THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE PARTICIPATION OF IOLDCS

40TH SESSION HRC

IOLDCs has engaged in the HRC with general debate and interactive participation, written statements* and the organization of two side events.

Annual High-Level Panel Discussion: “Human Rights Mainstreaming”

IOLDCs started the 40th session of the Human Rights Council participating in the Annual High-Level Panel Discussion “Human Rights Mainstreaming”. Mami Mizutori, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, made clear the Intersection of climate change and human rights. She outlined that extreme events magnify social inequalities, increasing existing vulnerabilities. Moreover, Preventing and reducing disaster risk is essential for the promotion of all human rights. A key thing is accountability. Therefore, public policies must contemplate disaster risk reduction and resilience. For example, including the key take away from the Sendai Framework.

OIPMA welcomes the celebration of this multidisciplinary event, emphasizing the interrelation of the areas here addressed. Considering climate change as an important factor causing displacement and building on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and UN related agencies, OIPMA stresses the need to develop coherent approaches to address the challenges of migration movements in the context of climate change. This should be driven by an inclusive and empowering perspective which allows affected communities and vulnerable groups to engage with this process and plan future relocation according to their needs, preferences and knowledge. Planners, on the other hand, must be skilled in listening and consensus-building.

Likewise, information and communication technologies can also play an important role for migrants to sustain their journeys. Network is vital for migrants to decide whether to move and if so, where and how. Moreover, ICTs can be an important early warning tool as well as educate people on sustainability and mitigation measures.

OIPMA also wants to express its concern, after the outcomes of COP24, failing to comply with the Paris Agreement which promised to protect, respect, and consider human rights in climate action. The negative impact that climate change supposes on the effective enjoyment of human rights must be considered in any laws, standards, policies and programmes. Moreover, many environmental human rights defenders have been harassed, sued or even murdered. This shows that whereas important work towards a future safe environment is being done, there are still many barriers facing us. We are in a critical and decisive moment to determine our future and the one of the next generations. In order to strengthen our efforts in climate action, a global acceptance of the right to a safe environment would pave the way towards more commitment from stakeholders.

*Written statements may be found at: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage_e.aspx?b=10&se=203&t=7, page 15.
Interactive Dialogue Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

Shortly after the third High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, which aimed to gain support for the humanitarian response in Yemen and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni, IOLDCs participated in the Interactive Dialogue with Madam Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

OIPMA wants to highlight the words you stated in 2017, “We are all to blame. We have the tools and resources to better protect children, even in situations of armed conflict; but we have failed to do so”. Regarding Yemen, evidences indicate that a significant increase in the recruitment and use of children by Houthi militias over the past 3 years, have become more systematic.

The total number of children being recruited and used in the conflict by the Houthis is estimated to be over 25,000, including children under the age of 10 years. Even a Houthi senior leader recognized earlier this year to the Associated Press to have been recruited 18,000 children since 2014. However, having considered several reports based on UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms, OIPMA believes that the number of children recruited in Yemen do not reflect the dramatic increase of this practice against minors.

The Houthi militias forcibly take children from their homes and push them to fight in the front lines. These children are inflicted an intensive ideological extremist program of three weeks to one-month duration. Then, they are sent to a training camps to attend a military training course for another month on the use of weapons, mines and explosive devices. And afterwards, they are sent to the battlefield.

Moreover, the militia goes door-to-door telling the progenitors of children that they have to either hand over their children or pay them a compensation for the war effort that the militia does.

Madam Special Representative, Which steps could be taken by your office to ensure that the real number of children recruited is really considered when working towards their release?

*Written statements may be found at: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage_e.aspx?b=10&se=203&t=7, page 15.
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SIDE EVENTS

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

IOLDCs hosted this event with the participation of the Platform of Disaster Displacement (PDD), the OHCHR and the IPCC. Prof. Warren (IPCC) firstly provided an overview of the impacts of climate change in biodiversity and ecosystems, outlining the difference of predicted impacts at 1.5 and 2 Celsius degrees, being the latter devastating for the planet.

Secondly, Mr. Schachter (OHCHR) talked about the impacts of climate change on the effective enjoyment of human rights, in particular, the right to health. With a very engaging presentation, he also pointed out the lack of inclusion of human rights (including gender equality) during COP24 negotiations although the importance of having human rights as a catalyst for an effective climate ambition.

Displacement, although being the last resort when adapting to climate change, is increasing and is predicted to rise in the years to come. Mr. Solberg (PDD) explained the typologies of displacements and their different nature, which may also be worsened by factors such as land degradation, poverty and overpopulation. He mentioned the lack of comprehensive mechanisms at the international level in addressing cross-border displacements, being different for internal mobility which mostly benefits from national (sometimes regional) standards.

TOLERANCE AND PEACE

IOLDCs hosted this event with the participation of the chairperson-rapporteur of the UN working group on the use of mercenaries, a Yemeni lecturer of the University of Aden and journalist from Sky News Arabia and the Head of the observatory council for Human Rights and member of the National Assembly of the Southern Transitional Council.

The event emphasised the need to urgently address the rapid rise in various parts of the world of religious extremism that affects the human rights of individuals, in particular, persons belonging to religious communities and religious minorities. Moreover, it also highlighted the important role of education, including human rights education, in the promotion of tolerance, which involves the acceptance by the public of and its respect for diversity, including with regard to religious expression.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN´S DAY

One of the commitments of IOLDCs is to ensure gender equality, particularly in LDCs. In this regard, the NGO, wrote a statement for the General Debate under item 3 in which stressed the importance of empowering women in LDCs, where they are often marginalized, isolated and not given the opportunity to be decision-makers, even at the community level. Moreover, IOLDCs outlined that violence against women and girls is a practice that must be stopped without further delay, adapting national laws and policies in this regard, including the content of the CEDAW.
IOLDCs engaged with Item 5 of the HRC-40 Agenda highlighting the persecution of the Baha’i community in Yemen by the Houthi militia.

The Baha’is are forced to practice their faith in total secrecy. Over the past three years, in Yemen, the Houthis have arrested many Baha’is, being forcibly disappeared, detained, in many cases without charge, and others have been tried in the Sana’a-based penal courts, including the death penalty. This practice makes Baha’is living in constant fear, including the fear for their children’s detention, and/or threatening them to murder their parents. Likewise, Baha’is are victims of hatred and inflammatory speech. Campaigns to arrest Baha’is have caused their displacement from their homes, cities and villages.

In this regard, OIPMA reiterates the words of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, calling for an end to discriminatory practices based on religion or belief and to the de facto authorities in Sana’a to put an immediate stop to the persistent persecution of Bahá’ís in Yemen, releasing those arrested due to their religion or belief.

In 2018, the UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen concluded the Houthis had “committed acts that may amount to war crimes, including cruel treatment and torture and outrages upon personal dignity.” The experts documented the Houthis detaining among others, members of the Baha’i community. OIPMA condemns the atrocities committed against the Baha’i community as a genocide which should be prosecuted without further delay.

**Item 3: Women’s and girls’ rights**

Today I talk on behalf of all women. Women from around the world who experience discrimination, women who have been harassed, threatened, sexually abused, raped and attacked. And I also talk on behalf of those women who are not anymore with us because a man finished with their lives.

Last Friday was the International Women’s Day. A day to really urge patriarchal societies that use laws, policies and institutions to deny women’s and girls’ rights, autonomy and equal participation to finish with such practices. Moreover, this fight for gender equality must be pursued every day for every girl and woman. Our voices matter and will never give up until we achieve equality. None of the SGDs will be fully accomplished if they do not integrate a gendered perspective.

Women must be integrated in dialogues and consultations, especially in many LDCs where they face many social and political barriers and marginalization. Women in LDCs and are often poorly informed of their community entitlements and rights. Moreover, those women who speak up are sometimes beaten, divorced, intimidated and “named”. Such countries need to empower the female figure as for instance Ethiopia did, electing its first female president last year.

It is time to embrace the change in law, policies and standards considering gender equality and the prosecution of those who vulnerate girls and women’s rights. We call upon all stakeholders present and absent in this room to join OIPMA in our fight for gender equality and we urge States which have not yet ratified the CEDAW, to do so. Feminism has never killed anyone, whereas machismo kills every day".
GENERAL DEBATES

Under item 2, IOLDCs, called upon the Group of Eminent experts on Yemen to base its reports in reliable and accurate information

We would like to draw your attention to the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen at a meeting organized by an NGO on March 14, 2019, in which he criticized his previous report as being non-exhaustive. Thus, losing the credibility of the team's performance.

He declared that "the new approach to be adopted will enable him to reach different sources and will depend on the mechanisms set by the Office of the High Commissioner, using the investigation expertise teams based in other countries ...". He stated that his report in the forthcoming session in September will be a professional and realistic report.

Relying on sources from local, non-independent organizations, affiliated to both sides of the conflict (the Houthis and the Islah party which is the decision maker of the internationally recognized authority), should be avoided.

We highlight the disregard of the previous report to the massacre of Tawahi in 2014, which took the lives of 90 women and children, and the massacre of Dar Saad, which killed 107 civilians by the Houthis, including, through mines.

Under item 8, IOLDCs stressed some key point for the achievement of the Agenda 2030

In less than 11 years, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be accomplished. As such, OIPMA welcomes the 6 elements stated by the United Nations Secretary-General to help frame and reinforce the sustainable development agenda and to ensure delivery at the country level; ending poverty and fighting inequality to ensure dignity; Working together with an inclusive gender approach, including children and indigenous communities; An inclusive and transformative economy to grow and stay strong; the protection of our ecosystems for present and future generations; justice and accountability to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; and partnership to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.

Moreover, LDC graduation needs to be considered in the larger context of development, based on a long-term and holistic approach towards equitable and sustainable development. On the other hand, OIPMA urges the need to take appropriate measures to hold global warming to 1.5°C in order to lessen or prevent future climate disasters.

Lastly, it is vital to bear in mind that the world will not achieve any of the SDGs if girls and women are not equal partners to boys and men.

We need solidarity and cooperation interlinked with businesses, civil society, individuals and governments.

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After the recent Islamophobic attack committed in Christchurch, OIPMA brings to your attention: The Document on Human Fraternity for world peace and living together” signed on February this year in Abu Dhabi during the visit of his holiness Pope Francis with Sheikh Al-Azhar, in the presence of several worldwide religious leaders. OIPMA urges the Council to support the declaration of his holiness Pope Francis proclaiming Abu Dhabi as the world’s capital of tolerance and a bridge of communication and convergence between the peoples and cultures of the world.

The United Arab Emirates has become a leading example of a tolerant nation where there are more than 200 nationalities living in peace and tolerance. The state has proved its commitment to eradicate ideological, cultural and religious bigotry, being the first state in the world who appointed a Minister of State for Tolerance; issued an Anti-discrimination/Anti-hatred law, and declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance, launching several National Tolerance Programmes.

Following these steps, we urge the Council to take appropriate measures to consolidate tolerance and respect for other’s religions or beliefs worldwide.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE HRC/40

Several resolutions (draft at the time of the writing) have taken place in relation to the work of IOLDCs. For instance, encouraged by Norway, a resolution on the contribution of **environmental human rights defenders** to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development;

A resolution on **combating intolerance**, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief;

A resolution on the **human rights situation in South Sudan**;

A resolution on the **realization** in all countries of **economic, social and cultural rights**;

And a resolution on the Thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the **Rights of the Child**.
OTHER EVENTS

IOLDCs participated in the Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism RCEM for the SDG/Agenda 2030 during the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region.

As part of the working group “connecting the dots” we agreed that while awareness raising and locally disaggregated data are still important, we know enough about the problems and solutions to go for a paradigm shift right now. We cannot have both a GDP growth SDG target and the Paris Agreement implemented because global decoupling between economic growth and environmental impacts is just not happening.

Extractions and emissions keep rising to levels that could eradicate humanity this century. Fossil fuel corporations know this for decades but corporate impunity reigns supreme. Young people all over the world are aware of all this and they are not accepting it.

Tens of thousands of scientists are supporting them and so do people from all generations. At the same time, we won’t achieve SDG implementation if people are not participating in policy-making, do not have quality education, human rights, equity and equality. Human Rights are under pressure.

In addition, IOLDCs was present in several side events on climate change; the environmental dimension of SDG 16; water security and finally, the inconsistencies between SDG 8 in relation to economic growth and SDG 13.

Parallel events: 15th March, Global Strike for Climate Change

On the 15th of March, people worldwide, especially young generations, took the streets urging for an immediate change in the system and climate action.

The impact of such demonstration was recognized by many stakeholders and should, hopefully, be followed by appropriate measures taken towards a more sustainable, cleaner and greener Planet.

IOLDCs is delighted to announce that it has become a member of the Advisory Committee of the Platform on Disaster Displacement. We look very much forward to contributing to the work of the PDD.

GREAT NEWS!