



Canadian
human rights
commission

Commission
canadienne des
droits de la personne

October 12, 2022

BY EMAIL

Mr. Rajagopal
UN Special Rapporteur Housing
srhousing@ohchr.org

Dear Mr. Rajagopal,

I am writing in response to your recent engagement on housing and climate change held on September 17, 2022. Although I was unable to participate, our colleague at the Canadian Human Rights Commission's Policy and International Division participated and noted that there may still be some opportunity for comment.

Climate change is having clear and dire impacts on the human right to adequate housing across Canada. Permafrost thaw, extreme heat and fires, flooding and other catastrophic weather events are having profound impacts on housing and people's ability to remain in their communities. For those living in remote communities, there are challenges in obtaining insurance due to lack of available fire services and other essential amenities. I am deeply concerned about the intersecting crises of climate change and inadequate housing, especially as it relates to disadvantaged groups. In Canada, low income, unhoused, and precariously housed Indigenous people, seniors, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and refugees, youth, and women and gender diverse people are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Whole communities were lost to fires in the interior of British Columbia in recent years and 619 people lost their lives in the 2021 heat dome, the majority being seniors.

My brief submission to you, is to please consider the following for your thematic report:

- Engage directly with First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments on the impacts that climate change is having on Indigenous people, especially those in northern and remote communities;
- Ensure the report recommendations align with inherent rights of Indigenous people as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People;
- Recommend that government duty bearers:
 - implement homeless prevention strategies, action plans and extreme weather protocols;
 - ensure that economically vulnerable individuals, businesses, and communities are made a priority for adaptation investments and for programs to ensure access to insurance and credit (taken from *Under*

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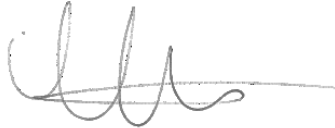
Water: The Costs of Climate Change for Canada's Infrastructure
<https://climateinstitute.ca/reports/under-water/>); and

- immediately adopt human rights-based frameworks for housing and climate policy decisions, including mobilizing all available resources to the most disadvantaged groups.

Thank you for considering these points. In May, I sent a letter of introduction and invitation to meet. I welcome a meeting early in 2023 if your schedule allows. I look forward to future discussions with you on approaches that my office can take to advance human rights-based solutions to housing and climate change as well as other topics outlined in the letter of introduction.

For future consultations, please send any invitations directly to our office. We can be reached at housing-logement@chrc-ccdp.gc.ca as we are an independent body within the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJ Houle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marie-Josée Houle
Federal Housing Advocate