



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention

Agenda item 5: Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

July 2024

Check against delivery

Thank you, Chair. I speak on behalf of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Under international human rights law, States have legally binding obligations relative to climate action which should guide and inform their decision-making.

Recent IPCC reports found there is still a narrow pathway to 1.5 without reliance on new, unproven and in some cases undeveloped technologies which there is no evidence can be safely or affordably scaled.

Geoengineering does not address the root causes of climate change and risks distracting from the human rights imperative of taking urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions NOW in order to avoid a situation in which climate engineering has to be deployed to limit heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

OHCHR is concerned that pinning humanity's hopes on untested and potentially harmful technologies, without a governance framework to regulate them, is not a viable option and carries with it unacceptable risks and continued inaction to reduce emissions and phase out fossil fuels.

It presents a dangerous distraction from emissions reductions and quite notably are regularly advanced by the fossil fuel industry to justify continued exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels.

We must pursue the path best aligned with human rights, including the "right to science" (i.e. the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications) and in lined with the precautionary principle. At this time, efforts which could legitimize potential deployment of climate altering technologies are inconsistent with such a path.

As put forward in report of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council, "relying on pre-emptive and emergency rhetoric without the backing of scientific certainty and in the absence of an appropriate international governance framework to deter and sanction inappropriate action will most probably lead to counterproductive results".

Further and in the event that there is no choice but to deploy such technologies in the future, the international community must then develop a rights-based climate engineering governance framework that facilitates inclusive dialogue, transparent processes,

accountability and active participation of all persons in decision-making processes related to potential climate engineering.

This should include:

- o Ex ante human rights and environmental impact assessments before climate altering technologies are deployed and continuous monitoring and evaluation thereafter.
- o A clear understanding of the human rights obligations of duty-bearers, including the obligation of States and private sector actors to exercise human rights due diligence.
- o Inclusive monitoring and grievance mechanisms to track human rights impacts and ensure access to remedies.

Thank you.