

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATES ON STEPS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

## AT THE 24<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2 TO 14 DECEMBER 2018

On Monday 10 December 2018, the world will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1948, this historic moment signalled the beginning of a new era founded on respect for human dignity and the belief that all people worldwide should be able to exercise their rights in full equality.

Seventy years afterwards, the increasing impacts of climate change are undermining these values. Preserving the vision of a shared future where all people can live in peace and dignity now requires decisive action by all governments. To remain true to their commitment to protect human rights for all, governments must urgently tackle the disastrous impacts of the fossil fuel industry on our planet; protect those speaking up for the rights of their communities and for their supporting ecosystems; promote gender equality; provide adequate support to vulnerable countries and impacted communities; and guarantee that projects implemented in the name of climate action do not reinforce existing abuses or create new ones.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATES ON STEPS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AT COP-24

While the majority of these actions require resolute domestic action, governments can reaffirm in Katowice their commitment to upholding their human rights obligations by taking the following steps:

- **COP-24 must endorse the need for more ambitious mitigation commitments.** Less than two months ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C provided a sobering assessment of the risks associated with any additional amount of warming. In addition, throughout 2018 states parties have been engaged in the so-called Talanoa Dialogue with the aim of collectively assess progress made on climate mitigation so far and increasing commitments to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. In light of the IPCC's findings and of the outcomes of the Talanoa Dialogue, the Parties must express unequivocally their willingness for more ambitious mitigation actions through a COP decision.
- **Parties must adopt a comprehensive and robust set of implementation guidelines** to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Agreement will only contribute to mitigating the most dangerous impacts of climate change if the modalities for its implementation enable governments and other relevant stakeholders to fully use all of the avenues for action highlighted in the Agreement and to avoid any loopholes.
- **The modalities must reflect the full vision of the Paris Agreement**, i.e. human rights-consistent, participatory and gender responsive climate actions that contribute to just transitions and food security and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. When finalising the guidelines related to the communication of future Nationally Determined Contributions, the scope of national reporting or the modalities of the mechanisms spelled out in Article 6, states should ensure that this vision is adequately reflected by providing guarantees that people's human rights are realised in domestic climate

action and that no climate action is implemented at the expense of local communities. It is critical that the Paris Agreement does not reinvent the wheel and its rulebook should be applied in conformity with the existing legal commitments states have already made under international human rights law.

- **Support the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration** drafted by the COP-24 Presidency with the support of trade unions and ensure its principles are adequately reflected in other relevant outcomes of the COP-24. This Declaration reaffirms the commitment made in Paris to ensure that the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce are taken into account - including the importance of participatory and representative social dialogue.
- **Finalise the operationalisation of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform** in order to ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and their traditional knowledge informs the implementation of climate policies. This operationalization must ensure the platform can adequately deliver on all of three functions and should respect the principles put forward by Indigenous Peoples and accepted by Parties at the COP-23.
- **Stress Poland's obligation to respect the right to freedom of assembly and expression, as well as the right to privacy** of all participants to the COP-24, civil society organizations and members of the public concerned by the decisions taken at COP-24. This is all the more important as five United Nations Special Rapporteurs expressed concerns about the Polish law that restricts the rights of civil society activists to protest at COP-24 and subjects them to government surveillance. Climate policy making can only be effective when civil society and NGOs participate fully - the principles of transparency and participation are cornerstones of every country's human rights obligations.

**The former High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson has warned that climate change is the greatest threat to human rights in the 21st century. By adopting robust and ambitious decisions in Katowice, governments can demonstrate their full commitment to placing the rights of individuals and communities at the centre of their responses to this urgent issue.**