12th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, 27-29 October 2025

Item 5.a (i): Implementation of the mandate and programme of work
Consideration of thematic studies
Climate finance: vulnerability and responsibility

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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Mr. Chair,

APG23 thanks the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development and Ms. Isabelle Durant for the draft study on Climate Finance and the choice to deal with this fundamental issue by deepening the nexus among vulnerability and responsibility. We welcome the choice of investigating the deep connections between climate change and broader social, economic and development challenges through a right-to-development perspective to climate and development finance.

The overall impact of climate change on human life in its entirety dramatically affects the fulfilment of human rights, critically undermining the trajectories to fully realise the right to development in its individual and collective dimensions. Loss and damage derived from climate change call into question essential principles, such as equity and non-discrimination as well as common but differentiated responsibilities, that are at the core of the right to development and of any genuine development process, and therefore have to be central in every climate adaptation, mitigation and finance initiatives, as pointed out in the draft study.
International cooperation - a cornerstone for the realisation of the right to development - is also called to play a vital role in shaping adequate human right-based responses to climate change consequences.

The need for aligning climate finance with the right-to-development principles, including States' duty to cooperate, is therefore crucial and we welcome the views and suggestions proposed in the draft study focused on participation, human-centred development, transparency, equality, and sustainability. Especially, we want to underline two critical points raised in the draft study.

1) Participation, governance and benefit-sharing of carbon market mechanisms
Climate finance should incorporate mechanisms for meaningful participation of local communities, especially the most vulnerable and exposed to climate risks. These participatory processes have to take into account the different cultural and social contexts and traditional and ecological knowledge, as well as the dimension of the Indigenous communities' spiritual connection to land.
But, as the draft study underlines, Indigenous communities have often denounced that projects related to carbon market mechanism could threaten this heritage and their traditional ways of life, by reinforcing exploitative and colonial practices to the exclusive benefit of profit-oriented financial institutions and the private sector, especially transnational corporations, without a fair benefit-sharing.

Furthermore, such market-based mechanisms in many cases lead to exacerbate adverse effects on biodiversity and human rights and to further expose Indigenous communities to socio-economic exclusion and discrimination.
An example of such adverse (even if indirect or unintended) impact on human rights by climate financing initiatives that the study could mention is the land grabbing phenomenon, which in many countries has been paradoxically enhanced or incentivised by the carbon market and carbon credits-related programmes, and which t
Therefore, free, prior and informed consent, access to information and meaningful participation in governance and decision-making processes are crucial measures to be enhanced and fully implemented throughout the entire project lifecycle, as well as the establishing of complaint and compensation mechanisms for affected persons.

2) Critical minerals, just transition and private sector accountability
We welcome the focus on the need for resource-rich regions to move beyond the export of raw minerals needed for the so called green transition by building local processing capacities, in order to fully leverage the potential of critical minerals and exit the pitfalls of dependence. It is necessary not only to move up the mineral value chain, but also and foremost to ensure that the communities living in those regions, often Indigenous peoples, are not threatened, marginalised and dispossessed of their lands and resources, but can fully participate in all the decision-making stages related to their lands and resources and in a fair and inclusive benefit-sharing. In this regard, we suggest to underline the need for strengthening accountability of the private sector, especially transnational corporations operating in the energy sector, also by reinforcing international legislation and adopting a legally binding instrument to regulate their activities in international human rights law.

3) Human rights impact assessment
Finally, we want to reiterate that any climate adaptation, mitigation and finance mechanism should avoid the risk of exacerbating inequalities and social conflicts. In this regard, we suggest to include in the draft study the consideration of human rights impact assessment as a proposal of concrete measure to be put in place, in order to avoid that climate funds and finance mechanisms leads to activities that can negatively impact on human rights and affect locally-owned resources and development processes. Adequate and participatory human rights impact assessments could be a crucial tool to impede that initiatives aimed at restoring climate justice result in increased human rights violations, inequity and exploitation at the expense of the most vulnerable to climate change consequences at all levels.

Thank You!