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

Written statement* submitted by Elizka Relief Foundation, 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.

[4 February 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Climate Change and The Right to Housing In Africa

Preamble

Disasters caused by climate change have multiple impacts on the right to housing. These disasters lead to the collapse or damage of residential buildings, thus exacerbating the migration crisis or the mass displacement of thousands of people. The rate of climate change-related displacement has exceeded that of other displacements linked to armed conflict (1), according to an expert on climate change and human rights. By 2050, there will be 1.5 billion refugees due to climate change. The right to housing in Africa is affected by climate change, and this continent is the most affected even though it contributes a small amount to total greenhouse emissions. Addressing the climate change repercussions on the right to housing requires integrated efforts among all stakeholders, including civil society organizations. The states were to fulfill their commitments at successive climate summits, the latest of which was the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).

First: Repercussions of climate change on the right to housing

The right to adequate housing is one of the basic human rights, and it was mentioned in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the first paragraph of Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights(2). However, the realization of this right faces almost daily challenges, one of which is the disasters caused by climate change(3). Africa, although only contributing less than 3% to global greenhouse gas emissions, it is the worst affected by climate change. This affects the right to adequate housing in Africa, where climate change is accompanied by a set of phenomena affecting the infrastructure, residential buildings and the general population, especially in unplanned and slum areas.

At the forefront of these phenomena is floods, where extreme weather caused by global warming leads to floods and forest fires. It affects most countries on the African continent. For example, in the Sudan, forest fires and floods in 2022 led to hundreds of families losing their homes, and thousands of other homes collapsed, reaching about 18,000 homes that were completely damaged. While more than 25,000 homes were partially damaged, according to the National Council for Civil Defense, infrastructure was deteriorating. Others died in the Kassala state and the Blue Nile in particular; these losses are not accompanied by a declaration of compensation. Elizka Relief Foundation has noticed that the compensation is a relief aid (4).

In South Sudan, entire villages in Duma, Ulang District, were isolated in October 2022. These villages are preparing for the flood season by building small dams, but these preparations were not enough in 2022. The floods resulted in the collapse of main roads, so relief and humanitarian organizations couldn't access those affected(5). The humanitarian aid provided in the aftermath of floods and torrents addresses only some of the symptoms and does not address the root causes of climate change. It included the possibility of mobilizing financing and adopting a human rights-based approach to dealing with these disasters. The United Nations Conference of the States Parties "COP 27", in Sharm El-Sheikh, urged member states to establish a fund for losses and damages to address the repercussions of climate change in vulnerable developing countries. Progress toward establishing the fund is still slow, and the fund's financiers' and beneficiaries' identification is still unknown. International assistance to countries exposed to the risks of climate change contributes to mitigating the consequences of climate change, but this assistance is not sufficient so far. The amount of \$100 billion under the Paris Agreement and the Loss and Damage Fund establishment was not committed(6).

Second: Repercussions of climate change on unplanned cities

Unplanned cities and slums are affected by the phenomena associated with climate change as floods, desertification, and precipitation. On the continent of Africa, 56% of the African population lives in random and unplanned housing, in cities without clean drinking water, and most of its inhabitants are informal workers; 65% of total employment in Africa is in the informal sector(7). In April 2022, at least 448 people were killed, and thousands of homes were destroyed in the Durban region of South Africa. Residential buildings within poor communities are affected by fluctuations in internal temperatures compared to residential buildings in urban societies(8). However, even urban areas, planned cities, and government buildings in Africa have been affected by climate change due to the lack of infrastructure prepared to deal with these floods and the inability of utility and service systems to counter this phenomenon.

Third: Role of civil society in adapting to climate change

Civil society is an essential partner in facing crises. In emergencies caused by climate change, civil society organizations in Africa take measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Elizka noticed some good initiatives of these organizations in Africa. In Kenya, the Green Climate Fund worked to reduce the repercussions of global warming emissions. The fund was designed in cooperation with strategic local organizations to finance any action plan to confront climate change (9).

In this context, initiatives to monitor good practices can support the rest of African countries in sharing experiences on adapting to climate change. In Mauritania, the "Tanmia" organization, a non-governmental organization, led a capacity-building program on adapting to climate change, a program aimed at supporting 14 developing countries in their efforts to integrate environmental dimensions into development processes, especially the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and was funded by three million dollars from the Federation European (10) in Zimbabwe. Civil society organizations have led pressure and advocacy campaigns on the private sector, especially the industrial sector, to adopt sustainable policies, raise awareness and generalize climate change issues in manufacturing operations (11).

The Center for Nationally Determined Contributions was also established. It is a collaborative platform for foundations and NGOs funded by the African Development Bank to benefit from good practices to support African countries in delivering their Nationally Determined Contributions faster and more efficiently under the UNFCCC. Therefore, civil society organizations must be actors in adapting to climate change. National action plans must include specific roles that civil society plays alongside governments to mitigate the consequences of climate change.

Recommendations:

- African countries should adopt a human rights-based approach in dealing with climate change effects and allocating compensation for climate-affected populations.
- Developed countries should fulfill their commitments, especially financial ones, towards African countries vulnerable to the dangers of climate change.
- Accelerating the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund resulting from the COP-27 Final Act.
- Expanding the sustainable cities establishment to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects.
- Doubling foreign direct investment in building cities on the African continent.
- Adopting a participatory approach, and stipulate specific roles for civil society in the National Action Plans for Adaptation to Climate Change.

- 1) “Intolerable tide” of people displaced by climate change: UN expert
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/intolerable-tide-people-displaced-climate-change-un-expert>
- 2) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, <https://bit.ly/3HbCUB7>
- 3) Africa Cannot Confront Climate Change Alone, <https://bit.ly/3XYqvan>
- 4) Catastrophic floods cause mass displacement and humanitarian crisis, <https://bit.ly/3R5NiPz>
- 5) COP27 climate change conference: Outcomes, <https://bit.ly/3DlvBpl>
- 6) Africa’s informal cities need more than green infrastructure to weather the effects of climate change, <https://brook.gs/3JhQ81O>
- 7) Housing Crisis Propels High Death Toll in South Africa Floods, <https://nyti.ms/3JzVLJ9>
- 8) Cholera outbreak investigation report in Mille woreda, Afar region, Ethiopia, 2019,
<https://medcraveonline.com/MOJWH/MOJWH-11-00307.pdf>
- 9) Civil Society Organizations and Climate Mitigation in East Africa. A Case Study of Kenya,
<https://bit.ly/3kKrDQN>
- 10) Page 138, <https://www.iiied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/2021-01/10032IIED.pdf>
- 11) Ibid, Page 146