those who suffer from economic stress due to disasters and the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change. |
| **Background documents:** | * [Human Rights Council resolution 6/30](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/6/30) of 14 December 2007 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system * Reports of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls [A/HRC/47/38](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/38) (2021) and [A/HRC/50/25](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/50/25) (2022) * CEDAW [General Recommendation No. 37](https://undocs.org/CEDAW/C/GC/37) on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change * CEDAW [General recommendation No. 35](https://undocs.org/CEDAW/C/GC/35) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 * [Achieving Human Rights and Gender Equality in the Context of Environmental Crises: Key Messages](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/66/EGM/Info%20Papers/OHCHR_CSW66%20Informational%20Paper.pdf), informational paper prepared by OHCHR * Commission on the Status of Women, 66th session, Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, agreed conclusions [E/CN.6/2022/L.7](https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2022/L.7) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings [A/HRC/41/19](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/19) * Human Rights, the Environment and Gender Equality, Key Messages ([OHCHR/UNEP/UN Women](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Final_HumanRightsEnvironmentGenderEqualityKM.pdf)) * OHCHR Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women [A/HRC/41/26](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/26) * Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, [Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change](https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf) |