



The Role of Human Rights in the Paris Climate Treaty

Juliane Voigt

juliane.voigt@carbonmarketwatch.org

Human Rights Policy Researcher, Carbon Market Watch



Side 1: climate change impacts on Human Rights



Climate change is a global injustice to present and future generations, exacerbating already existing structural injustices and human rights violations.

Side 2: Human Rights impacts of climate actions

Example: Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

- CDM Bajo Aguan Biogas, Honduras:
 - Brutal displacement of local communities
- CDM Barro Blanco, Panama:
 - Violation of indigenous peoples rights
- CDM Sasan coal power plant, India:
 - Forced displacement and extensive health Implications



Interconnectivity of Human Rights and climate change

- 2008 **UNHRC res 7/23** “Human rights and climate change”: climate change “poses an immediate and far-reaching threat to people and communities around the world”
- 2009 **UNHRC res 10/4** ““climate change-related impacts have a range of implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of human rights ...”
- 2010 **Cancun Agreements in Decision 1/CP. 16 paragraph 8** “Parties should, in all climate change-related actions, fully respect human rights”
- 2011 **UNHRC res 18/22** “human rights obligations and commitments have the potential to inform and strengthen international and national policy making in the area of climate change, promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes”
- October 2014 **An Open Letter from Special Procedures mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council to the State Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: A NEW CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT MUST INCLUDE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR ALL**
- February 2015 **Geneva Pledge**



CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS - A TWOFOLD PROBLEM

PROBLEM

Man-made climate change has significant effects on the full enjoyment of several human rights, such as: the right to life, health, food, water and housing, among others.

SOLUTION

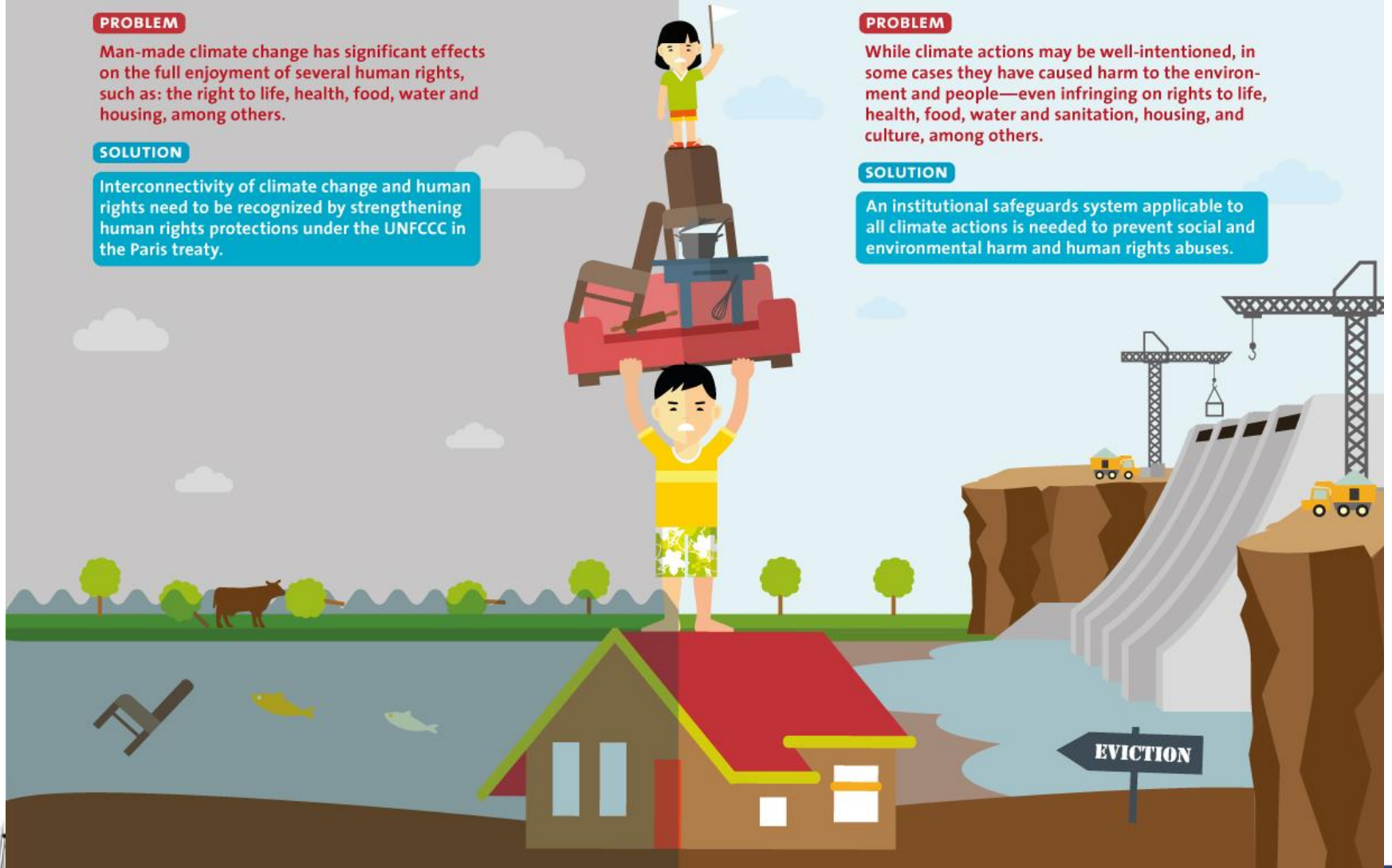
Interconnectivity of climate change and human rights need to be recognized by strengthening human rights protections under the UNFCCC in the Paris treaty.

PROBLEM

While climate actions may be well-intentioned, in some cases they have caused harm to the environment and people—even infringing on rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, housing, and culture, among others.

SOLUTION

An institutional safeguards system applicable to all climate actions is needed to prevent social and environmental harm and human rights abuses.



What Paris needs to deliver

- Explicit **recognition of human rights obligations** in the legal core agreement of the Paris text.
- **Robust human rights language** that guarantees the effective integration of Human Rights in all climate related actions.
- **Recognition that climate change impacts themselves can jeopardize human rights** and the need to specify how existing Human Rights obligations apply in the context of climate change.

