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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 3 September 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am pleased to transmit herewith the outcome document of the Fourth Samarkand Forum on Human Rights, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 13 and 14 June 2024 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 71 (b).

(Signed) Ulugbek **Lapasov**
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 3 September 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Samarkand Declaration on the Global Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change: Commitments and Actions for a Sustainable Future

We, the participants of the Fourth Samarkand Forum on Human Rights “**Environmental Challenges: Ensuring Sustainable Solutions for the Future of Human Rights in a Changing World**”, convened in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on June 13-14, 2024,

expressing gratitude to His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, for the initiative to convene this Forum, announced at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the 46th session of the Human Rights Council;

emphasizing that the first Asian Human Rights Forum, organized in Uzbekistan in 2018, introduced the special “**Samarkand Spirit**” into global practice and initiated the good tradition of holding forums every two years, dedicated to the most pressing issues in human rights;

noting that as a result of global climate changes, a critical ecological situation has developed on the planet, where problems such as the scarcity of drinking water, environmental pollution, soil erosion, severe dust and sand storms, the disappearance of biodiversity, and the reduction in agricultural productivity are increasingly intensifying, underscoring the importance of global environmental issues and the necessity for joint efforts to address them;

recognizing the intensification of the negative impacts of these processes on all continents and countries, especially in the Central Asia region, where the rates of temperature increase are twice the global average and which continues to suffer the consequences of the Aral Sea disaster;

highly appreciating Uzbekistan’s experience in the protection and restoration of the ecological system of the Aral Sea region, its social and economic development, the country’s transition to a “green” economy and carbon neutrality, as well as its efforts to increase the capacity of renewable energy to 40 percent by 2030, the creation of a forest over 2 million hectares of the dried-up Aral Sea, and the implementation of the national project “Yashil Makon,” (Green Space) which involves planting 1 billion saplings.

acknowledging the wide support by the global community for the measures taken by Uzbekistan in this area, particularly the unanimous adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of important resolutions such as “**Declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies**” and “**Central Asia Facing Environmental Challenges: Fostering Regional Solidarity for Sustainable Development and Prosperity**”;

recognizing that climate change and environmental disaster have become major obstacles and challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, for the full realization of human rights, including rights to health, access to water and food, as well as the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and housing, and *noting that* it is primarily people in need of social protection who suffer from this, especially persons with disabilities, the elderly, women, and children;

affirming the urgency and scale of the challenges facing the global community in the protection of human rights in the context of global climate change and the need for global, united, and urgent action to counter these challenges and minimize their impact on the lives and well-being of all peoples of the world;

emphasizing that states have the primary responsibility to protect the human rights of their citizens from the negative impacts of climate change, including obligations not only to mitigate climate change but also to adapt, ensuring that adaptation measures do not violate human rights and contribute to their promotion;

in the spirit of Article 2 of the Paris Agreement, which calls for the consideration of human rights in the context of climate initiatives, international cooperation and solidarity, special attention is given to the necessity of supporting developing countries, which involves the transfer of technology, financial support, and capacity building to ensure their ability to protect human rights in a changing climate;

reiterating special concern about the impact of climate change on marginalized groups, whose traditional ways of life and livelihoods are at risk, ***affirming*** the need to recognize and protect the rights of this group in accordance with universally recognized international human rights treaties;

highlighting the necessity of creating and strengthening financial mechanisms to support countries and communities facing the greatest challenges in the area of climate change and human rights protection, which includes not only international financial support but also the development of innovative financial instruments that promote sustainable development and the protection of human rights;

emphasizing the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as fundamental international instruments for mobilizing the global community to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and to ensure the protection of human rights in this context;

reminding of the commitment enshrined in the Paris Agreement for states to respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations on human rights when taking measures to combat climate change;

recalling also Human Rights Council resolutions [37/8](#)¹, [35/20](#)² and [40/11](#)³, which address human rights, including the rights of young people, taking into account environmental harm and climate change and that a safe climate is a vital element of the right to a safe, a clean, healthy and sustainable environment essential to human life and well-being;

inspiring by the progress and challenges of our times, emphasizing the necessity of integrating environmental principles into the foundation of constitutional building and legislation at both international and national levels;

recognizing that the greening of the world's constitutions is not only a matter of environmental conservation, but also the foundation for sustainable development, social justice and the guarantee of fundamental human rights and freedoms;

emphasizing that the constitutionalization of environmental law should become an obligatory element in the development strategy of each State, as evidenced by Uzbekistan's experience with the adoption of its Constitution in 2023 in a new edition, where a separate chapter establishes the human right to a favorable environment, as

¹ [A/HRC/RES/37/8](#)

² [A/HRC/RES/35/20](#)

³ [A/HRC/RES/40/11](#)

well as defines the State's obligations to improve, restore, and protect the environment, and to maintain ecological balance;

noting the need for countries around the world to adopt joint effective measures to significantly reduce the damage to human rights caused by climate change, and recognizing their enormous responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations, ensuring that environmental well-being and human rights are interconnected and inseparable in any political and legal system;

united by a common goal of creating a just, sustainable, and inclusive future for all peoples of the world, we hereby declare the following recommendations and proposals:

Key recommendations:

1. Recognizing the paramount importance of the **initiative of His Excellency President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, concerning the **adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on "Protection of Human Rights while combating the adverse effects of climate change in Central Asia"**, specifically to mitigate the effects of acute climate challenges that humanity faces, which is undoubtedly a priority area for international cooperation in the field of human rights;
2. Advocating for global recognition and implementation of the inherent human right to a healthy environment, as well as the adoption of measures to enshrine this right where appropriate, in national, regional, and global framework documents and/or national policy and legislation;
3. Enhancing efforts to create and implement international and national guidelines to ensure that all measures to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts take into account human rights and especially the rights of the most vulnerable groups;
4. Broadening and deepening international co-operation on research and data sharing on the impacts of climate change on human rights to develop effective global and regional adaptation strategies, including supporting research, sharing knowledge and best practices, and developing innovative solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change;
5. Introducing integrated national climate change policies and action plans, taking into account the protection of human rights, especially focusing on vulnerable groups, which implies developing integrated approaches that simultaneously address climate challenges and promote human rights, including access to clean water, food, health and a safe environment;
6. Developing educational programmes and information campaigns aimed at increasing public awareness of the connection between climate change and human rights, to promote environmental responsibility and enhance civic participation, including information on ways everyone can individually and collectively contribute to protecting the environment and promoting compliance human rights, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable groups;
7. Establishing and strengthening mechanisms to ensure access to justice for victims of climate change-related human rights violations, including specialized support mechanisms and programmes, in particular by providing not only legal aid, but also by developing procedures to effectively address and resolve claims related to environmental and climate change violations;

8. Increasing funding to support research and projects to study the impact of climate change on human rights and to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies, especially in the most vulnerable regions;

9. Ensuring that climate change measures are designed and implemented in ways that reduce inequalities and enhance human rights, especially for vulnerable groups;

10. Developing and implementing mechanisms that guarantee the active participation of marginalised groups in climate-related decision-making by creating platforms for dialogue where their views and suggestions can be expressed, and ensuring that these views are taken into account in the design and implementation of climate action;

11. Introducing approaches that combine the protection of human rights with sustainable development goals, with a particular focus on access to clean water, food, health and a safe environment requiring intersectoral cooperation and coordination between different levels of government and community organisations;

12. Encouraging the development and application of clean technologies and sustainable agricultural and production practices that take into account the rights and well-being of all groups, with a focus on supporting innovation and providing incentives for businesses and individuals to adopt clean and energy-efficient technologies and resource management practices that reduce their environmental footprint;

13. Expanding the meaningful participation of children and youth in climate-related processes, including through the **“Empowering Climate Action”** dialogue, participation in the Youth Delegate Programme of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and exploring opportunities to support the priorities of the **Youth Climate Movement (YOUNGO)**.

14. Instituting various accountability and oversight mechanisms that ensure states and other stakeholders adhere to their human rights obligations during the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

15. Promoting international cooperation and solidarity in combating climate change to ensure global efforts respect and protect human rights and contribute to reducing inequalities.

We highlight the following priority areas of action that will contribute to the realization of our shared mission and vision for a sustainable future,

1. Establishing an international working group on climate change and human rights to coordinate efforts, share best practices and monitor progress in implementing international commitments, including the development of a **draft resolution of the United Nations General Assembly “Protection of Human Rights while combating the adverse effects of climate change in Central Asia”**;

2. Developing and adopting an international legal instrument specifically dedicated to protecting human rights in the context of climate change, providing legally binding standards for countries;

3. Integrating the principle of **“do no harm”** into all climate change-related policies and programmes to prevent possible negative impacts on human rights;

4. Encouraging the private sector to implement sustainable practices and standards of corporate responsibility aimed at reducing climate impact and improving human rights protection;

5. Developing international standards to assess the impact of climate change on human rights, which includes the creation of progressive methodologies and tools that can adequately reflect the complex impact of climate change on people's lives, their health, living conditions and access to basic resources, such like clean water and food;

6. Incorporating comprehensive human rights impact assessments into all climate projects and programs, based on principles of transparency, inclusiveness and equity, ensuring that climate action not only reduces carbon emissions and improves environmental sustainability, but also actively protects and promotes human rights;

7. Organising information and education campaigns, as well as developing and implementing strategically planned communication initiatives aimed at informing the public about the importance of certain issues, including the need for action in response to global challenges such as climate change, human rights protection, sustainable development and others;

8. Stimulating the transition to a green economy through comprehensive measures and intensifying investment flows into sectors contributing to sustainable development, including financing renewable energy projects, improving energy efficiency and introducing sustainable technologies aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels, minimising harmful emissions into the atmosphere and promoting cleaner production;

9. Developing support programs for small and medium-sized businesses aimed at introducing environmentally sustainable practices and creating green jobs;

10. Introducing strict liability measures for companies and organizations whose actions harm the climate and environment;

11. Establishing specialized international body that will consider cases related to violations of climate commitments by countries and corporations that have a significant negative impact on climate and human rights;

12. Developing and implementing a global CO2 emissions tax mechanism for companies and countries, with proceeds used to fund climate adaptation and human rights protection projects in the most vulnerable regions;

13. Investing in the creation of smart cities and settlements equipped with technologies to minimize environmental impact, ensure climate change resilience and improve the quality of life of the population

14. Developing international educational programs aimed at raising awareness of climate change, its impact on human rights and ways of acting at the individual and collective levels;

15. Developing and implementing an international digital labelling system for goods and services that will allow consumers to see the carbon footprint of products, encouraging producers to reduce emissions and consumers to make more sustainable choices;

16. Creating a global support program for people forced to leave their homes due to climate change, including the provision of new housing, educational, and employment opportunities in host communities;

We, the participants of the IV Samarkand Forum dedicated to strengthening the protection and promotion of human rights in the context of global climate change, recognizing the commitments of states and the role of civil society, regional and international organizations, hereby transmit the recommendations of the IV Samarkand Human Rights Forum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other international organizations.