**47th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Panel discussion on the human rights of older persons   
in the context of climate change**

*Concept note (as of 29 June 2021)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **Wednesday, 30 June 2021, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva and online platform (Zoom)**  *(will be broadcast live and archived at* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org/)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | This panel discussion will focus on the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by older persons and best practices and lessons learned in the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.  The objectives are:   * **To enhance understanding** of the impacts of climate change on the rights of older persons; * **To highlight the benefits** of age-inclusive climate action; * **To identify good practices and share lessons learned** in the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in the context of the adverse impacts of climate change; * **To identify opportunities** for collaboration and action by States, including through international cooperation, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to implement an age-inclusive approach to climate action that benefits both people and planet. |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan**,President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statements:** | **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  **Ms. Mami Mizutori**,Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Claudia Mahler**,Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons *(video message)* * **Mr. Saleemul Huq**,Director of theInternational Centre for Climate Change and Development *(video message)* * **Ms. Katharina Rall**, Senior Environment Researcher, Human Rights Watch *(remote participation)* * **Mr. Handaine Mohamed**, Expert on issues of climate change and indigenous peoples in Africa *(remote participation)* |
| **Outcome:** | The panel discussion will provide an opportunity for States, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the adverse impacts of climate change on the effective enjoyment of the rights of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights through age-inclusive climate action. The anticipated outcomes of this discussion include:   * **Improved understanding** of the impacts of climate change on the rights of older persons, including good practices in the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in the context of the adverse impacts of climate change; * The **identification of strategies and lessons learned** with respect to the participation of older persons in climate action; * The **identification of opportunities** for international cooperation with respect to mitigation and adaptation actions to combat climate change which would help promote and protect the rights of older persons; * **Recommendations** foran age-inclusive approach to climate action at all levels of governance; * A **summary report** of the panel discussion to the Human Rights Council. |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution [44/7](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/44/7) on human rights and climate change, the Human Rights Council decided to incorporate into its programme of work for the 47th session a panel discussion on the rights of older persons in the context of climate change. The Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to submit a summary report of the panel discussion to the Council at its 49th session and to make the report available in accessible formats, including Plain Language and Easy-to-Read. |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. After the opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists, there will be two segments of interventions, followed by conclusions from the panellists.  A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover the opening statement, panellists’ presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Accessibility:** | In an effort to render the Human Rights Council more accessible to persons with disabilities and to promote their full participation in the work of the Council on an equal basis with others, this panel discussion will be made accessible to persons with disabilities. International sign interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided and webcast during the debate. Participants can access live English captioning on the website<https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=CFI-UNOG> during the event itself. The accessibility guide to the Human Rights Council for persons with disabilities is available for further information (available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Accessibility.aspx>). |
| **Background:** | Around the world, climate change is already causing rising temperatures, sea level rise, coastal erosion, glacial melt, the increasing frequency and intensity of forest fires, and extreme temperature and weather events including heatwaves, cold snaps, floods, droughts and hurricanes. Such events carry significant and often devastating human rights risks for all those affected, but older persons face disproportionate impacts on the effective enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. Older persons, and particularly the poor and marginalized among them, are also among those worst impacted by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Crises such as COVID-19 amplify the negative effects of climate change on older persons, including through impacts on access to food and land, water and sanitation, housing, livelihoods, decent work, healthcare and other basic necessities. The COVID-19 response must promote a sustainable recovery that addresses these impacts and leaves no one behind, including older persons.  By 2050, it is estimated that there will be 1.5 billion people aged 65 and above, constituting one sixth of the world’s population. Age does not in itself make individuals more vulnerable to climate risks, but age is accompanied by a number of physical, political, economic and social factors that may do so. Older persons face a number of challenges in the enjoyment of their human rights, as has been evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic.  The risks to human rights posed by climate change have been documented by the Human Rights Council, its special procedures mechanisms and OHCHR in resolutions, various reports and activities. The disproportionate harms that may be experienced by older persons are also increasingly recognized. Most recently, the Council acknowledged, in its resolution 44/7, the need to support the resilience and adaptive capacities of older persons to respond to climate change. The Council further highlighted the importance of international cooperation and assistance to address the adverse impacts of climate change, particularly on older persons. It called upon States to better promote the access of older persons to livelihoods, food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, social protection, health-care services and medicines, education and training, adequate housing and decent work, clean energy, science and technology and ensure services for older persons can be adapted to emergency and humanitarian contexts.  Several human rights instruments contain provisions relevant to the rights of older persons affected by climate change, including the International Bill of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. While specific reference to older persons is absent from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and other global climate (including climate finance) frameworks, certain international legal and policy frameworks relevant to climate change do include specific provisions for older persons, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.  An age-inclusive approach to climate change entails climate action that is inclusive of and accountable to older persons at all stages and addresses the negative effects that climate change has on their human rights. Taking into account the requirements of older persons is critical for effective climate action and to prevent climate change from exacerbating inequalities. The active, free and meaningful participation of older persons at all levels of decision-making and action will empower older persons as agents of change, prevent discrimination against them and make climate action more effective.  This panel discussion will be informed by the analytical study of OHCHR on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in the context of climate change ([A/HRC/47/46](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/46)). It presents an opportunity to develop a more profound understanding of the impacts of climate change on the rights of older persons and the power of older persons as agents of climate action and to identify opportunities to implement an age-inclusive approach to climate action in the context of the adverse impacts of climate change. |
| **Background documents:** | Human Rights Council resolutions on human rights and climate change:   * [Human Rights Council resolution 44/7](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/44/7) of 16 July 2020 * [Human Rights Council resolution 41/21](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/41/21) of 12 July 2019 * [Human Rights Council resolution 38/4](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/38/4) of 5 July 2018 * [Human Rights Council resolution 35/20](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/35/20) of 22 June 2017 * [Human Rights Council resolution 32/33](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/32/33) of 1 July 2016 * [Human Rights Council resolution 29/15](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/29/15) of 2 July 2015 * [Human Rights Council resolution 26/27](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/26/27) of 27 June 2014 * [Human Rights Council resolution 18/22](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/18/22) of 30 September 2011 * [Human Rights Council resolution 10/4](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/10/4) of 25 March 2009 * [Human Rights Council resolution 7/23](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/7/23) of 28 March 2008   OHCHR analytical study on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons in the context of climate change (2021): [A/HRC/47/46](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/46), [Easy-to-Read version](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session47/Documents/A_HRC_47_46_Easy_to_read.docx) in English and [Plain Language version](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/Plain-version-older-people-climate-change-study-2021-EN.docx) in English |