



**Statement by Mr. Saad Alfarargi, United Nations Special Rapporteur on
the right to development**

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Climate change and land issues

14 January 2021

Distinguished panellists, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honour to address you today in my capacity as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to development. I regret that I am not able to join you in person due to circumstances outside of my control.

I was heartened to learn that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is holding an online dialogue on climate change and land rights.

Climate change seriously threatens, directly and indirectly, a wide range of internationally guaranteed human rights, and poses an existential threat to all people's enjoyment of their right to development, both today and, particularly, to future generations. Climate change has impacted and will continue to disproportionately impact certain countries, regions, and socio-economic or other groups within them, so ensuring the active and meaningful participation of those most affected will be key so as to ensure that their rights and interests are better protected. It is particularly relevant to indigenous populations, who often are under threat to losing their traditional ways of life as a result.

In order to effectively address the unprecedented challenge posed by climate change to the right to development and other fundamental rights, the active participation of individuals and communities throughout the design and implementation of relevant policies, projects, and decisions is and will be vital. Participation is not merely a means to an end but rather a fundamental right to which individuals are inherently entitled and which States are obligated to respect and uphold. The right to development itself can only be achieved and fulfilled if it is based on meaningful participation.

As you may know, every year I am delivering thematic reports to the United Nations' Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. For the

reason mentioned above, I have decided to devote my thematic reports in 2021 to the subject **of climate change and human rights from the right to development perspective**, in the context of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development, and core international human rights treaties. To that end, I have issued a call for information to all United Nations Member states and all relevant international and civil society stakeholders, seeking to gather good practices on the implementation of climate change-oriented policies that are in line with both the right to development and other commitments made under international environmental agreements. I am also looking for information about challenges and areas for improvement. The call for information is available on my website (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/SRDevelopment/Pages/cfi-climate-change.aspx>) and I hope that many of you will contribute their perspective and knowledge and allow me to bring forward their message for change.

I thank you for your attention.
