**Mitigating climate change without leaving behind human rights: a challenge for the new Sustainable Development Mechanism of the Paris Agreement**

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**Abstract for oral presentation (Topic: 1)**

Climate change is undoubtedly one of the greatest human rights challenges of the 21st century. The negative impacts of climate change affect millions of people worldwide and undermine the full enjoyment of a vast range of human rights, including the rights to life, food, health, water and sanitation, self-determination, development and housing. However, human rights violations and climate injustices do not only arise by the direct or indirect effects of climate change; they can also emerge from actions to tackle climate change.

In the light of the new era of climate action under the Paris Agreement (PA) and the rights and justice issues raised by climate change-related policies and measures, this paper argues for the necessity to operationalise the rights language included in the new treaty by introducing a strong human rights component within the Sustainable Development Mechanism (SDM) of the PA. Established in article 6.4, the SDM is essentially a new mitigation mechanism available to all Parties aimed at helping them to meet and increase their mitigation actions, while fostering sustainable development. Looking back at the experience of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, which bears great resemblance to the SDM, as well as the human rights concerns raised during its implementation, this paper provides theoretical and factual arguments for the integration of human rights safeguards into the SDM and its governing rules in order to avoid negative outcomes and human rights harms when implemented. Thus, in addition to promoting climate change mitigation and sustainable development, the rules, modalities and procedures of the SDM should strengthen substantive and procedural human rights protection with a view to preventing the exacerbation of climate injustices. By adopting such rules, consistent with international human rights, Parties have the opportunity to move forward and to demonstrate that they have learned from past experiences and are seriously committed to addressing climate change, while ensuring respect for human rights.

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