CENTER for INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Global Initiative for Economic, Social & Cultural Rights

States' Human Rights Obligations in the Context of Climate Change

Guidance Provided by the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies

2024–2025 Synthesis Note

Overview

Human Rights Treaty Bodies (HRTBs) are the expert bodies established by the international human rights treaties and mandated to monitor their implementation by the State parties to those treaties. The HRTBs are made up of independent human rights experts elected by the State parties. They have three main activities:

1. Reviewing States' implementation of the relevant human rights treaty (State review procedure, which consists of the review of a report submitted by the State party in response to a List of Issues (LOI), or List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPRs), a constructive dialogue between the HRTB and the State, and policy recommendations in the form of concluding observations).
2. Elaborating General Comments (GC) or statements which provide guidance to States on the interpretation of the treaty.
3. Adjudicating individual communications (complaints of violations of the treaty by a State party).

This report, States' Human Rights Obligations in the Context of Climate Change: Guidance Provided by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Treaty Bodies (2024 and 2025) builds on previous reports (2020-2021, 2022, and 2024) by adding new information and current analysis on the work of HRTBs on climate change. Our analysis considers the work, over the course of 2024 and 2025, of the seven HRTBs whose mandates relate most directly to climate change (see Table 1 for the list of the HRTBs and some of the rights and principles most relevant to climate change contained in the respective legal instruments).

In 2024 and 2025, the HRTBs continued to address climate change repeatedly in the context of their work. They issued 229 documents (117 in 2024 and 112 in 2025) referencing climate change in their overall outputs to States as part of their State review procedures — including 132 Concluding Observations (COBs) and 97 LOIs/LOIPRs. LOIs and LOIPRs are questions that the Committee asks the State under review on specific topics of interest or concern, which should guide the State in preparing for the final stage of the review. COBs are the final recommendations that the Committee makes at the end of the State review procedure, and include action and measures that the State party should undertake to better implement its human rights obligations. This represents a slight increase compared to previous years, as the analysis and graphs below shows. While climate featured quite heavily in HRTBs' State review procedure, no individual communication relating to climate change was decided upon in 2024 and 2025.

Further progress towards clarifying the scope of States' human rights obligations in the context of climate change was also made in the context of General Comments. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) adopted, in September 2025, its GC No. 27 on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development, an analysis of which is provided in the CESCR-focused section below. The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) continued its work on the draft General Comment No. 27 on children's right to access to justice and to an effective remedy, also detailed below.

Relevant Developments by Other International Bodies

Over the course of the past years, the work of international institutions to uphold States' obligations in the context of climate change was largely influenced by four parallel advisory proceedings taking place at the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), the Inter-American Court on Human Rights (IACtHR), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (still pending). Each advisory opinion proceedings have a different scope and focus, but all contribute to informing the understanding of States' obligations related to climate change and reviewing important dimensions, such as emission reduction obligations, remedy for climate harm, obligations towards future generations, corporate accountability, and so on.

The ITLOS issued its Advisory Opinion on May 21, 2024. In its first-ever climate-focused advisory opinion, the Tribunal clearly stated that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions pollute the marine environment and States must take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce, and control them. The Tribunal noted that climate change raises human rights concerns and that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and "external rules" must be interpreted consistently. The tribunal also rejected the argument that the UN climate agreements constitute *lex specialis* derogating from other norms of international law in the context of climate change, thereby reaffirming the applicability of relevant rules of international law, including human rights obligations, in defining States' climate obligations.

The IACtHR released its advisory opinion on July 3, 2025. The Court reaffirmed States' obligations of prevention, regulation, due diligence, reparation, and international cooperation, informed by the best available science and equity, and affirmed State responsibility for extraterritorial human rights impacts attributable to conduct within State jurisdiction or control. The advisory opinion identified fossil fuel production and use as the primary drivers of climate harm, requiring comprehensive climate impact assessments across all stages of high-emitting activities, and reinforcing State responsibility for failures to regulate, license, or subsidize climate-destructive conduct. The Court emphasized that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment encompasses the right to a healthy climate. It also concluded that States have obligations to provide redress and integral reparation for harm resulting from the violation of their obligations to protect the climate system. The Court also affirmed States' duties to regulate corporate influence, prevent climate disinformation, protect environmental human rights defenders, apply heightened protections for groups in situations of vulnerability, and recognize Nature as a subject of rights, thereby consolidating climate protection as a core, enforceable obligation within contemporary international human rights law.

The ICJ climate advisory opinion was released on July 23, 2025, building on a broader set of legal sources, including, extensively, human rights law. The Court emphasized that States must take ambitious action to protect the environment, particularly the climate system, as a prerequisite for the effective enjoyment of human rights. It reaffirmed that a healthy environment underpins human life and the well-being of present and future generations, and that environmental and climate degradation undermines multiple human rights, including the rights to life, health, adequate living standards, and the rights of women, children, and Indigenous Peoples. Importantly, the Court also affirmed that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a binding norm of international law and a precondition for the enjoyment of many other human rights. As will be further explained below, it also stressed that a State's failure to take appropriate action to protect the climate system from fossil fuel-related pollutants may constitute an internationally wrongful act.

It is worth noting that a great number of States and international organizations referred to the work of treaty bodies concerning climate change in their inputs to the ICJ. The majority of all the written contributions — i.e., written submissions, written comments, and written replies— mentioned at least one human right treaty or treaty body (114 out of 219 contributions). In the oral hearings, thirty-four out of sixty-two interventions mentioned human rights treaties or HRTBs. The advisory opinion itself includes extensive references to international human rights treaties, General Comments/Recommendations and individual communications by the UN Human Rights Committee (CCPR), CESCR, and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the 2019 Joint Statement on Human Rights Climate Change by five HRTBs. This is a striking confirmation of the impact and relevance of HRTBs in clarifying States' obligations in the context of climate change.

In 2025, some Committees started to mention the three advisory opinions, although to a limited extent. The CEDAW commended Tuvalu and Thailand for their role in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 77/276, which requested the advisory opinion to the ICJ. In its COB to Tuvalu, the Committee also welcomed the State party's role as founder and Co-Chair of the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law, recognized it for its role in the 2022 request for an advisory opinion of the ITLOS, and recommended implementing the opinion at the domestic level. The CESCR, in its General Comment No. 27, referred to the ICJ and IACtHR advisory opinions a few times in its footnotes to support key arguments.

In 2024 and 2025, several mechanisms and institutions continued to provide guidance on States' obligations in the context of climate change. The United Nations Secretary-General issued a landmark Analytical Study on the Impact of Loss and Damage from the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on the Full Enjoyment of Human Rights, Exploring Equity-Based Approaches And Solutions To Addressing The Same (an analysis is provided in the section on remedy for climate harm below). The Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council released a report on the Impact of Disinformation on the Enjoyment and Realization of Human Rights, which includes a dedicated section on environmental disinformation. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change continued her important work in further clarifying relevant States' obligations, most notably with regard to transitioning away from fossil fuels, in her landmark report on the Imperative of Defossilizing Our Economies. In her Scene-Setting Report, the Special Rapporteur made extensive reference to the work of treaty bodies on climate change, which further demonstrates the pivotal role played by them.

The increased work on climate change by various UN human rights mechanisms highlights the potential offered by cross-pollination among human rights institutions and procedures to further articulate States' obligations in the context of climate change. As the climate crisis unfolds, UN and regional human rights mechanisms and procedures should continue to build on their work on climate change and monitor and respond to the worsening climate-driven human rights crisis in 2026 and beyond.

Table 1: List of HRTBs and the Rights and Principles Most Relevant to Climate Change

Name of the Treaty Body	Human Rights Treaty Monitored	Relevant Rights and Principles
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	• Obligation to prohibit and eliminate discrimination against women (Article 2) and to ensure the full development and advancement of women (Article 3) • Right to participation (Article 7) • Rights of rural women (Article 14)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	• Obligation to take steps towards the full realizationof ESC rights (Article 2) • Peoples' right of self-determination and to own means of subsistence (Article 1) • Rights to an adequate standard of living, including food, water, and housing (Article 11); to health (Article 12); and to science and culture (Article 15)
Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Convention on the Rights of the Child	• Obligation to respect and ensure the rights of children and to eliminate discrimination against children (Article 2) and the principle of the best interests of the child (Article 3) • Rights to life (Article 6); freedom of expression (Article 13); health (Article 24); an adequate standard of living, including food, water, sanitation, and housing (Article 27); and education (Article 28)
Human Rights Committee (CCPR)	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	• Peoples' right of self-determination (Article 1) • Rights to non-discrimination (Article 2), Article to life (Article 6), to home, private life, and family life (17), to expression (Article 19), rights of children (Article 24) to take part in public affairs (Article 25), and to culture (Article 27)
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	• Prohibition of racial discrimination (Article 2) and obligation to eliminate racial discrimination in relation to all human rights (Article 5) • Right to remedy (Article 6)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	• Prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities (Article 4), obligation to consult • Rights to life (Article 10), education (Article 24), health (Article 25), and adequate standard of living (Article 29) • Obligation to protect persons with disabilities in situations of risk and natural disasters (Article 11)

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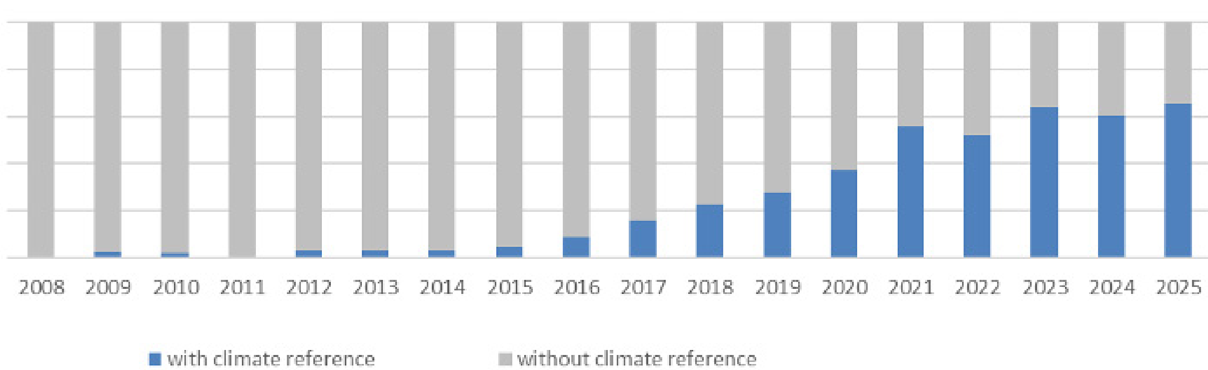
Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCPR	Committee on Civil and Political Rights, or the "UN Human Rights Committee"
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMW	Committee on Migrant Workers
COBs	Concluding Observations
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EHRDs	Environmental human rights defenders
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GC	General Comments
GR	General Recommendations
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRTBs	Human Rights Treaty Bodies
IACtHR	Inter-American Court on Human Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITLOS	International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LOIPRs	List of Issues Prior to Reporting
LOIs	List of Issues
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	UN General Assembly

Analysis of the Contributions of the HRTBs to Elaborating States' Human Rights Obligations in the Context of Climate Change

The present note analyzes all outputs to States by the CCPR, the CESCR, the CEDAW, the CRC, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) through the State review procedure in 2024 and 2025. In total, 229 COBs, LOIs, and LOIPRs addressed climate change out of 364, which accounts for approximately 63 percent of the total number of outputs issued through the State review procedure. The total number of climate-related outputs in 2024 and 2025 continue the increasing trend of the past years. This sustained attention to climate change demonstrates that the HRTBs recognize that addressing the climate crisis and its harmful impacts on rights is as urgent as ever. The following graph shows the evolution in the number of COBs and LOIs/LOIPRs mentioning climate change from January 2008 to December 2025.

Graph 1: Outputs in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure (CCPR, CESCR, CEDAW, CRC, CERD, CRPD, CMW)



Over the past couple of years, and more increasingly in 2025, treaty bodies continue to face a serious financial crisis, which is affecting the wider UN human rights system. This was driven by a reported shortfall in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)'s core budget and significant unpaid member State dues. This liquidity crisis resulted in the cancellation or reduction of sessions, a system-wide loss of total meeting time, the postponement of numerous State party reviews, delays in decisions on individual communications, and the suspension of regular pre-sessional working groups, forcing committees to reallocate scarce plenary time to procedural backlogs. Budgetary constraints have also led to the cancellation for other UN human rights mechanisms of country visits and sharply reduced in-country monitoring capacity, while staffing freezes and programmatic cuts have further undermined civil society participation and timely reporting.

Even amid severe financial and operational limitations, treaty bodies have maintained their key role in the guidance and monitoring of States, by continuing to engage in the State review procedure, working on new General Comments, and advancing individual communications. This continued work highlights their essential role in the UN human rights system, while also exposing how sustained underfunding risks eroding their capacity to effectively monitor States' compliance with their human rights obligations.

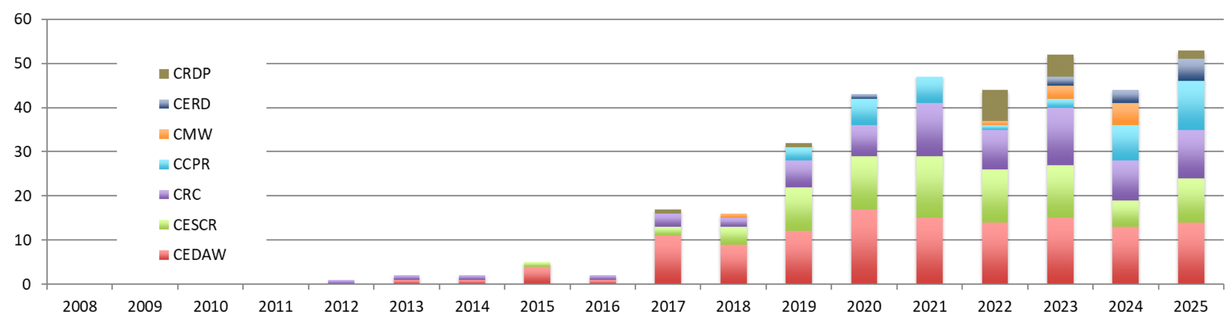
The liquidity crisis is reflected in the total number of outputs (COBs, LOIs and LOIPRs) adopted in 2025. While in 2023 and 2024 these amounted to 196 and 197, 2025 registered a steep decrease, with a total of 168 outputs adopted. In absolute terms, the number of climate-related outputs consequently declined, from 117 in 2024 to 112 in 2025. However, when considered in relative terms, climate-related outputs accounted for approximately 57 percent of total outputs in 2023, increased slightly to 59 percent in 2024, and then increased markedly to 67 percent in 2025, suggesting a sustained relevance of climate change within treaty body outputs despite overall constraints on output production.

For the purposes of this Synthesis Note, "high-income countries" refers to Annex I State parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while "low-income countries" includes all non-Annex I countries, excluding Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Across 2024 and 2025, the CEDAW, CESCR, and CRC continued to treat climate change as a recurring theme in the majority of their issues and recommendations to State parties, reflecting balanced attention to climate concerns across both high-income and low-income countries. CEDAW's climate-related outputs declined from thirty-three in 2024 to thirty-two in 2025 (which represented 82 percent and 86 percent of the total share in 2024 and 2025 respectively). CRC's climate-related outputs decreased from twenty-eight to twenty-four, yet their relative share slightly increased, from 88 percent in 2024 to 92 percent in 2025. CESCR increased its climate-related outputs from nineteen in 2024 to twenty-one in 2025 (share of 100 percent in both years).

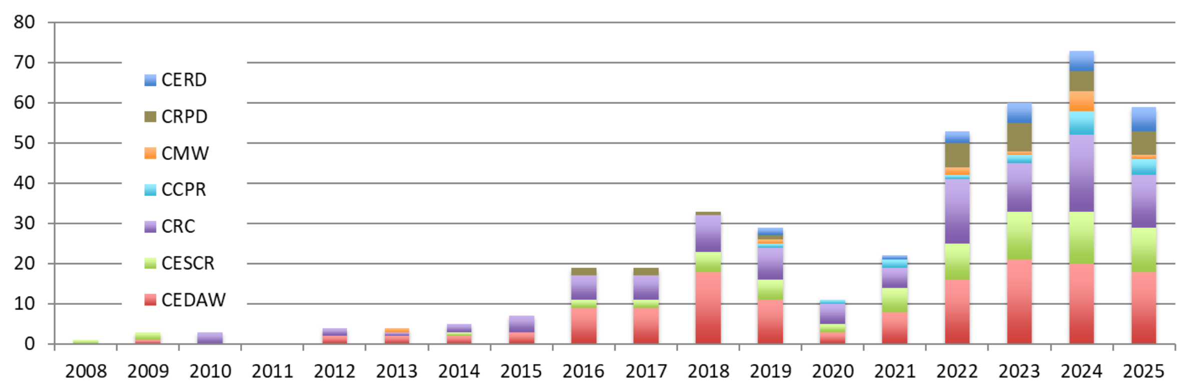
The CCPR, which first considered climate change in 2019, steadily increased its climate-related outputs from four out of twenty-six in 2019 to fourteen out of thirty-five in 2024, and fifteen out of thirty-one in 2025, which accounts for 15 percent, 56 percent and 48 percent respectively. Similarly, the CERD, which began addressing climate change in 2019, intensified its focus from 2022, peaking in 2023 with seven out of seventeen outputs. While its absolute number of climate-related outputs in 2024 (eight out of thirty-six), the CERD rebounded in 2025, rising to eleven out of twenty-six total outputs, which reflects renewed attention to climate change impacts on vulnerable populations. The CRPD also registered a notable rise, increasing from five out of nineteen outputs in 2024 to eight out of twenty in 2025, which represents an increase from 26 percent to 40 percent. By contrast, the CMW experienced a sharp contraction, with climate-related outputs dropping from ten out of sixteen in 2024 to one out of seven in 2025 — the most significant reduction observed among the treaty bodies over the period.

A detailed analysis of climate-related work by the CCPR, CESCR, CRC, CEDAW, and CERD is provided further below in this note.

Graph 2: LOIs/LOIPRs Containing References to Climate Change

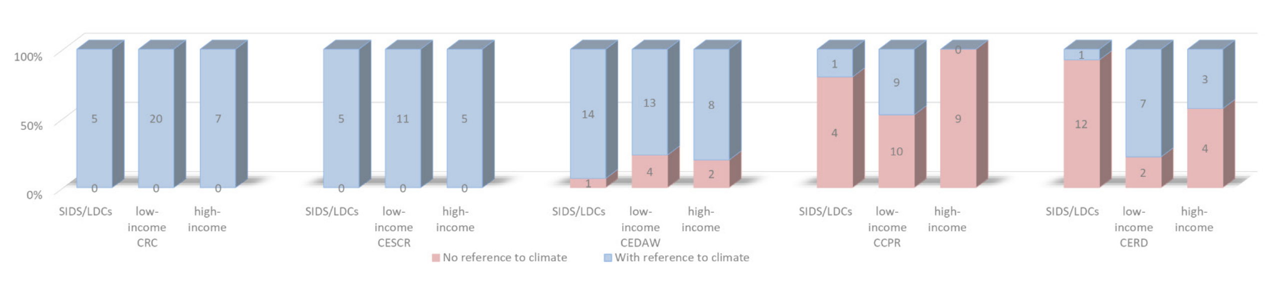


Graph 3: COBs Containing References to Climate Change



While the CRC and CESCR have been very consistent — with climate-related outputs for all the countries reviewed, whether high-income, small island developing states (SIDS)/least developed countries (LDCs, as defined by the UN) or other high-income countries — the CCPR appears to be less balanced, with no climate-related question or recommendation to high-income countries, and all of its climate-related outputs to low-income States (ten out of a total of twenty-four reviewed SIDS/LDCs and other low-income countries). The CERD gave more emphasis to low-income countries, with seven out of nine outputs being climate-focused, and quite balanced with regard to high-income States (with three climate-related outputs out of seven reviewed countries). CEDAW demonstrated the strongest engagement with SIDS and LDCs (fourteen climate-related outputs out of fifteen), while still looking at climate change in the majority of its outputs to other developing States (thirteen out of seventeen) and developed countries (eight out of ten). Overall, this represents a positive trend compared with previous years and confirms that climate change is being increasingly understood as an issue that is relevant to all categories of States.

Graph 4: Outputs of the HRTBs in 2024 and 2025, by Country Category (as defined by SIDS/LDCs, low-income, high-income)



State Review Procedure: Climate-Related Themes

HRTBs have a unique role to play to continue reviewing the adequacy of the climate policies of individual States and to continue to provide authoritative statements regarding the scope of the human rights obligations of States in the context of climate urgency. Compared to other human rights mechanisms, the State review procedure allows treaty bodies to look at the specific circumstances, needs, and challenges of the countries reviewed, and to provide specific and ad hoc guidance. HRTBs should leverage this process to focus on the most pressing climate-related issues.

This section identifies a few of these issues that are particularly relevant when discussing human rights obligations in the context of climate change yet are still little explored by human rights mechanisms. It builds on and expands the themes that had been identified already in the 2024 Synthesis Note. These include fossil fuels, loss and damage, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, environmental human rights defenders, the threats posed by carbon markets and offsets, the rights of future generations, international financial cooperation and climate finance, and an equitable and just energy transition.

Fossil Fuels Extraction, Export and Consumption

As highlighted by the joint statement that was released in November 2023 by six UN Special Rapporteurs, "fossil fuels are at the heart of the planetary ecological crisis and their tremendous negative impacts on human rights are felt throughout their life cycle, from exploration and extraction to combustion and contamination." The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has repeatedly stated that staying below 1.5°C of warming requires immediate action to rapidly phase out fossil fuels. As was indicated in the 2024 Synthesis Note, a growing number of human rights institutions are looking at the role of the fossil fuel industry in undermining human rights, and corresponding obligations upon States. The report on the Imperative of Defossilizing Our Economies by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change further sheds light into the multiple ways in which the fossil fuel industry infringes human rights across its supply chain, through environmental degradation, pollution, adverse health impacts, land dispossession and displacement, interference with Indigenous Peoples' rights, and corporate practices aimed at undermining climate science, public participation, and civic space.

Both the advisory opinion by the IACtHR and the ICJ included important findings about States' obligations with regard to fossil fuels. The IACtHR relied on scientific evidence to identify fossil fuels as the main driver of the climate crisis and called on States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, eliminate short-lived climate pollutants, and facilitate the transition from polluting sectors. It emphasized mandatory climate impact assessments at all stages of high-emitting projects, which also include fossil fuel activities, and endorsed stricter regulation of high-emission companies. It also affirmed that States can be held responsible for climate harm linked to fossil fuel production or authorization, even if the resulting emissions occur abroad.

The ICJ advisory opinion on climate change, which relies on the IPCC as the best available science, affirmed that fossil fuel combustion is a leading cause of climate change and that States, under international law, must exercise due diligence to prevent significant environmental harm, including to the climate system. The Court further specified that failure "to take appropriate action to protect the climate system from GHG emissions — including through fossil fuel production, fossil fuel consumption, the granting of fossil fuel exploration licenses or the provision of fossil fuel subsidies — may constitute an internationally wrongful act which is attributable to that State." Accordingly, States are required to take effective measures to achieve deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, including by regulating and monitoring public and private actors within their jurisdiction.

By addressing multiple dimensions of the fossil fuel industry, both advisory opinions are expected to provide important guidance to national and regional courts, as well as treaty bodies, in assessing how fossil fuel–related conduct may infringe fundamental human rights and identify corresponding obligations of States.

In 2024 and 2025, HRTBs continued to look at fossil fuels from different angles. Twenty-nine COBs and eighteen LOIs mentioned fossil fuels, oil, gas and/or coal. Gas appears to be the fossil fuel that is mentioned more frequently (thirty-two COBs and sixteen LOIs/LOIPRs). When disaggregated by year, the 2024 data show fifteen fossil fuel-related mentions within the COBs and eight in the LOI/LOIPRs. Similarly, in 2025 there have been fourteen mentions in the COBs and ten in the LOI/LOIPRs. This is a significant increase from the past and a testament to the growing attention that treaty bodies are giving to the root causes of the climate crisis. The CESCR is the committee that considered fossil fuels in relation to climate change most frequently compared to other committees. It did so looking at different dimensions of the interplay between fossil fuels and protected rights. Overall, it produced thirty-one outputs that addressed fossil fuel-related issues between 2024 and 2025. Other committees accounted for significantly fewer outputs — for instance, the CRC only issued four containing fossil fuel-related language.

The CESCR made explicit connections between Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and ongoing fossil fuel production and use. For instance, in its COB to Indonesia it stated that the "increase in the number of coal plants across the State party, … may affect the State party's efforts to meet its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement by 2030" and recommended that the State party reduce its reliance on coal and promote alternative and renewable energy sources. Similarly, the Committee expressed concern about Russia's "continued reliance on natural gas and oil exports" with regard to the State party's ability to meet its NDC, and recommended "phas[ing] out carbon emissions from fossil fuels as fast as possible in order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement." The same Committee looked at a specific technique, gas flaring, in its COBs to Iraq, recommending "developing alternatives to gas flaring, expanding the production and use of renewable energy such as solar energy and pausing the issuing of new licenses and concessions concerning oil and gas extraction and production." Interestingly, the CESCR also expressed concern about ongoing subsidies to the fossil fuel sector in its COB to Croatia, as well as the high number of licenses granted for fossil fuel exploitation in its COB to Peru.

The CRC issued a comprehensive COB to Norway, noting with concern its "ongoing and expanding oil and gas exploration, extraction and export and its current climate targets, which are not aligned with the Paris Agreement." The Committee recommended that the State party reduce GHG emissions and consider the impact of climate change on children's rights, including in relation to plans to expand oil and gas extraction. It also included detailed recommendations regarding licenses for the exploration and production of fossil fuels, which should be "in full compliance with the rights enshrined in the Convention," as well as Norway's policies, which should consist of a "detailed plan for phasing out fossil fuels" and a revision of its climate and energy policies, "in order to achieve a reduction in emissions of 55 percent by 2030, in accordance with its commitments, and net-zero emissions by 2050."

The CCPR's LOI to Mongolia focused on the local impacts of extractive industries, asking to provide information on measures taken to "prevent and mitigate the impact on the right to life and other rights … in the context of extractive activities, such as coal and other mining operations in the Gobi region." In its COB to Luxembourg, the CEDAW noted with concern that private financial institutions continued to make significant investments in the fossil fuel industry and other carbon-intensive sectors. It then recommended regulatory policies "to encourage private sector financial institutions to invest in renewable energies and the green economy, disincentivize them from investing in the fuel industry and other carbon-intensive sectors and promote compliance" with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris Agreement, and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Finally, it suggested the establishment of a human rights due diligence process, "to ensure that businesses identify, prevent, mitigate and account for their climate impacts."

A dimension that tends to be overlooked when addressing the question of human rights harm by the fossil fuel industry is corporate-led deception and disinformation with regard to climate science. In its General Comment No. 26 (2023) on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change, the CRC stated that States have an obligation to refrain "from impeding access to accurate environmental information, and protect children from misinformation concerning environmental risks." Yet, treaty bodies have not looked at climate-related disinformation yet. Addressing it would be relevant to their mandates, as climate-related disinformation undermines the rights to participation, access to information and science, among other rights. In its General Comment No. 27 (2025), the CESCR briefly mentioned that States "must adopt evidence-based environmental policy, ensure public access to environmental information, safeguard against disinformation" as part of their obligations under the right to science. The Human Rights Council (HRC) Advisory Committee, in its report on the "Impact of Disinformation on the Enjoyment and Realization of Human Rights", included a recommendation on States' duty to ban fossil fuel advertisements, "and establish robust mechanisms with independent oversight to ensure accountability for both public and non-public entities involved in environmental disinformation." With regard to the issue of "green washing," it recommended that States "[r]equire transparency in corporate sustainability and net-zero claims, ensuring that they are science-based and exclude fossil fuels expansion."

Fossil Fuel Recommendations

HRTBs have an important role in clarifying States' human rights obligations in the context of fossil fuels production, export and consumption. They are in a unique position, compared to other human rights mechanisms, to look at the specific context of each of the State parties they review, and identify the challenges and opportunities when it comes to human rights protection in the context of the oil, gas and coal industry. When addressing the issue of fossil fuels, HRTBs should:

- Highlight concerns related to the extraction of fossil fuels specifically in the State party under review, due to the specific challenges of fossil fuel extraction.
- Look at the multiple dimensions of the human rights impact of fossil fuels production, subsidization, licensing, export and consumption in order to provide effective scrutiny and guidance to State parties on this matter.
- Reiterate that State parties have clear human rights obligations regarding the phaseout of fossil fuel extraction, subsidization, licensing, export and consumption, as a proven measure to address climate change on the basis of the best available science.
- Highlight State parties' human rights obligations with regard to the regulation of private actors — including fossil fuel multinational corporations and financial actors — that are registered in a State party but operate in or finance fossil fuels-related activities in third countries, with a specific focus on extraterritorial obligations.
- Unpack State parties' human rights obligations regarding civil and political rights in the context of ongoing or planned extraction projects.
- Review States parties' obligations with regard to countering corporate-led disinformation on climate science and fossil fuels' impacts.

Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment was recognized by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021 (HRC resolution 48/13), and by the UN General Assembly in 2022 (UNGA resolution 76/300), building upon a wealth of national laws, constitutions, and jurisprudence that already established this right. Many regional human rights instruments also recognize this right — most recently the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, which was adopted in October 2025. As was already unpacked in the 2024 Synthesis Note, the CRC has done pivotal work to specify the content of this right and explain how it relates to other rights protected under the Convention, in its General Comment No. 26 (2023), as has the CEDAW in its General Recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls, where the Committee explicitly recognized that this right "encompasses a safe and stable climate." The CESCR's General Comment No. 27 (2025) on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development is now the latest to mention that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is implicit in the Covenant.

Both the advisory opinions of the IACtHR and the ICJ included important arguments in support of the right to a healthy environment. The IACtHR had already built on this right in previous rulings since it had already been recognized in Article 11 of the San Salvador Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights (see in particular its 2024 ruling in Inhabitants of La Oroya v. Peru). In its advisory opinion, for the first time, the Court recognized that the right to a healthy environment includes the right to a stable and healthy climate. Based on this, it affirmed that States have clear duties to prevent climate harm, uphold international climate obligations, and provide remedies and full reparations for any damage resulting from failures to meet these obligations.

The ICJ recalled the various legal sources and precedents at the national, regional and international levels that already recognized the right to a healthy environment, and noted that over one hundred States have, in variously worded provisions, enshrined this right in their constitutions or domestic legislation. It then affirmed that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a precondition for the enjoyment of many human rights. Consequently, it affirmed that "[t]he human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is therefore inherent in the enjoyment of other human rights," concluding that, "under international law, the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is essential for the enjoyment of other human rights."

In 2024, the CRC and the CEDAW were the only committees that mentioned this right explicitly in their outputs, while in 2025, the CESCR and CERD also referred to this right once. Some of the COBs by the CRC that mention the right to a healthy environment are particularly important, as they look at different ways through which State parties can uphold this right. In its COB to Bhutan, the Committee recommended "[s]trengthen[ing], with the active participation of schools, awareness-raising for children on their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health." When reviewing Georgia's climate framework, it recommended that the State party ensure that its 2030 climate change strategy and action plan "prioritize children's right to a healthy environment, including an assessment of risks and measures to address priority concerns." Importantly, in its COB to Argentina, the Committee focused on the need to ensure access to justice and effective remedies for harms and violations of children's right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Finally, in its recommendation to Korea, the CEDAW highlighted the need for the State party to be "more ambitious in the enforcement decree of the Carbon Neutrality Act, which mandates the State Party to set its nationally determined contributions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 so as to respect the fundamental rights to a healthy environment for generations to come."

In its COB to Sweden, the CERD expressed its concern about "[r]eported irreparable damage caused by economic, energy, industrial and natural resource development projects, including mining projects and the adverse impact on the Sámi people's right to...a clean, healthy and sustainable environment." In its LOI to Kazakhstan, the CEDAW requested information on the role that women play in the implementation of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The CESCR asked Germany about measures to ensure that "its support of industrial green energy projects and its regulation and monitoring of the business activities of companies domiciled in the State Party do not have a negative impact on the right to a healthy environment or biodiversity."

When discussing the right to a healthy environment, special attention must be given to those whose lives and other fundamental rights are at risk due to their work to defend the environment, i.e., environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs). In 2024, four outputs mentioned EHRDs explicitly, while in 2025, six did. The CCPR's LOIs to Vietnam and South Africa requested information on measures taken to specifically protect EHRDs. In the former, the Committee also referred to specific individual cases and remedies to the victims. In its COB to Chile, the CEDAW recommended that "impartial, and effective investigations" be conducted into "all reported cases of threats, intimidation, and violence against women environmental human rights defenders, ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and victims have access to effective remedies and adequate protection." The CCPR's LOIPRs to Switzerland and Sweden were the only outputs addressed to high-income countries. In them, the Committee included detailed questions about measures taken to ensure a safe and enabling environment for environmental and climate human rights defenders, including with regard to alleged censorship, harassment and the use of "abusive judicial procedures, such as strategic lawsuits against public participation." Interestingly, the CCPR and the CEDAW included "climate activists" as part of human rights defenders in their questions, to Sweden and Kenya respectively, about intimidation, harassment, and arbitrary arrests. This is particularly important, as crackdown on climate and environmental protesters is increasing globally, as various human rights experts have highlighted (e.g., the report on *Tipping Points: Human Rights Defenders, Climate Change and a Just Transition* by the UN Special rapporteur on human rights defenders, or the *Position Paper on State Repression of Environmental Protest and Civil Disobedience: A Major Threat to Human Rights and Democracy* by the UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention).

Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment Recommendations

HRTBs have the potential to further clarify the content of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. They should:

- Continue to, or start to, explicitly recognize it as a right, in line with the HRC and the UN General Assembly Resolutions.
- Unpack how the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is linked to other rights protected by the Conventions or Covenants.
- Build on the advisory opinions on climate change by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice and recommend that State parties climate action is informed by them.
- Make explicit the need for effective protection of those that work with the respect of this right, i.e., environmental human rights defenders, including activists and protesters.

Remedy for Climate Harm

In the context of climate change, harm can take multiple forms. On one hand, States have obligations to address the human rights harm caused by climate-induced slow-onset and sudden events. Harm can also occur in the context of climate-inducing activities, for instance, fossil fuel extraction. Human rights obligations are an important compass to determine States' duties to provide effective remedy for those who are harmed by climate change-related impacts or climate-inducing activities, and guide remedy measures to ensure that they are effective and inclusive. As the *2024 Synthesis Note* showed, a growing number of human rights mechanisms have started to look at the question of remedy for climate harm, including in the 2019 Joint Statement on Climate Change and Human Rights by five HRTBs, the CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls, and more extensively, the CRC's General Comment No. 26 (2023) on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change. This work builds on and complements development under the UNFCCC, as Parties established a "Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage" at the Twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties (COP27). In this context, human rights-based guidance on how to address loss and damage at the local, national, and international levels is becoming increasingly important to ensure that any financial mechanism to address loss and damage can best serve the individuals and communities affected by the climate crisis.

In 2024, the UN Secretary General released a landmark *Analytical Study on the Impact of Loss and Damage from the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on the Full Enjoyment of Human Rights, Exploring Equity-Based Approaches and Solutions to Addressing the Same*. The study makes it explicit that those who experience climate-related human rights violations are entitled to access effective remedies under international human rights law, including reparations, and that States should be accountable for their contributions to the climate crisis, including for failing to regulate corporate emissions. It confirmed that "[r]emedies and reparatory justice require a comprehensive and multipronged approach grounded in international human rights law, including, where appropriate, the right to reparations, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition." The study contains a series of recommendations to States, with regard to loss and damage policies, modalities of climate finance, access to remedies through judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, and loss and damage assessments. The IACtHR, in its advisory opinion, reiterated the right to remedy and provided guidance on States' obligations to provide comprehensive redress in the context of climate-related harm. It clarified that mechanisms and measures of reparation should be adapted to the nature of the harm and consider the particular circumstances of its effects on individuals and on Nature. It also identified a series of measures, which include restitution aimed at restoring the climate system and the ecosystems; rehabilitation, for diseases linked to or exacerbated by climate change; compensation measures based on effective assessment of the losses suffered; guarantees of non-repetition to reduce vulnerability, monitor compliance, and enhance the resilience of natural and human systems. The ICJ also looked at the question of remedy and confirmed that any breach of legal obligations by a State in the climate context triggers the full range of legal consequences under the international law of State responsibility. It then confirmed that these consequences include obligations of cessation and non-repetition, which apply irrespective of the existence of harm, as well as full reparation, including restitution, compensation and/or satisfaction when harm occurs. These reports and advisory opinions provide helpful references as treaty bodies work to guide States in the provision of effective remedy in the case of climate-related human rights harm.

While in 2023 the CEDAW was the first treaty body to explicitly mention issues relating to remedy and loss and damage in the State review procedure, in 2024 and 2025, the CRC, CESCR, and CERD also issued relevant statements. In 2024, in total, ten COBs and two LOIs/LOIPRs mentioned loss and damage, remedy or compensation in the context of climate or environmental disruption, while in 2025, twelve COBs and one LOI. Some looked at climate-induced losses. For instance, the CEDAW noted with concern that in Brazil, "climate change has a deleterious impact on rural, Indigenous and Quilombola women and women of African descent, ... , since climate change results in the loss of their ecosystems, community habitats, livelihoods and ancestral knowledge and in the disruption of food and water supplies." The CERD took a step forward, recommending that Kenya "guarantee that those affected by climate change and conservation measures are properly consulted and compensated for any damage or loss suffered." For the first time, the CRC referred to the polluter pays principle, recommending that South Africa "[e]xpedite the adoption of the Climate Change Bill, ... strictly implement the "polluter pays principle," and ensure that any revisions of the national development, climate, environmental and energy policies and plans integrate the linkages with the needs and rights of children."

Some outputs reviewed issues connected to loss and damage, such as displacement or loss of cultural heritage. For instance, in its COB to New Zealand, the CERD made a detailed recommendation about the need to safeguard and allow the transmission of "Māori cultural knowledge, practices and livelihoods that are at risk due to climate change and environmental degradation, such as *tūrangawaewae* (a place to stand) resulting from forced relocation or loss of land; the erosion of traditional relationships with *te taiao* (the natural environment); the decline of *taonga* (treasured) species; and the disruption of intergenerational knowledge and cultural practices such as *mahinga kai* (customary food gathering)." The Committee also recommended enhanced efforts to support the resettlement and integration of migrants and refugees, "taking into account regional migration trends, including those driven by climate change." In its COB to Guinea Bissau, the CCPR noted with concern the absence of a national framework to address internal displacement, "including risks linked to climate change." The CEDAW noted "with interest" Tuvalu's 2023 constitutional amendments that included a new definition of statehood, providing that "the State of Tuvalu shall remain in perpetuity, notwithstanding the impacts of climate change or other causes resulting in loss to the physical territory of Tuvalu." It also noted the *Te Ataeao Nei* Project (Future Now Project) initiative to create a virtual representation of Tuvalu, stating that "[w]ith the launch of the first-ever digital State, Tuvalu has the potential to pioneer best practices regarding digital space and to provide stronger protections in potentially high-risk areas." It also cautioned the State party against promoting displacement as a solution to climate change and rising sea levels. While noting that a recent resettlement agreement with Australia provides a pathway for Tuvaluans to settle in Australia, including in the context of climate change, it stated that potential "large-scale migration from Tuvalu due to rising sea levels and climate change poses significant risks to Tuvaluan nationality for women, men, girls and boys, in legal terms and for their identity."

Other outputs, even if they didn't focus on climate change, looked at the question of remedy for harm caused by environmentally disruptive activities, including fossil fuel extraction. For instance, the CESCR recommended that Honduras "[e]nsure that Indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples affected by extractive projects and business activities are consulted, receive compensation for any damage or loss suffered and obtain tangible benefits from such activities." Similarly, in its COB to Peru, it recommended "remediation mechanisms for communities affected by the pollution caused by mining and petroleum-related activities, whether legal or illegal, ensuring ecological restoration and compensation for the victims." The Committee further urged Peru to comply fully with the judgment of the IACtHR in the case of *Inhabitants of La Oroya v. Peru*, "ensuring full reparation for the harm suffered by the communities affected by industrial pollution."

Some outputs mentioned finance for loss and damage specifically, looking at State parties' obligation to put in place such mechanisms at the national level, support existing ones, and ensure effective participation of affected communities. For example, the CESCR recommended that Honduras "[s]trengthen international cooperation to obtain financial and technological support for climate change mitigation and response measures, including under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts." The same Committee asked Cabo Verde whether it had applied to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC, and what the result of such a request was. The CEDAW also looked at the Fund and issued a comprehensive recommendation to Luxembourg. The Committee first noted that the State party had contributed eight million euros to the Fund but also expressed concern that the Fund still remained underfunded. On this basis, it recommended that Luxembourg consider increasing its contribution to the Fund.

The CEDAW also recommended that Niger "ensure that women equally and actively participate in the creation and operation of new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage" under the UNFCCC, and that Greece and the Central African Republic empower women "with knowledge to demand their rights and effectively participate in climate change-related decision-making and the development of adaptation and loss and damage strategies and actions that build women's and girls' resilience to the impact of climate change."

The draft General Comment No. 27 on Children's Right to Access to Justice and to an Effective Remedy that the CRC is working on will also provide the opportunity to unpack important dimensions with regard to access to justice and remedy in the context of environmental harm.

Climate Harm Recommendations

In the context of loss and damage, HRTBs should:

- Urge high-income States to provide adequate, grant-based, equitable sources of finance to address loss and damage, including through the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage established under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.
- Underscore that States bear human rights obligations, including extraterritorial obligations, to provide remedy and reparation for climate-related human rights harms, and specify what such obligations entail, including in the context of non-economic loss and damage.
- Reiterate the polluter pays principle, which should inform States' obligations to provide remedy and reparation for climate harm, including with regard to remedy from private actors.

Carbon Markets and Offsets

Carbon markets are trading systems in which carbon credits — generated primarily from a reduction or removal of GHG emissions — are bought and sold by countries, companies, or individuals. These entities engage in a carbon market by buying a carbon credit sold by another entity to claim that they have "offset" their own emissions. The 2024 *Synthesis Note* explained how carbon markets are associated with several human rights and environmental risks and violations, and how carbon trading mechanisms are ineffective in reducing GHG emissions. By pursuing carbon market mechanisms, States violate their obligations to promote, respect and fulfill human rights, and fail to effectively reduce the GHG emissions. Furthermore, these schemes often contribute to violations of fundamental rights in the places where credit-generating activities occur by providing additional financial incentives for such projects. Thus, both the countries that host these activities (and thus sell credits) and those that buy the credits fail to uphold their human rights obligations.

HRTBs have very rarely addressed the issue of carbon markets, even though the associated human rights violations would fall within the scope of their work. In 2024, only one output mentioned, in passing, carbon trading mechanisms. In its COB to Indonesia, the CCPR noted the adoption of a national regulation, the Procedures for Carbon Pricing Implementation, among other climate and environmental laws, but did not comment on it. In 2025, the CESCR recommended that Chile "[g]uarantee the effective implementation of the monitoring, transparency and accountability mechanisms established in Decree No. 4 of the Ministry of the Environment, which approves the regulations on carbon tax compensation through carbon credits, in order to ensure that the system operates as a real and verifiable instrument for compensation and emission reduction to achieve carbon neutrality."

For future State reviews, treaty bodies might want to consider looking more in detail at the content of carbon market-relevant laws and regulations, and assess whether they are in line with State parties' human rights obligations.

Carbon Market Recommendations

HRTBs have the potential to look closely at the issue of carbon markets and provide guidance on States' relevant human rights obligations. In particular, HRTBs should:

- Assess whether provisions on carbon markets exist and whether they are in compliance with the State party's human rights obligations when reviewing States' climate law.
- Review whether protected human rights — both substantive and procedural — are violated by States hosting credit-generating activities, whether effective complaint and accountability mechanisms exist, and whether communities face retaliation for using them.

- Assess States that buy credits for compliance with their human rights obligations to effectively reduce GHG emissions directly (rather than relying on offsets) and ensure that no human rights violation occurs in connection to the credit-generating activities.
- Reiterate that, in line with their duty to regulate private actors under their jurisdiction and control, States must ensure that private actors buying credits comply with their obligations to effectively reduce GHG emissions and ensure that no human rights violation occurs in connection to the credit-generating activities.

Future Generations

Climate change, along with the two other environmental planetary crises (biodiversity loss and pollution) jeopardizes the rights of future generations to enjoy all internationally recognized human rights. This undermines some of the very core principles of the human rights systems: universality and non-discrimination. Several General Comments, including the CCPR's General Comment No. 36 (2019) on the Right to Life, the CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change, the CESCR GC No. 27(2025) on Sustainable Development, and the CRC's General Comment No. 26 (2023) have mentioned the rights of future generations in the context of climate change and environmental harm. The CESCR GC No. 27 (2025) on Sustainable Development devotes a section to future generations and explains that "[t]he Covenant does not contain any temporal limits and the rights enshrined therein extend to all members of the human family" and that the rights protected under the Covenant "will not be realized if the obligations of States parties to respect and protect the economic, social and cultural rights of future generations are not recognized" (para 91).

Since 2008, only twelve outputs issued by HRTBs through the state review procedure have mentioned future generations or intergenerational equity. In 2024, two recommendations were made with regard to future generations and climate change. In its COB to Mali, the CRC recommended reviewing "the methodology of elaborating and updating climate change programs and legislation by promoting children's participation and referencing children and future generations in all related documents." In its COB to Korea, the CEDAW recalled the final hearings of the Constitutional Court "on four landmark cases on climate change policies that would impact future generations," and recommended that the State party be more ambitious in the implementation of the Carbon Neutrality Act, "so as to respect the fundamental rights to a healthy environment for generations to come." In 2025, no climate-relevant output mentioned future generations specifically, however the CERD noted the disruption of intergenerational knowledge and cultural practices for the Māori in its COB to New Zealand, while the CEDAW recalled that Tuvalu's obligations under the Convention "demand active climate action, [and] compliance with the State Party's duties to the future and the ensuring of intergenerational equity."

Treaty bodies still have the potential to further look at the human rights of future generations with regard to climate change and climate-inducing activities, including fossil fuel extraction, consumption and export. The Maastricht Principles on the Human Rights of Future Generations, adopted in February 2023, and endorsed by more than fifty current and former UN human rights experts, provide a useful source to clarify States' human rights obligations vis-à-vis future generations.

Future Generations Recommendations

HRTBs have the opportunity to further incorporate the rights of future generations in their work. They should:

- Look into how State parties are accounting for the interests and the human rights of future generations when setting up environmental and energy policies, in particular regarding fossil fuels, when conducting State review procedures.
- Unpack and explain how the rights of future generations encompass the Covenants and Conventions in their General Comments/Recommendations or statements, including by building upon the Maastricht Principles and other authoritative documents.
- Make explicit that States' human rights obligations vis-à-vis future generations are distinct from those towards children.

International Financial Cooperation and Climate Finance

In 2024 and 2025, HRTBs continued to address issues related to climate finance and cooperation, although in these last two years CEDAW and CESCR are the only Committees that expressly addressed these issues. In 2024, there were eight outputs addressing these issues and, in 2025, there were a total of sixteen outputs. Surprisingly, contrary to its precedents from previous years and the standards set in the General Comment No. 26 (2023), the CRC failed to devote attention to the issue of climate finance in these last two years.

On its part, CEDAW urged States to ensure women's meaningful participation in the design and governance of climate finance mechanisms, particularly those related to adaptation and loss and damage, in a series of COBs. Notably, Niger, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Chad and Fiji were called to promote women's active participation in the creation and operation of new funding arrangements for responding to environmental damage in their respective COBs. In 2025, in the LOIPR, CEDAW requested Comoros to provide information on any measures taken to ensure the effective participation of women and girls in decision-making processes on climate finance. In the 2025 COBs, the Committee acknowledged Ireland's $27 million and Luxembourg's €8 million contributions to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage. However, after expressing concern on the underfunding of this mechanism, it recommended that Luxembourg consider increasing its contribution. It also called on Tuvalu to solidify its leadership at the international and regional levels to combat climate change.

In addition, the CESCR noted with concern the insufficiency of climate-related finance and called for strengthened international cooperation, particularly related to contributions to the Green Climate Fund, as seen in its recommendations in the COBs to Romania and Sweden from 2024. In a 2025 LOI, it asked Germany to provide information on the steps taken to implement its international obligations to provide climate finance and required the Netherlands in the COB to implement its international obligations of assistance and development cooperation, mentioning particularly climate finance. The Committee also recommended the Philippines, Zimbabwe, and Lao People's Democratic Republic increase efforts to obtain international support, including financial and technical assistance, to secure funding for emission-reduction targets and climate adaptation measures in their respective 2025 COBs. The CESCR also stressed the need to integrate climate obligations into broader economic and fiscal policies. It called on States to reform fossil fuel subsidies, introduce emissions-related taxation, and ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation measures are adequately funded through rights-based budget allocations in its 2024 COBs to Iraq, Ireland, Poland and Cyprus.

CESCR's General Comment No. 27 (2025) provided detailed normative guidance on international assistance and cooperation in the context of environmental degradation. The Committee emphasized that responding to transboundary environmental challenges, such as climate change, requires States to take steps individually and through international cooperation. The Committee stressed that in implementing this obligation, States should consider historical contributions to environmental degradation, different capabilities, and the specific needs of developing countries, reaffirming that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities is essential for a just and equitable transition. The General Comment identified priority areas of cooperation, including climate finance, technology transfer, capacity-building, information-sharing, addressing loss and damage, and securing solutions for climate-induced displacement. It emphasized that "developed" States should provide climate finance and transfer environmentally sound technologies to support mitigation, adaptation and reparations, particularly for countries least responsible but most affected. Critically, the Committee stated that assistance to low-income countries with high debt burdens should be provided as grants rather than loans to avoid exacerbating debt distress, and that, where necessary, debt restructuring, relief or cancellation should be considered. The General Comment also called on States to exercise their responsibilities within the international financial architecture to ensure that decisions advance the realization of Covenant rights.

Climate Finance Recommendations

HRTBs have the opportunity to clarify the obligations of States in relation to international cooperation and climate finance. HRTBs should:

- Call on high-income or high-polluting States to increase their financial assistance to fight climate change in their State review procedures.
- Call on States to further cooperate at the universal level to establish a fair international taxation system and establish progressive and green taxes to garner the financial resources to fight the climate crisis.
- Call upon States, as members of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), to use their influence and decision-making power in those organizations to promote climate sustainability — which includes finance for a just transition — when assessing new programs and loans and potential renegotiations of existing debts.
- Call upon States, as members of IFIs, to leverage their influence and decision-making power to ensure that loan conditions are not tied to fossil fuel extraction derived from the export of commodities.

Equitable and Just Transition

Considering the pressing nature of the climate emergency, States have the imperative to phase out fossil fuels in a way that is grounded in human rights and equity, and accounts for historically marginalized groups. In 2024, HRTBs continued addressing the need to ensure a just transition away from fossil fuels.

HRTBs have underscored the need to advance the energy transition by calling on States to transform their energy systems. CEDAW, for example, emphasized the importance of establishing gender-responsive policy frameworks for climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and mitigation (e.g., in their COBs to Korea and Singapore). While not explicitly referencing the concept of a just and fair transition, CEDAW nonetheless called for measures aimed at building women's capacity and increasing their access to work opportunities in the areas of climate transition (e.g., in its COB to Italy). It also expressed concern about women's underrepresentation in decision-making processes related to the green transition and urged Estonia to ensure the participation of women in decision-making related to the transition. Its COB to Estonia also called on the State to assess the economic impact of the green transition, in particular on rural women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities and single women heads of households, in order to devise measures to compensate for any undue economic hardships. Similarly, the CESCR expressed concern over the inadequate consideration of the impact that the development of industries such as wind power and mining of critical minerals, implemented in the context of the green transition, has on the rights of minorities in its COB to Sweden. In 2025, the CESCR continued working on these issues and, in its COB to the Netherlands, called on the State party to accelerate the transition towards renewable energy, phasing out reliance on fossil fuels and ensuring a just and inclusive energy transition, with special attention to workers in the fossil fuel industry and low-income households.

CESCR's General Comment No. 27 (2025) also provided comprehensive guidance on the human rights dimensions of the transition to sustainable economies. The Committee emphasized that the full realization of Covenant rights demands a just transition towards a sustainable economy that puts human rights and the well-being of the planet at its center. It recognized that while the transition to environmentally sustainable economies can generate new decent work opportunities, it may also result in job losses in fossil fuel-reliant sectors, requiring States to assess such impacts and implement policies to expand decent work opportunities during the transition to sustainable economies. The General Comment also stressed that fiscal policies should be sustainable, support a just transition to low-carbon economies, and protect low-income households from increased costs during this transition, while being shaped through transparent and participatory processes. The Committee emphasized that developed States, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, should lead mitigation efforts and provide financial and technological assistance to developing States to enable their effective climate action, and that a just transition must reduce, not reinforce, inequalities both within and between countries. Considering the importance of climate policy being aligned with human rights principles and serving as a tool to tackle disparities, these recommendations from the Committees are particularly significant.

Just Transition Recommendations

As HRTBs increasingly consider States' obligations to phase out fossil fuels, they must also look at the obligations that underpin the transition towards renewable energy, in a way that is just, rights-based, and equitable. In doing so, HRTBs should:

- Refer specifically to the concept of just transition and further develop what this entails for the countries under consideration.
- Clarify that the energy transition towards more sustainable societies must be carried out while fully respecting human rights and highlight the importance of human rights principles and obligations guiding mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Identify specific groups that need specific attention in the just transition process.
- Recognize the increased challenges faced by women and girls due to the overburden of care responsibilities derived from the escalation of the climate emergency.

Human Rights Committee (CCPR)

This note reviews the outputs of the CCPR related to climate change in 2024-2025 and complements our previous notes dedicated to such outputs up to 2023.

Graph 5: Outputs of the CCPR in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure

In 2024 and 2025, the CCPR continued to consider climate change in some of its COBs, and LOIs/LOIPRs. In 2024, fourteen outputs of its States review procedure out of thirty-five mentioned climate change (40 percent), of which six COBs and eight LOIs/ LOIPRs. In 2025, fifteen outputs out of thirty-one were climate-related (48 percent). Of these, four were COBs and eleven were LOIs/ LOIPRs. In both years, there was an increase in climate related work, if compared to 2023, when the Committee issued two COBs and two LOIs/LOIPRs mentioning climate change. The Committee made more frequent references to climate change in its 2025 outputs than any year before.

Throughout the last two years, the Committee required States to provide information on the measures taken to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in a total of twelve LOIs/LOIPRs (Mongolia, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Austria, Djibouti, and Benin in 2024, and Sweden, Samoa, Denmark, Ghana, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas in 2025). In some of those outputs, the CCPR specifically inquired about how States were adopting a precautionary approach to protect persons from the negative impact of climate change (e.g., Vietnam, Austria, New Zealand, Sweden, Denmark and Australia). Concerning mitigation efforts, in its COBs to Ecuador, the Maldives, Pakistan, Mongolia and Vietnam, the Committee focused on the impacts of climate change on the population, and corresponding obligations of the State parties, highlighting the precautionary principle. In particular, it focused on the impacts of climate change on disadvantaged groups and affected communities, including Indigenous Peoples (e.g., its COB to Ecuador, Mongolia and Vietnam), and reiterated States parties’ obligation to protect them from climate-induced internal displacement (e.g., its COB to Indonesia). In the COB to Namibia, to which the Committee had asked information on “the implications of planned oil and gas extraction for local rural populations, in particular for marginalized Indigenous communities” in 2023, it recommended that the State party ensure meaningful consultations before granting extraction licenses, and noted the importance of undergoing an environmental impact assessment.

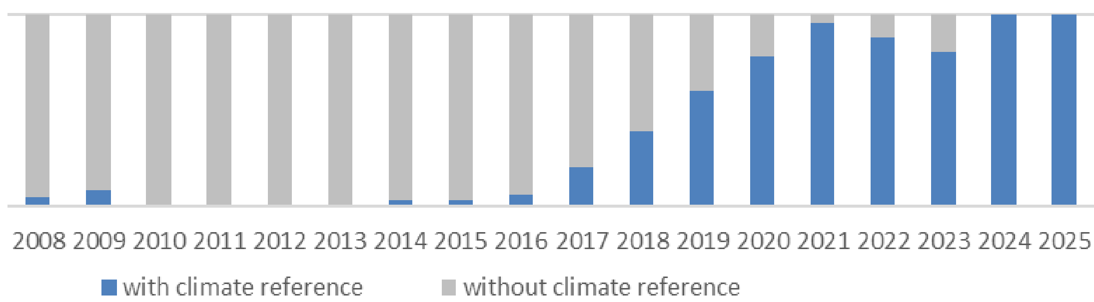
The LOI to Vietnam and the LOIPR to Sweden are particularly timely in light of shrinking civic space, as both explicitly mentioned environmental human rights defenders and asked questions on measures to safeguard civic space. In the LOI to South Africa, while it did not mention climate change explicitly, the Committee also asked questions about the protection of EHRDs.

The Committee also asked questions about the local impacts of coal extraction, and in its LOIPRs to Andorra and Azerbaijan, it asked questions about the current climate policies and efforts to promote sustainable energy sources. Moreover, in the COBs, the Committee welcomed, noted and scrutinized a series of laws and policies that States adopted with regard to climate change, including its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement (e.g., its COBs to Namibia, Maldives, Zimbabwe, Indonesia). In some cases, the CCPR noted the inadequate implementation of measures (e.g., its COB to Guyana) or criticized specific policies lowering environmental standards (e.g., its COB to Indonesia).

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)

This note reviews the outputs of the CESCR related to climate change in 2024-2025 and complements our previous notes dedicated to such outputs up to 2023.

Graph 6: Outputs of the CESCR in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure.



In 2024 and 2025, the CESCR achieved a significant milestone, as it referenced climate change in all of its outputs through the State review procedure. In 2024, CESCR released nineteen outputs, of which thirteen were COBs and six were LOIs, all including a reference to climate change. The same happened in 2025 with all of the twenty-one outputs, eleven COBs and ten LOIs. Across the 2024-2025 cycle, this totals forty out of forty outputs — the CESCR being the first of the HRTBs to include references to climate change systematically in all its outputs. This was an increase compared to 2023 where CESCR produced twelve COBs and twelve LOIs mentioning climate; however, only 80 percent of the total outputs included climate references. Although due to the cancellation of pre-session meetings and its growing backlog, the Committee has been releasing fewer outputs than in the years before (down from twenty-four in 2022 and thirty in 2023), the fact that the Committee analyzed climate related issues in all of its State reporting work for two years in a row is very significant and shows CESCR's efforts to address the obligations incumbent upon States in light of the climate emergency.

Throughout these two years, the Committee maintained a strong focus on States’ climate mitigation efforts, raising the issue in nineteen outputs (six LOIs and thirteen COBs) in 2024 and likewise in nineteen outputs (ten LOIs and nine COBs) in 2025. It also analyzed twenty-seven times the progress of States related to the NDCs under the Paris Agreement, noting that a number of States were off track. For example, in its COB to Indonesia, the Committee urged Indonesia to curtail its growing fleet of coal-fired power plants so as to meet its 2030 NDC, and, in its COB to Iraq, it recommended that the State party increase taxation on emissions and suspend new oil and gas licenses. It also asked Ireland to tighten emission reduction measures in the agriculture and land use sectors. Similar concerns appeared in the concluding observations on Romania, Sweden, Iceland, Poland, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Cyprus, Albania, Malawi, Russia, Croatia, Peru, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Laos, and the Netherlands. In the LOIs for Angola, Georgia, Mexico, Namibia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, the Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Mauritius, Moldova, Cabo Verde, Turkmenistan, North Macedonia, Guinea-Bissau, Eswatini, and Germany. the Committee pressed those States to detail the steps they are taking to deliver their NDCs. The Committee also promoted concrete policy tools: it advised Iraq to develop alternatives to gas flaring, encouraged Indonesia to replace coal with renewables, recommended that Croatia abolish subsidies for fossil fuels, and simplify approval processes for renewable energy projects.

Climate adaptation remained almost as prominent. In 2024, adaptation was mentioned in sixteen outputs (ten COBs and six LOIs); while in 2025, the theme was included in twenty outputs (ten COBs and ten LOIs). The Committee repeatedly asked whether States had adopted — or planned to adopt — comprehensive National Adaptation Plans and whether those plans were adequately funded. It welcomed Iraq’s NAP yet called for much greater investment in water scarcity measures, expressed concern at Mauritania’s lack of a NAP, and recommended that Poland, Cyprus and Malawi increase the resources earmarked for disaster risk reduction and resilience building. In several LOIs, including Angola, Georgia, Namibia, the Republic of Korea, Tunisia, and Germany, it required detailed information on how adaptation measures would protect the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The Committee also linked adaptation to food systems and land management: it suggested, for instance, that drought-prone Iraq invest in desalination, wastewater treatment and cross border water sharing. The Committee also recommended that the Philippines finalize its NAP with attention to the needs of Indigenous Peoples and marginalized groups and recommended taking measures to protect coastal communities and densely populated areas from rising sea levels and potential flooding.

Across both mitigation and adaptation discussions, the Committee stressed the need to consult and protect communities most affected by climate impacts and by low carbon transitions. In its COB to Indonesia, it called on the State party to obtain the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples before approving energy projects, urged Sweden to ensure meaningful Sámi participation in green transition initiatives, and reminded Honduras and Kyrgyzstan that large-scale extractive or renewable energy projects require environmental and human rights impact assessments and effective remedies for affected groups.

Explicit references to fossil fuels appeared in fifteen outputs (eight in 2024 and seven in 2025). In its 2024 work, the Committee criticized continued coal expansion in Indonesia and heavy oil and gas dependence in Iraq, Cyprus and Poland, and recommended accelerated investment in renewables and, where necessary, higher emissions taxes or moratoria on new extraction licenses (e.g., in its COBs to Iraq and Ireland). In several cases — most clearly Iraq and Poland — it highlighted that unsustainable practices were harming the climate "beyond the State party's borders," implicitly invoking extraterritorial responsibilities under the Covenant. Among the 2025 outputs, the Committee recommended Croatia eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and called on Russia to expand renewable energy and introduce carbon pricing instruments.

Finally, the Committee increasingly stressed the need to integrate climate obligations into broader economic and fiscal policies. It called on States to reform fossil fuel subsidies, introduce emissions-related taxation, and ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation measures are adequately funded through rights-based budget allocations (e.g., in its COBs Iraq, Ireland, Poland, and Cyprus). The Committee also called on the Netherlands to prioritize climate finance and technology transfer through its development cooperation obligations.

The Committee also released its General Comment No. 27 (2025) on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development. CESCR emphasized that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is both an autonomous human right, inherent in the Covenant as a whole and derived from specific Covenant rights. The Committee stressed that this right is essential for the enjoyment of all Covenant rights and stressed that accelerating environmental challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, pose serious threats to the enjoyment of rights by present and future generations. It also noted that individuals, groups and countries that have historically contributed the least to the environmental crises we face are often the most affected and least able to cope with their impacts.

The General Comment is structured in six main sections:

1. An introduction that establishes the urgency of environmental crises and their impact on economic, social and cultural rights.
2. The scope and method of interpretation, situating the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment within the Covenant framework and emphasizing the principles of intergenerational equity, sustainable development and the need for integration with international environmental law.
3. Obligations in the context of environmental degradation, further subdivided into general obligations (including the general obligations to respect, protect and fulfil rights, progressive realization, and maximum available resources), core obligations, international obligations (divided into extraterritorial obligations, and international assistance and cooperation), and the obligation of equality and non-discrimination (divided between obligations deriving from art. 2(2) and art. 3).
4. The obligations deriving from specific Covenant rights.
5. Individuals and groups in particularly vulnerable situations, including children, Indigenous Peoples, peasants, pastoralists, fishers and displaced persons.
6. Remedies and accountability, emphasizing access to timely, affordable and effective judicial and non-judicial remedies, and reparations for victims.

The Committee stressed that relevant rules of international environmental law — including the principles of intergenerational equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and precaution — should also guide interpretation of the Covenant in the context of climate change.

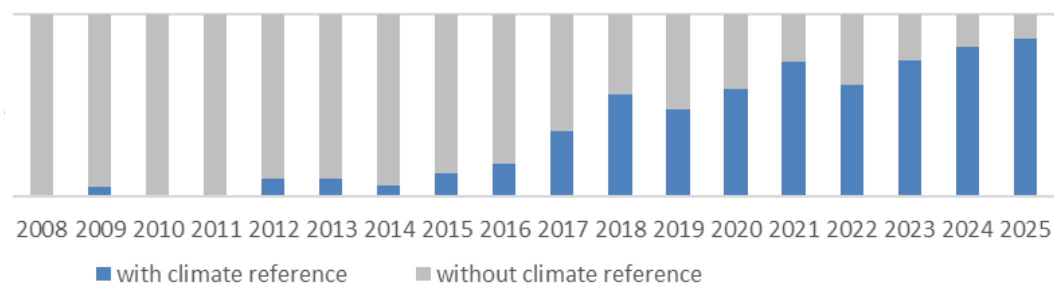
Regarding general obligations, the Committee outlined that the obligation to respect requires States to refrain from acts that foreseeably contribute to or cause significant environmental harm, while the obligation to protect requires preventing such harm by regulating the activities of business entities and other actors under their jurisdiction or control, exercising due diligence proportionate to the degree of risk. Where there is risk of serious and irreversible environmental harm affecting Covenant rights, States must apply the precautionary principle and take all necessary measures to prevent such harm even in the absence of scientific certainty. The obligation to fulfill requires States to take legislative, administrative, financial and judicial measures to preserve, protect and restore ecosystems essential to Covenant rights, including securing clean air, a safe climate, fertile land, and healthy ecosystems.

On extraterritorial obligations, the Committee affirmed that States must prevent foreseeable harm to the enjoyment of Covenant rights in other countries resulting from climate change, pollution or unsustainable development, including by regulating activities under their effective control that contribute to such harm. Regarding international assistance and cooperation, the Committee stressed that responding to transboundary environmental challenges requires an effective global response, with States taking steps individually and through international cooperation, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and address biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. In implementing this obligation, the Committee said States should consider historical contributions to environmental degradation, different capabilities, and the specific needs of so-called "developing" countries, a term the Committee uses without specific definition. The Committee highlighted that a just transition must reduce, not reinforce, inequalities both within and between countries.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

This note reviews the outputs of the CEDAW related to climate change in 2024-2025 and complements our previous notes dedicated to such outputs up to 2023.

Graph 7: Outputs of the CEDAW in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure



In line with the work from previous years, CEDAW was the committee that issued the highest number of climate-related outputs in its State review procedure work in 2024 and 2025 in absolute terms. In 2024, the CEDAW released thirty-three climate-related outputs out of forty total outputs (82 percent). Of these thirty-three, twenty were COBs and thirteen were LOIs. In 2025, it released thirty-two out of thirty-seven (86 percent), of which eighteen were COBs and fourteen were LOIs/LOIPRs. Across the 2024-2025 cycle, this totals sixty-five out of seventy-seven outputs (84 percent), indicating consistently high integration of climate considerations in CEDAW's reporting work. This was an increase compared to 2023 where only 75 percent of CEDAW's outputs were climate related.

CEDAW continued to address mitigation policies, an issue that appeared in eighteen (six LOIs and twelve COBs) outputs in 2024. In 2025, CEDAW issued nineteen outputs (twelve LOIs and seven COBs) addressing mitigation. In particular, it called for the systematic integration of a gender perspective in national mitigation frameworks (e.g., in its COBs to Greece, Chile, and Singapore). CEDAW urged Estonia to ensure women's participation in decision-making around the green transition and encouraged the inclusion of gender-responsive budgeting for mitigation in the COBs to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In its COB to Brazil, CEDAW also emphasized that Indigenous, Quilombola and Afro-descendant women should be included in decision-making around both mitigation and adaptation projects and that any use of their territories must be subject to their FPIC and adequate compensation. A similar recommendation was made in the COB to Chile, underscoring the need for environmental safeguards and protection of women EHRDs.

CEDAW also continued to highlight how rural women, Indigenous women, women of African descent, migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, and women living in poverty face an intensified impact of climate change (e.g., in its COBs to Brazil, Chile, Canada, Japan, Laos, Niger, Kuwait, the Republic of Korea, and Benin). In light of the disproportionate impact of climate change on women's rights, CEDAW repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring women's meaningful participation in processes, programs, and policymaking related to climate change (e.g., in its COBs to Italy, Turkmen-istan, Singapore, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Laos, and the Central African Republic).

CEDAW continued to look specifically into fossil fuels, although to a limited extent, in its LOI to Kazakhstan, and its COBs to Luxembourg and Belize. In its COB to Luxembourg, CEDAW noted with concern that "private financial institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Party continue to make significant investments in the fossil fuel industry and other carbon-intensive sectors," and recommended regulatory policies to encourage private sector financial institutions to invest in renewable energies, and disincentivize them from investing in fossil fuels. It also suggested establishing a "human rights due diligence process, to ensure that businesses identify, prevent, mitigate and account for their climate impacts." In its recommendation to Belize, CEDAW expressed concern about the delay in the full implementation of a landmark 2015 judgment of the Caribbean Court of Justice, *Maya Leaders Alliance et al. v. The Attorney General of Belize*, as well as the authorization of oil drilling, logging and concessions to energy companies in Maya lands. In its COB to the Republic of Korea, CEDAW requested improvements to the enforcement of the Carbon Neutrality Act to better safeguard women's rights and environmental health for future generations. CEDAW also considered the broader impacts of the extractive sector, raising related concerns in five outputs. In its COB to Brazil, CEDAW noted the adverse impact of extractive activities on rural, Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, urging the State to uphold their right to FPIC. It also addressed extractive-sector impacts in the COB to the Central African Republic, where mining and resource exploitation were linked to climate-related displacement and loss of livelihoods among rural women, and in the COB to Chile, where it asked the State to ensure that mining companies comply with environmental standards and respect water rights. In its COB to Canada, CEDAW addressed the gendered risks of deep-seabed mining, and in its COB to Japan, it emphasized the extraterritorial obligations of the State in relation to Japanese extractive companies operating abroad.

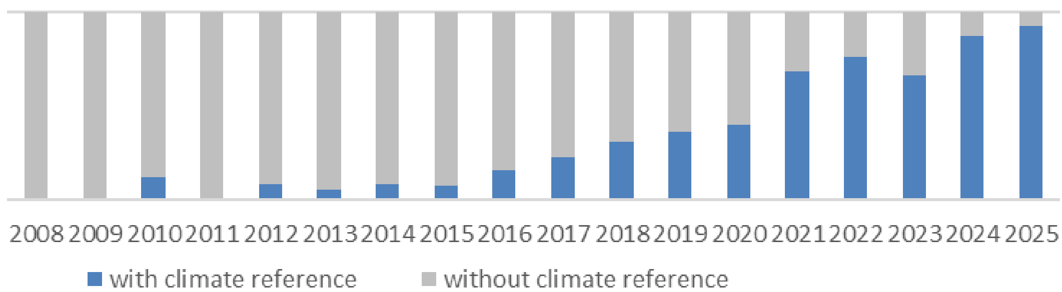
CEDAW also looked at loss and damage and climate finance. The latter was discussed in ten COBs and two LOIs/LOIPRs. In most of these outputs, CEDAW made questions or recommendations about women's active participation in climate finance, and, in a few instances, in the creation and operation of new funding arrangements for responding to environmental damage. Of those countries that received a climate finance-related output, only two are considered as "developed" States by the Committee. CEDAW noted Luxembourg's contribution of €8 million to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage but recommended increasing its contribution and earmarking that contribution for gender-related issues. In its COB to Ireland, it noted the State Party's contribution of $27 million to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and suggested incorporating a gender perspective into climate financing activities. With regard to irreversible impacts of climate change, in its COB to Tuvalu, CEDAW recommended raising awareness "about the extraterritorial application of human rights in cases of transboundary harm provoked by climate change and domesticate the recent views adopted by the Human Rights Committee in Teitiota v. New Zealand (communication No. 2728/2016), particularly concerning the applicability of the non-refoulement principle in the context of both climate change and sea-level rise." In its COB to Brazil, it noted with concern that "climate change results in the loss of their ecosystems, community habitats, livelihoods and ancestral knowledge and in the disruption of food and water supplies."

Throughout its outputs, CEDAW continued to consistently recall the relevance of General Recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the Gender-Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Climate Change. It continued to emphasize the differentiated impact of climate change on women, underscoring the importance of implementing gender-responsive strategies to address environmental degradation and climate change. In particular, the CEDAW focused on the need to integrate a gender perspective into States' frameworks for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (e.g., its COBs Brazil, Chile, Djibouti, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Laos, Niger, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Turkmenistan, Canada, the Central African Republic, Estonia, and New Zealand). The issue of adaptation was particularly prevalent in the work of CEDAW, appearing in sixty-four outputs in total.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

This note reviews the outputs of the CRC related to climate change in 2024-2025 and complements our previous notes dedicated to such outputs up to 2023.

Graph 8: Outputs of the CRC in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure



The CRC maintained its sustained efforts to address the impacts of climate change on children's rights. The CRC has done so increasingly over the years through its State review procedure, General Comments (GCs) and thematic work. In 2024, the CRC released twenty-eight climate-related outputs out of thirty-two total outputs (87.5 percent). Of these twenty-eight, nineteen were COBs and nine were LOIs/LOIPRs. In 2025, the CRC released twenty-four climate-related outputs out of a total of twenty-six, therefore 92 percent of the results reflected a climate consideration. Of these, thirteen were COBs and eleven were LOIs. Across the 2024-2025 cycle, this totals fifty-two climate references out of fifty-eight outputs (90 percent). Year-on-year, climate-related outputs decreased by four, while the share of outputs referencing climate change increased by 4.8 percent. This was a sharp increase compared to 2023 whose climate-related outputs amounted to 66 percent of the share.

The CRC continued to consider climate change mitigation in its 2024 and 2025 work. In 2024, fourteen outputs (twelve COBs and two LOIs) were mitigation related, while in 2025 eleven outputs reflected this dimension (eight COBs and three LOIs). The Committee addressed States' obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and align their mitigation strategies with the rights of the child. In its COB to Russian, the CRC urged the State to reduce coal and oil production and adopt a clear pathway toward carbon neutrality by 2050. It made similar recommendations to Israel in its COB, urging the adoption of a delayed climate bill and calling for stronger national targets on emissions reductions. In its COB to Lithuania, the CRC also recommended that climate mitigation policies incorporate child-rights impact assessments.

As in previous years, the CRC maintained a strong focus on climate adaptation. In 2024, twenty-seven outputs (nineteen COBs and eight LOIs); while twenty-three outputs in 2025 (twelve COBs and eleven LOIs). The CRC made recommendations in over a dozen COBs on strengthening child participation in environmental decision-making and improving climate education. It urged States such as Estonia, Turkmenistan, Bhutan, Israel, Mexico, and Armenia to ensure the regular inclusion of children's views in climate-related processes, and recommended that Guatemala, Namibia, Russia, and Lithuania integrate children's perspectives into disaster risk reduction and adaptation plans. Education on climate change featured prominently in the Committee's recommendations, with calls to integrate climate preparedness and rights-based environmental education into school curricula and teacher training (e.g., in its COBs to Lithuania, Russia, Bhutan, and Namibia).

The CRC continued to highlight the importance of assessing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on children's health and wellbeing. It called on Paraguay and South Africa to assess the effects of air, water and soil pollution from mining, agriculture and industrial activity on children's health, and recommended that the Republic of Congo pay particular attention to monitoring children's rights and the environment in the context of the extraction of oil. These requirements were often linked to broader strategies, including the enforcement of environmental standards and the adoption of pollution thresholds.

The role of private actors in environmental harm, including their involvement in fossil fuel production, remained a recurring concern. In its COB to the Republic of Congo, the Committee recommended the establishment and implementation of regulations to ensure that the business sector comply with international and national human rights, labor, environmental and other standards, particularly with regard to children's rights. It made similar recommendations to Georgia and Paraguay in their respective COBs, urging the establishment of strong regulatory frameworks on companies, particularly in the extractive sector. In particular, it called on Paraguay to require companies to undertake due diligence, assessments and consultations and make full public disclosure of the impacts of their business activities on the environment, health and children's rights. The Committee also emphasized the importance of access to effective remedies for children affected by corporate activities. In its COB to Norway, it called on the State party to consider the impact of climate change on children's rights in relation to plans to expand oil and gas extraction. It also urged that national policies related to granting new licenses for fossil fuel exploration and production be both in full compliance with the Convention and take into account children's vulnerabilities, needs, and best interests. It also recommended urgently setting out "a detailed plan for phasing out fossil fuels and revis[ing] its climate and energy policies, in order to achieve a reduction in emissions of 55 percent by 2030, in accordance with its commitments, and net-zero emissions by 2050." The CRC also made a few implicit references to fossil fuels in a few outputs. It called on Bulgaria to align its GHG emission targets with its international commitments and accelerate its transition to renewable energy. It urged Russia to reduce coal and oil production and transition to carbon neutrality and called on Israel to ensure a pathway to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Throughout its 2024 outputs, the CRC continued to place significant weight on the existence and strength of normative frameworks to address climate change. In its COB to Argentina, it welcomed steps taken by States to adopt or advance climate legislation, such as the enactment of Argentina's Minimum Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Budgets Act, while in its LOI to Uganda, it asked about measures to implement the Climate Change Act 2021. In its COB to Slovakia, it recommended ensuring that the proposed Updated Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030 was "backed by sufficient financial resources, clear targets and responsible actors." On the other hand, it called on States to expedite the adoption of pending climate legislation, such as in the case of Israel and South Africa's COBs, and support the involvement of children in climate legislative debates, as requested in the COB to Estonia. The CRC referred to national implementation efforts under the Paris Agreement, and asked several States — e.g., in its COBs to Armenia, Turkmenistan, Mexico, Egypt, and Ecuador — to ensure that their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and related policies are child rights-based and participatory.

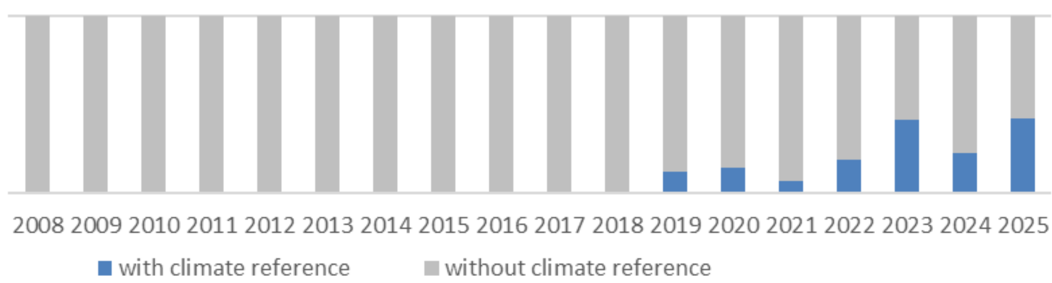
Extraterritorial obligations were addressed merely in the COB to Israel. In that output, the CRC raised concerns about the environmental consequences of military operations in Gaza, urging remediation for transboundary air, soil and water pollution.
In 2024 and 2025, the CRC continued to work on its General Comment No. 27 on Children's Right to Access to Justice and to an Effective Remedy. While the GC will not be focused specifically on the environment, it will still provide the opportunity to unpack important dimensions with regard to access to justice and remedy in the context of environmental harm.

Building on the adoption of General Comment No. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment, with a Special Focus on Climate Change, the CRC repeatedly referred to the General Comment in its questions and recommendations to States — explicitly or implicitly using it as a normative benchmark for evaluating national climate laws, education frameworks, environmental regulation, and corporate due diligence obligations.

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

This note reviews the outputs of the CERD related to climate change in 2024-2025 and complements previous notes dedicated to such outputs up to 2023.

Graph 9: Outputs of the CERD in the Context of the State Reporting Procedure.



2024 and 2025 marked the fifth and sixth consecutive years in which the CERD addressed climate change as part of its state review procedure. In 2024, CERD released eight climate-related outputs out of thirty-six total outputs (22 percent). Of these, five were COBs and three were LOIs or List of Themes. In 2025, it released eleven climate-related outputs out of twenty-six (42 percent) of which six were COBs and five were LOIs or List of Themes. What can be observed is that some COBs in 2025 included climate-related references, despite not having addressed such issues in their list of themes. Examples of this include Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, and Sweden. In 2023, climate concerns appeared in roughly 40 percent of the Committee's outputs, whereas in 2024 that figure decreased to nearly twenty percent. In 2025, the ratio rose back to around 40 percent, marking a substantial proportional increase in CERD's climate-related outputs. This growth highlights the Committee's increasing recognition of climate change as a driver of racial and ethnic inequality, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, minorities, and other marginalized communities.

The CERD looked at a range of climate-related issues. It urged Mexico to adopt a national policy that prevents climate-related internal displacement while incorporating an intercultural perspective centered on the needs of displaced Indigenous Peoples. The risk of displacement linked to conflict, natural hazards and large-scale conservation or development projects remained a recurring concern. The CERD noted, for example, that climate-exacerbated extractive activities in Kenya led to forced evictions of the Ogiek, Endorois and Sengwer peoples, and it called for safeguards that guarantee access to justice and respect for free, prior and informed consent and adequate compensation. Similarly, it asked Mexico to expedite legislation on internal displacement that protects the cultural ties of Indigenous Peoples to their territories. Generally, the CERD continued to stress the necessity of meaningful consultation processes and obtaining free, prior and informed consent before authorizing extractive or conservation projects that may affect Indigenous lands and resources, for instance, in its COBs to Kenya and Mexico.

Throughout its 2024 and 2025 outputs, the CERD again examined the impacts of climate change and related policies on Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups in a number of outputs, including on Mexico, Kenya, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. In its concluding observations to Mexico, Kenya, and the United Kingdom, the CERD underlined the disproportionate burden that climate change, environmental degradation and associated health hazards place on ethnic minorities and Indigenous communities. In its COB to Mexico, it reiterated that climate impacts may effectively deny these groups the enjoyment of their ancestral lands and natural resources. In its COB to New Zealand, the CERD devoted attention to the safeguarding and transmission of Māori cultural heritage when this is at risk due to climate change and environmental degradation, including forced relocation or loss of land.

The CERD made explicit reference to the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in its COB to Sweden, recommending the adoption of measures to "prevent, mitigate and redress the impact of economic, industrial and natural resource development projects on the lands, territories and resources of Sámi people, with a view to protecting their customs and traditional ways of life and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment."

The CERD still has room for more comprehensive engagement with climate-related issues in its State review procedure. In its 2024 examinations of States with significant oil and gas industry activity — such as the United Kingdom and Pakistan — the Committee could have gone further by explicitly addressing the broader implications of fossil fuel extraction in the context of climate change, particularly its impact on the rights of minorities and marginalized communities.

As governments and intergovernmental organizations have recognized, climate change has adverse impacts on a wide range of human rights. Consequently, existing human rights obligations defined under legally binding treaties must inform climate action. These obligations require that climate policies effectively protect the rights of those most affected by the climate crisis, including by averting harm and preventing further threats through mitigation and the effective regulation of private actors. They also require that the design of these policies builds on the principles of non-discrimination and meaningful public participation. A growing number of national, regional, and international courts are being asked to review the compatibility of States' climate policies in the context of these human rights obligations. Human rights treaty bodies (HRTBs) — established to monitor the implementation of the United Nations human rights treaties — have a critical role to play in informing decision-makers' and other actors' understanding of the scope of these human rights obligations in the context of climate change. During the past decade, these bodies have provided many valuable recommendations to States, illustrating the relevance of international human rights obligations in driving ambitious and just climate policies. This Synthesis Note reviews the outputs adopted by HRTBs in 2024–2025 with regard to climate change, complementing our 2024, 2022, 2020–2021 Synthesis Notes, reviewing developments of the previous years. This note describes the important role that the HRTBs have continued to play in 2024 and 2025 to guide and inform States' responses to climate change and also highlights some of the pressing issues that could benefit from more proactive engagement by HRTBs in the future so as to further articulate States' existing human rights obligations related to key dimensions of climate policies.

Since 1989, the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) has used the power of law to protect the environment, promote human rights, and ensure a just and sustainable society. The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) is a human rights organization that works to transform power structures and ensure that every person and community can access, claim, and enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights, now and in the future. Authors: Francesca Mingrone (CIEL) and Magdalena Belén Rochi Monagas (GI-ESCR), with support by Sébastien Duyck, Lien Vandamme, Erika Lennon, Joie Chowdhury, Martina Orofino and Sintique Machado de Carvalho (CIEL).

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