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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Anglican Consultative Council, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[23 May 2022]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



## **The Adverse Impact of Climate Change On The Full And Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights by Three Particular Groups: Indigenous Peoples, Young People And Women.**

The Anglican Consultative Council facilitates the co-operative work of the 42 independent-yet-interdependent autonomous churches of the Anglican Communion. The organisation, in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, is represented by a permanent representative who works with the Instruments of Communion of the Anglican Communion – the Council, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting, and the Archbishop of Canterbury – to represent the concerns of the member churches through the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations.

The Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations welcomes the opportunity to submit a statement ahead of the Panel Discussion at the 50th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by people in vulnerable situations, and best practices and lessons learned in the promotion and protection of the rights of people in vulnerable situations.

As a global body with a shared identity that transcends national borders, the Anglican Communion has a distinctive perspective on this issue. Member churches of the Anglican Communion are involved in every part of the story of the climate crisis. Anglicans face devastation in disaster-stricken communities, but are also the polluters in wealthy countries. We are living in poverty and on the margins, including Indigenous peoples, but also wield power and political influence. We are investors with financial capital, first-responders to disasters and those who accompany communities on the journey of recovery. Anglicans contribute to the problem and to the solution. As a global community, Anglicans connect with one another, share experiences and can leverage their networks and shared identity to mobilise for action.

This statement focuses on the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by three particular groups: Indigenous Peoples, young people and women. It sets out key concerns for each of these groups, and shares lessons learned and recommendations to promote and protect the rights of people in vulnerable situations.

Evidence from across the Anglican Communion establishes the significance and necessity of lifting up Indigenous communities, whose way of life and very survival are threatened by the climate emergency; young people, facing the fallout of decisions made by past generations; and women, who are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change across all population groups. As such, we wish to emphasize the following:

- Indigenous communities are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Their deep-rooted connection to land and natural resources means that climate change threatens their very culture and way of life. Indigenous territories and livelihoods are threatened by extractive industries that contribute to climate change, including mining and intensive farming (including through deforestation). In some cases, threats are posed by measures considered as climate mitigation strategies, such as hydroelectric power or biofuel production. Formally recognising and securing the customary lands of Indigenous peoples is critical to a just climate response. Principles of free, prior and informed consent must also be upheld.
- Indigenous perspectives on the climate emergency and stewardship of natural resources offer both practical and spiritual responses. Indigenous peoples are holders of local knowledge on the sustainable management of lands, forests, and earth's abundance and emphasise connection and relationship with the natural world. While Indigenous voices are increasingly being recognised in climate discussions, their ability to participate meaningfully in and influence decision-making remains limited. To protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, they must be actively included in decision-making spaces and inform all responses to climate change.
- Every missed opportunity for climate action affects the rights, well-being and opportunities of young people. The failure of those in positions of power and authority to address the crisis with adequate resources and sufficient urgency has motivated

young people to mobilise globally for climate action on a scale not seen on any other policy issue.

- The impact of climate change on young people is not confined to the physical impacts of a changing climate on the world. Research suggests that ‘climate anxiety’ and ‘climate grief’ experienced among young people require specific mental health support.
- Young people are seeing the effects of inaction on a daily basis; therefore, if genuine solutions to the climate crisis are to be achieved, the voices, experiences and ambitions of young people must be at the heart of the climate decision-making process.
- Climate change impacts women disproportionately. Women are 14 times more likely to die in disasters than men. The rapid advancement of climate change has increased the pre-existing vulnerabilities of women, especially Indigenous women, women of colour and women living in poverty. It has impacted all areas of life including access to stable housing, healthcare, education, sustainable livelihoods, safety and security.
- Women and girls are increasingly relied on for a greater share of household income despite facing higher rates of job insecurity and lower wages. COVID-19 has further exacerbated the situation and increased women’s vulnerabilities: women are at a heightened risk of poverty, discrimination, and violence such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, rape, sexual harassment, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.
- In rural areas, women face a greater risk of food insecurity than men as they are highly dependent on local ecosystems that are vulnerable to climate-related impacts and experience unequal land ownership rights. The impact of climate change on sectors dominated by women, such as rain-fed agriculture, disproportionately affects their livelihoods and security while men have greater access to technology and capital that enhances their resilience.
- Deaths from climate change-related disasters are higher for women. In countries heavily impacted by climate-related weather changes, and where agriculture is a common source of income, thousands of women are pushed below the poverty line each year, leading them to resort to other means of subsistence which are less stable and may further compromise their safety.
- Churches across the Anglican Communion have long been engaged in creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs, including through organic food markets and brick building classes. Anglican churches are supporting women to create new means of income for the whole community. Tackling gender inequality in the face of climate volatility requires a comprehensive approach that acknowledges the economic disempowerment of women and includes women and their concerns in the solutions.

Given the concerns and responses set out above, we make the following recommendations to Member States, United Nations agencies, and civil society:

- Faith actors are important partners for peoples living in vulnerable situations. Governments, multilateral organisations, financial institutions and private sector business should recognise the strategic importance of faith actors and include them as key partners in local, regional and global planning in disaster preparedness, response, other adaptation and mitigation activities, and disbursing funds to the most vulnerable.
- Resilience building is a vital tool to tackle vulnerability. Resilience planning must include comprehensive, multi-sector interventions and responses supported by adaptive and flexible funding and designed with the active participation of local and affected communities, particularly Indigenous peoples, women, and youth.
- Protecting women’s rights supports climate action. Ensure that all environmental and climate-related interventions are gender transformative by applying a gender lens to all responses, policy design and programmes, ensuring full inclusion and participation of women and girls of all ages, and addressing the specific risks associated with sexual and gender-based violence.

- Implementing key policies supports Indigenous rights. Act on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's call to strengthen land tenure policies, especially for Indigenous communities, including recognition of customary tenure, community mapping, redistribution, decentralisation, and co-management, which can provide both security and flexibility in the response to climate change.
  - Investment at the local level protects rights. Investment in localised capacity-building through just financing practices and the inclusion of local practitioners in policy and other decision-making spaces is key to an effective global response to climate disasters and resilience building.
  - Promises must be fulfilled. Governments, especially those in the Global North, must fulfil their financial commitments on climate finance, scale up development assistance to support mitigation and adaptation initiatives, go beyond dialogue to action on Loss & Damage financing, encourage financial institutions to provide grants, rather than loans, and consider broad-based debt relief for financially overburdened countries.
  - Solidarity is a key principle for implementing rights-based policy. Technology transfers and sharing of information across countries should be expediently facilitated to support resilience building measures, especially in climate-vulnerable countries.
  - Environmentally-induced displacement has created new vulnerabilities that must be addressed. Climate change is an existential threats to peace and security, human rights, economic prosperity and cultural and ecological preservation. Resolving the uncertain status of people displaced by short- and long-term environmental events under international law is an urgent task for Member States. Mitigating the repercussions of environmentally-induced displacement, including loss of culture, history, sovereignty and identity, must also be prioritized. In addressing displacement, voices of local and marginalized communities must be prioritized, to understand how best to respond to specific needs.
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