



## **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. Distinguished delegates, I speak on behalf of the UN human rights office.

States have fundamental obligations to mitigate climate change through non-market mechanisms, prioritizing strategies that directly address the root causes of emissions and promote sustainable development.

However, we witness the increasing proliferation of market-based mechanisms for climate change mitigation which has led to significant human rights risks and violations, including land grabbing and displacement, with adverse impacts on human rights, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Access to information is a cornerstone of effective rights-based environmental action. Unfortunately, in many carbon market projects, transparency remains a significant challenge. The Aarhus Convention underscores the right of everyone to receive environmental information held by public authorities and to participate in environmental decision-making. States should ensure this principle extends to carbon markets. Robust mechanisms must be established to ensure that all rights-holders, including Indigenous Peoples, as well as local communities, have access to relevant, timely and accessible information about carbon projects affecting their lands and livelihoods. This includes access to information on project developers, certification and regulatory bodies, beneficial ownership information about corporate actors involved, all contracts and agreements, and scientific and financial models and projections, as well as intermediaries and all related transactions.

Carbon market mechanisms must incorporate clear, mandatory rules for stakeholder consultations. These consultations should occur throughout the lifecycle of a project, starting from the design phase, and should be free from intimidation and coercion. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish independent, accessible grievance mechanisms that allow affected communities to seek redress.

While UNFCCC is working towards finalizing a framework for carbon crediting, it is essential to ensure that these activities integrate human rights principles into all aspects of carbon markets. This includes ensuring that human rights safeguards are in place, including the rights to access to information, participation and access to justice, rights that are also protected under the Aarhus Convention, as well as recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and guaranteeing gender equality.