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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 International Action for Peace & Sustainable Development, 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.

[20 May 2022]

* 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.



Impacts on Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change

All human beings depend on the environment in which we live. A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation.

Without a healthy environment, we are unable to fulfil our aspirations. We may not have access to even the minimum standards of human dignity.

The significance of climate action (goal 13) in the context of disputed region of Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir is important. Climate change among others is one of the greatest threats to human rights in Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir including rights to life, provision of safe drinking water, food and an adequate standard of living of individuals and communities.

The entire edifice of sustainable development is built around inclusive societies, with justice, accountability and collaboration. This also necessitates the significance of civil society and communities living with protection of human rights.

Climate change has come up as the key challenge to the people of Indian Administered Kashmir due to massive military deployment, climate hostile activities, deforestation and use of massive artillery risking human security, environmental and personal wellbeing diminishing the prospects for peace and justice for Kashmiris.

The 2014 floods the most severe disaster in the past 60 years brought significant damage to the lives of the residents of the Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir. At least 1.2 million people were directly affected, and approximately 300 people died or remain missing due to this flooding. The devastating impact was felt on other side of Line of Control (LoC)

Socio-political factors have strong bearing on Environmental security and it becomes more significant in the societies confronted with conflicts. This is also linked with human rights, general securities which can help people to prevent instead of react in case of these environmental tragedies. The proven history of human rights violations in Indian Administered Kashmir, gender harassment and state sponsored repression on Kashmiris have diminished even the slightest chance of their participation towards improving environmental security. The state's interventions and excesses in Indian Administered Kashmir where people and especially female gender fell prey to it created huge void to create a shared response to counter climate change. Deforestation as normal practice in Kashmir largely done under the patronage of forces, building military installations on forest lands, using heavy weaponry and presence of around million forces in a small portion of land made the region vulnerable to worst kind of natural and man-made disasters. The repressive and draconian laws, enforced regimes and repression further exacerbate climatic situation since the process of accountability and civil society oversight does not exist.

Kashmir Himalayas a complex terrain, massive glaciers are warming air temperatures and vulnerabilities of highland ecosystems and biodiversity. Kashmir Himalayas as a hotspot for climate change risks. The natural disaster stemming from climate change which is largely due to presence of heaviest military deployment and their environmental non friendly activities is posing greater risks to communities where they are stuck in protracted conflict and are deprived from political and social space to paly constructive role. In Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir the deeper conflict and state repression has a direct link with the outcomes of climate change. It could not gain significance as the security apparatus dominates the landscape and entire politics of New Delhi revolves around suppression and seizing political economic and social spaces for Kashmiris thus crippling their lives to play any meaningful role. There is a direct bearing of climate change on the economics of local people making them more vulnerable through direct or structural violence. One cannot ignore the gender dimension of it since both SDGS and UNSC resolution on women, peace and security offers great support for female gender to take role in society and climate change could be one; but state strict control on basic rights including freedom of movement, association, and networking has incapacitated the women to realize their potential to mitigate, or manage impact of climate change in their lives. Indian security force targeted women with

impunity as women have fear of getting raped and molested by Indian forces having blanket impunity thus making them immobile to play any role.

Though international frameworks encourage female genders to take more leading role and in case of environmental security to build their capacity to preempt and prevent the disasters; but a broader political question of rights has strong bearing on the climate change response as well. In Indian administered Kashmir the state is in clear violation by carrying out frequent crackdowns on the internet, phone services, prolonged lockdowns, army and police checkpoints, surveillance, harassment, blockades, illegal detentions, to paralyse society to take any meaningful step on climate change. The politics is divided, and the political system was made dysfunctional which left society divided and polarized. This weekend societal capacity to generate response as no one was able to take ownership of climatic disasters like floods. A long term response mechanism require cohesion in society, and functioning institute with public ownership but the situation in Indian Administered Kashmir is precarious to achieve any development goal. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2019 raises serious concerns about abuses by state security forces in Indian Administered Kashmir. Many international organizations including Human Rights Watch already demanded India to rescind its unaccountable special powers act which is biggest security threat to Kashmiris as Indian army resorted to pelleting, molesting and killing the innocent people creating worst security crises. The laws like Armed Forces Special Power Act “empower officers” to “fire” or use “force” as a measure of self-defense or “maintenance of public order which was blatantly used by Indian forces. Such worsening security can never enable any society to work towards response to climate change. The element of justice is severally compromised when security forces have effective immunity from prosecution for serious human rights abuses and power to arrest, shoot to kill, and occupy or destroy property. The effective element of justice is paralyzed and made dysfunctional due to structural flaws of governance by Indian state. The capacity to response was further diluted by Indian authorities by introducing new citizenship laws allowing outsiders to buy land in Indian Administered Kashmir and marginalized local communities. Post August 5th, when India abrogated status of Kashmir and enforced communications blackout, imposition of shoot-at-sight curfews, and severing of all transport links, this was also a direct assault on economy of Kashmir where people were forced to stay at homes for more than a year which crippled them economically. These were to coerce people to submission. Not only this, sustained conflict, removing landholding protections, and other measures are blatant violations of laws that risk not only human security but also environmental security sine it requires functional institutions and stable society to ensure social accountability, public participation, and responsiveness. Armed with special and inhuman laws it is an open secret that the Indian government is not only a major obstacle in achieving any progress towards climate change but also its design to coerce, capture, and criminalize dissent will be detrimental to the environmental security of Indian Administered Kashmir and region at large.
