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Submission from the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice
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**Information, views and proposals from Parties and admitted
observer organizations on the work of the ADP
(FCCC/ADP/2012/3, paragraph 22)**

Human rights informing climate action

Climate actions that benefit people and protect their rights will garner broad support from society and help to maximize ambitious actions to keep warming below 2°C. A climate justice approach uses human rights standards and commitments to inform climate policies and ensure a people-centred approach to climate action.

Responding to the challenge of climate change requires cooperative action by all countries and communities. Ambitious action on climate change at a local, regional and global scale protects people and their rights. Human rights can inform more inclusive, effective and equitable climate actions that deliver positive development outcomes.

Decisions taken by the COP in relation to amongst others the participation of indigenous people and local communities in climate decision making, access to information, gender equality, gender balance and environmental and social safeguards demonstrate a commitment by Parties to human rights in climate action.

The UNFCCC and UN Human Rights Council have recognized the links between climate change and human rights in a number of decisions and resolutions to date:

- Cancun Agreements (notably paragraphs 7 and 8 and REDD+ safeguards in Appendix A)
- Human Rights Council Resolutions 7/23, 10/4 and 26/27

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However, more work is needed to fully recognize and act on this linkage in the climate regime¹. This includes raising awareness and building the capacity of climate policy makers to enable them to integrate human rights into climate actions as well as strengthening reporting of climate actions that respect human rights and deliver positive outcomes for people and the climate.

In October 2014, 28 special rapporteurs and independent experts (known as special procedures) of the Human Rights Council wrote an open letter² to the Parties to the UNFCCC emphasizing these points. The rapporteurs and experts stress the fact that climate change threatens to undermine the protection of human rights, and that the UNFCCC has a crucial role in effectively protecting human rights for all. The UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts urge Parties to:

“include language in the 2015 climate agreement that provides that the Parties shall, in all climate change related actions, respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights for all. And [they] urge the State Parties at COP 20 in Lima to launch a work program to ensure that human rights are integrated into all aspects of climate actions.”

The Paris Agreement must result in equitable and ambitious action that avoids dangerous climate change and protects human rights. Building on the language that Parties already agreed in Cancun, the overarching principles set forth in the operative paragraphs of the new agreement should include:

“Parties shall, in all climate change related actions, respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights for all”.

Parties could also consider additional preambular language drawing on agreed language contained in resolutions of the Human Rights Council and COP decisions as required.

¹ See recent research by the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice which documents progress on integrating human rights into climate action to date. <http://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2014-10-20-Incorporating-Human-Rights-into-Climate-Action.pdf>

² http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/SP_To_UNFCCC.pdf