SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

# ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Summary of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Elisa Morgera

A/79/196

*Image: USGS / Unsplash*

# Introduction

**The right of access to information is a precondition for the protection and exercise of other human rights**. It supports the rights to freedom of expression, association, participation and remedy and is linked to the rights to science and education.

**States have obligations,** individually and as part of international cooperation, and **businesses have responsibilities** to ensure access to information on **climate change and human rights.**

Access to information is a prerequisite for enhancing the **transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness of decision-making** processes on climate change at all levels.

It plays a crucial role in **preventing intersectional discrimination** and better **protecting human rights** that are, and may be, negatively affected by **climate change and climate change response measures**.



*Image: Chris Gallagher / Unsplash*

# The Right of Access to Information

Access to information encompasses the right of individuals to **request and receive information** of public interest and information that may affect their individual rights.

It enables individuals to understand how **climate change** and **climate change response measures** may adversely affect their **human rights**.

States must **regularly and proactively collect and disseminate information** to the public, as well as provide **accessible, affordable, effective, understandable and timely access** to this information to any person.

Enhanced measures must be taken to ensure access to information for **those most affected by climate change and related decisions**, including Indigenous Peoples, peasants and local knowledge holders, and those facing intersectional discrimination.

Access to information on climate change and human rights is essential for public authorities to make **holistic, effective and inclusive decisions to mitigate and adapt to climate change**.

*Image: Thom Milkovic / Unsplash*

# Information Needed

**Causes, extent and effects of climate change**, to ensure the public understands whether climate-related conditions are improving or worsening.

- Including greenhouse gas emissions, climate change projections and information on weather patterns.

**Potential and actual impacts of climate change on human rights**, to support the public's resilience and adaptive capacity to respond to those impacts.

- Including information from climate vulnerability assessments.

**Proposed and ongoing climate response measures and their impacts on human rights and the environment**, to empower the public to assess the adequacy of State action to combat climate change and respect, protect and fulfill human rights.

- Including mitigation and adaptation measures, climate finance projects, just transition programmes, carbon credits and carbon technologies.



*Image: Tim van der Kuip / Unsplash*

# Challenges and Barriers

- **Inconsistent or limited historical, local and disaggregated data** on climate change, climate change response measures and their impacts on human rights and the environment, including gaps on **differentiated and intersectional impacts** and limited integration of **local and Indigenous knowledge**.
- **Lack of transparency** and information gaps across sectors, including fisheries and the military.
- **Lack of inter-institutional coordination** to support the generation and sharing of information across sectors.
- **Disinformation campaigns** on misleading and false solutions for a just transition.
- **Multiple barriers to accessing information**, including the digital divide, language and format barriers, limited access to education, poverty and geographic remoteness.
- **Threats and intimidation** against environmental human rights defenders, climate activists, journalists and communities requesting information.



*Image: Matt Palmer / Unsplash*

# Good Practices

- **Collaboration among public authorities**, including National Human Rights Institutions, to gather and share information on climate change and human rights.
- **Partnerships with non-State actors** that have access to relevant information, including internationally funded projects and community-based initiatives supported by civil society organizations.
- Support for **community-led initiatives** and **participatory research methodologies**.
- **Integration of climate change and human rights into education**, including school curricula, popular campaigns and training.

Current practices on access to information on climate change and human rights **can be improved in light of the right to science**, which entails non-discriminatory access to, participation in and enjoyment of science and its benefits.

**States should identify the greatest need for progress in science to protect human rights in the context of climate change and prioritize the gathering and sharing of that information.**



*Image: Andreas Gücklhorn / Unsplash*

# Recommendations for States

**Regularly collect, disseminate and increasingly improve quality, trustworthy and evidence based-information** on climate change and human rights.

**Identify and fill data and information gaps**.

**Provide accessible, affordable, effective, understandable and timely access to information** to any person upon request, taking enhanced measures to ensure access to information for **those most affected by climate change and related decision-making.**

**Enact clear procedures** to ensure the right of access to information and provide guidance to the public on how to obtain such information.

**Protect the public against disinformation campaigns and misleading information** on climate change and human rights.

**Recognize the important role, and promote the protection, of environmental human rights defenders and climate activists,** including by sharing information on threats and available protection measures.

**Integrate climate change and human rights into education**.

**Fund and support participatory research**, particularly when community-led, women-led or co-developed with children or local grassroots organizations, and when it ensures consideration of **intersectionality**.

*Image: Artiom Vallat / Unsplash*

# Recommendations for Businesses

**Accurately report and disclose climate impacts** in an accessible manner that is sufficient to evaluate the adequacy of corporate efforts to prevent climate change-related harms.

**Ensure effective communication on these efforts**, including through translation into local languages, culturally appropriate engagement methods, and the provision of independent legal and technical support to communities.

**Disclose information about lobbying** related to climate policies.

**Refrain from supporting public misinformation campaigns** and take measures to mitigate risks arising from information manipulation.

**Refrain from engaging in defamation and strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs)** aimed at silencing individuals and groups combating climate disinformation.



*Image: NOAA / Unsplash*

# International Cooperation

**States should cooperate to undertake scientific research and encourage the exchange of information and data** on emissions, pathways, risks, remedies, and critical biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**States should support and fund international organizations** that contribute to connecting, comparing and complementing areas of information on climate change and human rights.

**Donor States should prioritize funding** to strengthen the integration, interoperability and accessibility of international sources of information and **fill gaps for the protection of human rights**.

**Integration, interoperability and accessibility of information** on climate change and human rights should also be ensured across all **sources of international climate finance**.

The **United Nations System should map relevant international information initiatives, identify gaps and enhance collaboration**, including with civil society and academia, on information on climate change and human rights.



*Image: Ishan @seefromthesky / Unsplash*

SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Read the full report:
**https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/176**

**For more information, please visit:**
**https://www.ohchr.org/en/specialprocedures/sr-climate-change**

*Image: USGS / Unsplash*