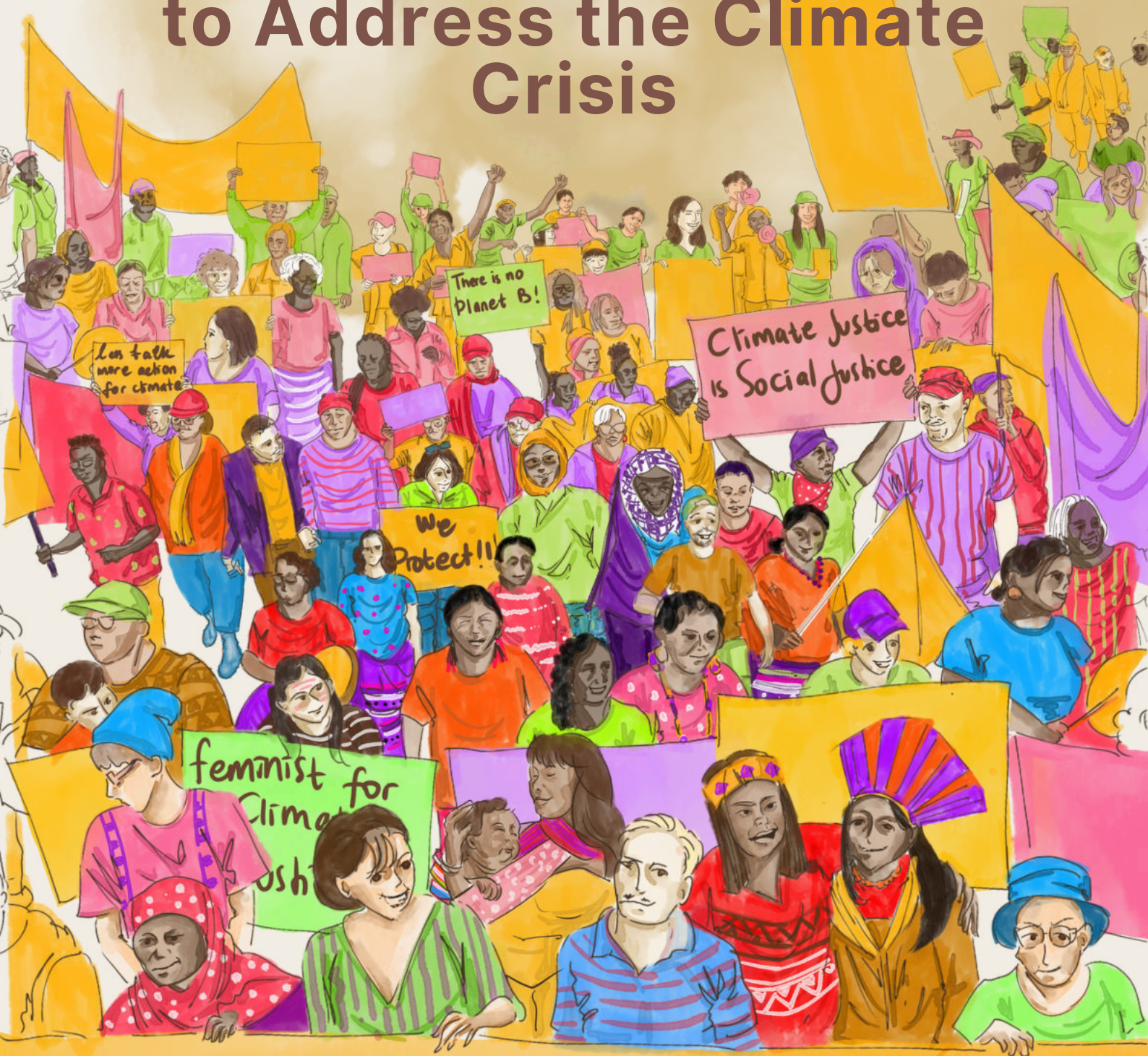


# The Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in a Pathway to Address the Climate Crisis



Environment and ESCR Working Group  
International Network for Economic, Social  
and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)



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International Network for Economic, Social and  
Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)  
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# THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT IN A PATHWAY TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The right to a healthy environment addresses the corresponding image of environmental injustice, a by-product of the era of unbridled economics in which the rich seek to continue increasing their wealth through neoliberal market-driven economic and development systems by exploiting communities, natural resources, and the ecosystem. Global recognition of the right to a healthy environment is a result of the collective struggle of the people to realize environmental justice grounded in human rights.”

- Hala Murad, Dibeem Association for Environmental Development, Jordan

## 1. Introduction

On 28 July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) formally recognized the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment,<sup>1</sup> often referred to as the right to a healthy environment). This landmark recognition was the result of decades of mobilization by civil society groups and progressive government representatives, and it was celebrated as a significant victory by both environmental and human rights activists. However, the true impact of this victory hinges on how the right is implemented, particularly against the backdrop of dominant extractive economic models that prioritize profit over people. This brief delves into the history of the right to a healthy environment, its significance to communities at the forefront of the climate crisis, core principles and obligations of States that must guide its implementation, and the collective demands that members of the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net) are advocating for at national, regional and international levels.

## 2. Global recognition: How did we get here and why is it important?

The UNGA resolution that recognized the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right was adopted with unprecedented support.<sup>2</sup> This resolution is part of a long history of legislative efforts linking human rights with environmental protection, following a pivotal recognition by the Human Rights Council in October 2021. Moreover, numerous countries have enacted laws featuring ambitious targets, timelines, and accountability mechanisms,<sup>3</sup> and have established over 1,000 specialized environmental courts and tribunals at national and subnational levels.<sup>4</sup>

The first international acknowledgment of the right to a healthy environment was articulated in the 1972 Declaration of the UN on the Human Environment. Its first principle declared that “*man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being.*”<sup>5</sup> This declaration set the stage for further environment and Development (1992), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (2018).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Paris Agreement, adopted in December 2015, which extends Article 4(f) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), emphasizes that actions for climate change adaptation and mitigation should minimize “*adverse effects on public health and on the quality of the environment.*” It asserts that “*parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on [...] the right to health.*”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 2022. Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Resolution 76/300. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/300>

<sup>2</sup>The resolution was passed by 161 votes in favor, none against, and eight abstentions.

<sup>3</sup>“In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Climate Change Act requires a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, through legally binding caps on emissions, carbon budgets and various programmes. Elements of the British law have been emulated by other States, such as Denmark, France, Mexico, Norway and Sweden. In Peru, the framework law on climate change (2018) mandates that climate change considerations be incorporated into public spending decisions at all levels of the Government.” A/HRC/43/53, p. 51

<sup>4</sup>UNGA. 2019. Right to a healthy environment: good practices. A/HRC/43/53, Art. 31

<sup>5</sup>Declaration of the UN Conference on the Human Environment, 1972. UN Doc. A/Conf.48/14/Rev.1.

<sup>6</sup>Redvers N, Celidwen Y., Cloud Q.Y., Jensen A., Githaiga, C (2023). “Indigenous solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises: A reflection on UNDRIP”. PLOS Global Public Health 3(6): e0002060. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.002060>

<sup>7</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). 2016. “The impact of climate change on the enjoyment of the right to health. OHCHR and climate change.” Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/climate-change/impact-climate-change-enjoyment-right-health>



Under international human rights law, the right to a healthy environment is embodied in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognizes that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is a human right that requires States to take steps towards ensuring these standards. Over the past two decades, UN treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs, and other human rights mechanisms have increasingly applied human rights law, particularly rights related to life and health, to environmental issues.<sup>8</sup> These bodies have also highlighted how environmental harm impacts human rights and their defenders,<sup>9</sup> and stressed the necessity of developing frameworks that robustly protect environmental rights.

## The protection of the right to a healthy environment in different regions:



### Latin America

The San Salvador Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights declares that “[e]veryone shall have the right to live in a healthy environment.” In 2017, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights recognized the right to a healthy environment as an autonomous right under the American Convention. The Court has made several pivotal decisions concerning the territorial and environmental rights of Indigenous Peoples, addressing issues like State violence, dispossession, forced displacement, and violations by corporations amid increasing developmental pressures.<sup>10</sup>



### Africa

The African Charter asserts that “[a]ll peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development,” but also makes the provision subject to review by both the African Commission and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights.<sup>11</sup> In 2002, the Commission ruled that the Nigerian government’s failure to prevent pollution and environmental degradation violated the Ogoni peoples’ right to a satisfactory environment conducive to their development.



### Europe

The Aarhus Convention mandates that its parties ensure public rights of access to information, participation in decision-making, and justice in environmental matters to “contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being.”<sup>12</sup> The European Court of Human Rights, in *Cordella and Others v. Italy*, found that the State’s failure to address pollution and continued environmental degradation violated the applicants’ right to private life.

<sup>8</sup> Knox, J., Pejan, R. (2018). “The Human Right to a Healthy Environment.” Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Annex to A/HRC/52/33 para. 64. See *Kawas Fernández v. Honduras*, Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2009); see also *Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname*, Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2015); and *ADVISORY OPINION OC-23/17* para. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Knox, J., Pejan, R. (2018). “Introduction to The Human Right to a Healthy Environment.” Cambridge University Press, p. 10. See, e.g., *Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v. Ecuador*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 245 (2012); *Saramaka People v. Suriname*, 2007 Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 172 (2007); *Sawhoyamaya Indigenous Community v. Paraguay*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 146 (2006). They have also emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of environmentalists to life and to freedom of association. See *Kawas-Fernández v. Honduras*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (Ser. C) No. 196 (2009).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. Social and Economic Rights Action Center & the Center for Economic and Social Rights v. Nigeria ACHPR/COMM/A044/1 (2002) finding that the Ogoni had suffered violations of their right to health (Article 16) and right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to development (Article 24) due to the government’s failure to prevent pollution and ecological degradation.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. The European Court of Human Rights has recognized that severe environmental degradation can impact individual well-being and potentially lead to human rights violations.



## League of Arab States

The Arab Charter on Human Rights includes the right to a healthy environment as part of the right to an adequate standard of living.<sup>13</sup> Article 38 states: “Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, which ensures their well-being and a decent life, including food, clothing, housing, services and the right to a healthy environment. The States parties shall take the necessary measures commensurate with their resources to guarantee these rights.”



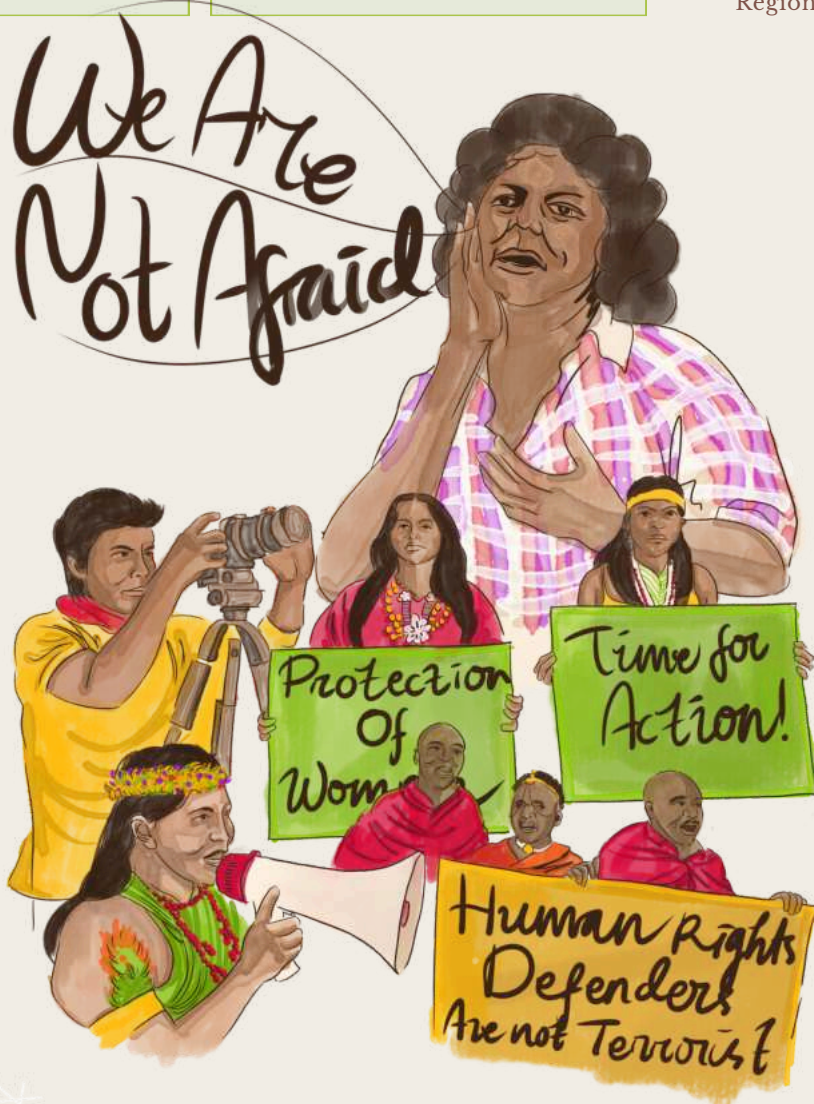
## South East Asia

The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration acknowledges the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as part of the right to an adequate standard of living.<sup>14</sup> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is committed to ensuring a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment for children from all groups and backgrounds. This commitment involves adopting, improving, enforcing, and monitoring compliance with laws, regulations and policies that integrate recognised science-based minimum core social and environmental standards.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Arab Charter of Human Rights, League of Arab States, entered into force on March 15, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Knox & Pejan, p. 9. See also Article 28(f) of the Declaration which states: “Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself or herself and his or her family including: [...] f. The right to a safe, clean and sustainable environment.” Cf. ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, adopted November 18, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Principles and Policy Guidance on Children’s Rights to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in the ASEAN Region, November 23, 2021.





### 3. Right to a healthy environment: What does it mean to communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis?



Human rights and the environment are intrinsically interconnected. On one hand, a healthy environment is essential for the full enjoyment of numerous human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water, sanitation, and development. On the other hand, the full exercise of all human rights, such as the rights to information, participation, and access to justice, plays a critical role in protecting the environment and those who defend it.<sup>16</sup>

For Indigenous Peoples, the right to a healthy environment is linked to the freedom to exercise their human rights, particularly the rights to self-determination and identity. This right also encompasses the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which is crucial for protecting their ancestral lands, territories and resources.

For feminists and grassroots women's movements, the right to a healthy environment serves as a means to achieve a just and equitable transition and to address the climate crisis, which is deeply rooted in gender and social injustices.

This right is especially crucial to grassroots communities, Indigenous Peoples, and defenders of environmental and women's human rights, who are disproportionately impacted by extractivist projects and neoliberal policies. These groups face violations of their economic, social and cultural rights amid the planet's unprecedented climate, pollution and biodiversity crises. Indigenous Peoples, in particular, are the custodians of most of the world's remaining pristine ecosystems and play a significant role in combating climate change and leading collective efforts for environmental justice.

<sup>16</sup> OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP. 2023. "What is the right to a healthy environment? Information Note." Available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/what-right-healthy-environment>

## 4. The Right to a healthy environment in the face of extractivism and neoliberal economic systems

2022 marked an alarming milestone, with more than 400 targeted killings of human rights defenders worldwide. Nearly half (48%) of these tragic deaths were environmental, land and Indigenous Peoples' rights defenders, making them the most frequently targeted group. This grim reality underscores the urgent need for strengthened laws and policies to protect human rights defenders who are advocating for the right to a healthy environment.<sup>17</sup>

Despite growing acknowledgment of the centrality of the right to a healthy environment, communities continue to endure the repercussions of an ecological crisis fueled by neoliberal and exploitative economic systems that prioritize profit over people and the environment. Development projects driven by neoliberal policies often ignore the intrinsic relationship between communities and their natural environment. Those who oppose such projects and/or policies face violence, with many terrorized or killed for defending their environmental rights. The combined power of wealthy nations and corporations, along with increasing oppression by State and non-State actors, has also hindered grassroots communities from seeking justice and accountability for environmental damage and human rights violations caused by exploitative business practices.



Furthermore, historical inequalities between the Global North and South, rooted in centuries of colonialism, perpetuate illegitimate debt cycles that trap many developing countries.<sup>18</sup> These countries and corporations from the Global North have established a neoliberal economic system through international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Over decades, these institutions have enforced policies and economic reforms with devastating impacts on economic, social and cultural rights, such as forcing States to cut public spending on essential services, liberalize trade, privatize state enterprises, and reform tax regimes to benefit private actors and large investors.<sup>19</sup> These policies continue to push countries into unsustainable debt cycles, empowering them and limiting their capacity to address climate crisis impacts.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Front Line Defenders. 2022. "Global Analysis 2022." Available at: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resolve-publication/global-analysis-2022>

<sup>18</sup> ESCR-Net, 2024. "The intersection of Debt and Corporate Capture." Available at: <https://www.escr-net.org/news/2024/intersection-debt-and-corporate-capture>

<sup>19</sup> ESCR-Net, 2023. "The Power of the 99% to Stop Corporate Capture & Debt" Available at: <https://www.escr-net.org/comic-series/power-99-stop-corporate-capture>

<sup>20</sup> University of Essex, 2023. "A Human Rights-based Approach to Debt and Climate Justice." Available at: [https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/a\\_human\\_rights-based\\_approach\\_to\\_debt\\_and\\_climate\\_justice\\_1\\_1\\_1.pdf](https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/a_human_rights-based_approach_to_debt_and_climate_justice_1_1_1.pdf)  
*Ibid.*



The devastating effects of sovereign debt on States grappling with ecological and social crises, including the impact of loss and damage must be carefully considered in efforts to meaningfully implement the right to a healthy environment.

The neoliberal system also empowers transnational corporations and economic elites from the Global North to influence democratic processes and decision-making at national and international levels – a phenomenon described by ESCR-Net members as *corporate capture*.<sup>21</sup> This is particularly evident as the fossil fuel industry continues to dominate climate negotiation spaces and shape environmental regulations and climate ambitions from local to global levels. The presence of at least 2,456 fossil fuel lobbyists<sup>22</sup> at the 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP28), and the appointment of the World Bank to manage the Loss and Damage Fund –despite opposition from many Global South countries, social movements and civil society organizations—highlight this issue. The World Bank’s notorious history of promoting the fossil fuel industry, harming communities, violating human rights, and fueling corporate capture and illegitimate debt raises significant concerns.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, corporate capture of state legislative processes and judiciary mechanisms has weakened environmental accountability while facilitating repression of communities and individuals who oppose unjust development models. Addressing the devastating effects of the neoliberal economic system and corporate power is crucial to fulfilling the right to a healthy environment.

## 5. Core principles and State obligations for the implementation of the right to a healthy environment



<sup>21</sup>Corporate capture refers to the means by which an economic elite undermine the realization of human rights and the environment by exerting undue influence over domestic and international decision-makers and public institutions. For more information, see: <https://www.escr-net.org/corporateaccountability/corporatecapture/manifestations-corporate-capture>

<sup>22</sup>The Guardian, 2023. “Record number of fossil fuel lobbyists get access to COP28 climate talks.” Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/05/record-number-of-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-get-access-to-cop28-climate-talks>

<sup>23</sup>ESCR-Net, 2023. “COP28: Lost and Damaged, Swallowed by Corporate Capture and False Climate Solutions.” Available at: <https://www.escr-net.org/news/2023/cop28-lost-and-damaged-swallowed-corporate-capture-and-false-climate-solutions>

While formal recognition of the right to a healthy environment is progressing, critical questions remain about what implementation should look like to address the realities, needs and priorities of communities at the frontlines of ecological devastation. The implementation of this right involves both procedural and substantive elements. Procedural elements include ensuring the right to access to information, participation of affected communities in decision-making processes, and the right to seek remedy through the justice system. Substantive elements require States to adopt and effectively implement legal frameworks and policies that protect against environmental harm, potentially affecting human wellbeing and other human rights, and regulate both private actors and public authorities.

In fulfilling the right to a healthy environment, States must also guarantee respect for other fundamental rights such as equality and non-discrimination. This involves protecting communities that are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation due to historical subjugations and imbalanced power relations, which have led to their dispossession and marginalization –particularly affecting women, children, rural communities and Indigenous Peoples. Most importantly, implementation must acknowledge the unique relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with their environment, which are based on their worldviews and collective right to self-determination.

Additionally, the extraterritorial dimension must be considered to hold Global North countries –home to many multinational corporations--accountable for human rights violations outside their jurisdictions.<sup>24</sup> Achieving this requires ensuring legal enforceability in line with the African and Inter-American human rights systems, national and constitutional laws, and various international resolutions and declarations.

## Principles for realizing the right to a healthy environment

To fully realize the right to a healthy environment, which addresses the priorities and needs of frontline communities experiencing the worsening impacts of ecological collapse, members of ESCR-Net have identified core principles —rooted in solidarity and accountability to the peoples— that must be observed:

- **Indivisibility and Integration:** This principle is based on the recognition that the realization of the right to a healthy environment cannot be separated from other human rights, including the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Gender Transformative Approach:** In alignment with international frameworks like the Paris Agreement,<sup>25</sup> states must recognize and protect the role and contributions of women in combating climate crises. This approach is vital to address historical gender inequalities and ensure that women’s knowledge and experiences are central in decision-making processes on climate action.
- **Intergenerational Equity and Justice:** This principle, consistently applied in both international and domestic jurisprudence,<sup>26</sup> holds the current generation accountable for preserving the planet for the well-being and human rights of future generations.
- **Non-Retrogression and Progressive Realization of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:** Under international human rights law, states are required to take positive steps toward the fulfillment of these rights and avoid actions that cause their deterioration. This includes rejecting false solutions<sup>27</sup> that fail to address the root causes of the climate crisis while promoting human rights-centered climate actions, such as drastic emissions reductions and a swift, just, and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels.
- **Polluters pay:** Rich industrialized countries must be accountable for their historical and ongoing responsibilities. This includes regulating their corporations to prevent environmental damage and human rights violations stemming from extractive and exploitative business practices.

<sup>24</sup> *Addressing these gaps in human rights protection, the Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were articulated in 2011. These extraterritorial obligations (ETOs) are clearly defined, underscoring that states’ responsibilities extend beyond their own territories in ensuring the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. For more information, visit: <https://iuraw-ap.org/gem/etos/>*

<sup>25</sup> *The Paris Agreement underscores the necessity for States Parties to adhere to principles of “gender equality, women’s empowerment and intergenerational equity,” but also emphasizes the importance of adaptation actions that are gender-transformative, participatory and fully transparent.*

<sup>26</sup> *In Future Generations v Ministry of the Environment, the Supreme Court of Colombia ruled in favor of 25 youth and children, recognizing the rights of future generations to a healthy environment, life, food, water access, and health. This landmark decision also designated the Colombian Amazon as an entity with legal rights requiring protection. See also Leghari vs. Federation of Pakistan, Lahore High Court (2015).*

<sup>27</sup> *False solutions to climate change are those that pose as ‘climate actions’ but in reality, do not address the root causes of the climate catastrophe. They can be largely characterised by the neoliberal corporate capture of climate action and corporate greenwashing, essentially perpetuating climate injustices. For more information, see: “False Solutions: Climate Colonialism and Tragedy of the Commons. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. 2023. Available at: <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FALSE-SOLUTIONS-BRIEFER-Final.pdf>*





## 6. Collective demands for a meaningful implementation of the right to a healthy environment

Grassroots communities and civil society organizations are essential in shaping environmental protection and human rights policy from the very beginning. They must lead to concerted efforts to transform the right to a healthy environment into a powerful tool for resistance, facilitating a radical shift away from profit-driven extractivism and corporate exploitation. By doing so, they can promote community-led and people-centered solutions to the ecological crisis, ensuring that environmental policies genuinely reflect and serve the needs and priorities of those most impacted by environmental degradation.

ESCR-Net members, particularly social movements and grassroots groups, are advancing the following demands to realize the right to a healthy environment:

- **Centering Feminist Economies of Care Grounded in Human Rights:** The current market-driven global economic and development systems have proven to violate human rights and threaten the livelihoods, well-being, and survival of frontline communities globally. Rural and indigenous women, who face disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation and are often denied access to land and other productive resources, play a significant role in caring for the environment amid climate catastrophes. Implementing a gender-just economic transition means ensuring energy democracy that is responsive to community-based needs and priorities.
- **Recognition of the Historical Inequalities Between Men and Women:** This includes acknowledging women's unpaid care work, ensuring their equal and meaningful participation in the decision-making processes, and facilitating their access to justice and freedom to contribute effectively in combating the climate crisis.<sup>28</sup>
- **Holding Polluters Accountable for their "Business as Usual" Practices:** Corporate impunity, the neoliberal economic system's extractive nature and commodification of resources drive global crises, led by major polluters and corporate giants.<sup>29</sup> States and multilateral institutions must reject market-driven false climate solutions and demand corporate accountability for their "business-as-usual" practices. Moreover, advocating for intergenerational equity should guide the development and implementation of the right to a healthy environment, while respecting human rights of future generations.
- **Protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders:** Frontline communities and environmental human rights defenders facing harassment, criminalization, imprisonment, and even death for opposing false climate solutions need stronger legal and policy protection. Failure of states to protect these defenders equates to a failure to protect the right to a healthy environment, as it cannot be realized if defenders are weakened and silenced.
- **Preventing Further Biodiversity Loss and Promoting Food Sovereignty:** A healthy environment requires maintaining biodiversity, not massive industrial monoculture plantations that threaten the right to food sovereignty. States must adopt sustainable food production systems, that emphasize the health of the soil and seeds, alongside agroecological practices, ensuring food sovereignty, security, and diversity.
- **Climate Financing that is Fit for Purpose and Accountable:** Civil society and social movements advocate for a new, adequate, grant-based climate finance flows from developed to developing countries. Climate finance should be accessible directly by communities facing ecological crises. The private sector must be excluded from climate finance decision-making and implementation processes.<sup>30</sup> States should promote climate financing bound by principles of equity, historical responsibility and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). Illegitimate and unsustainable debts must be canceled to enable Global South countries to allocate resources to adapt, mitigate, and recover from environmental crises

<sup>28</sup>ESCR-Net, 2021. "A New Social Pact on Care is Urgent." Available at: <https://www.escr-net.org/news/2021/new-social-pact-care-urgent>

<sup>29</sup>ESCR-Net, 2020. "ESCR-Net Collective Submission on the Second Revised Draft Legally Binding Instrument on Corporate Accountability Corporate Impunity Must End." Available at: [https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/attachments/escr-net\\_written\\_submission\\_second\\_revised\\_treaty\\_oct\\_2020\\_final.pdf](https://www.escr-net.org/sites/default/files/attachments/escr-net_written_submission_second_revised_treaty_oct_2020_final.pdf)

<sup>30</sup>The proposal by some developed countries to manage the Loss and Damage Fund through the World Bank is a concern; such a move risks entrenching corporate capture within the fund's structure and operations, potentially leading to increased debt and financial instability for developing nations. It is crucial to collectively advocate for climate finance that is governed by the needs and priorities of the affected communities, rather than external institutions.

- **Educating the Public on the Right to a Healthy Environment:** It is crucial to develop popular educational materials that foster dialogue and communication between scientific communities, civil society, and cultural communities. Outreach should inclusively involve all members of society, especially underrepresented and marginalized groups, to emphasize their role in environmental and biodiversity conservation, and societal care.



## 7. Conclusion

The recognition of the right to a healthy environment underscores the inherent link between human rights and environmental protection. A healthy environment is crucial for the full enjoyment of all human rights, and reciprocally, the respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights are essential for effective environmental protection. To ensure meaningful implementation of the right to a healthy environment, States must center and actively involve frontline communities confronting climate emergencies throughout all decision-making processes. In this light, the UNGA resolution serves not only as a critical tool to expand legal protections at all levels, but also as a means to create synergies between ecological, gender and social justice that are vital for advancing the protection of the planet. Implementing the right to a healthy environment alongside other human rights such as the right to development, the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands, territories and resources, and the right to self-determination, is key to addressing systemic inequalities and injustices. These are often overlooked by wealthy countries and corporations, yet they remain among the root causes of the climate crisis and related injustices.



