

Side event Wednesday 1 December 2010, 11:30-13:00, Monarca Room, Cancunmesse

Food Security and Human Rights in Small Island Developing States and the Arctic

This side event will address the links between climate change, food security and human rights from the perspectives of people in the Arctic and Small Island Developing States.

Participants:



Patricia Cochran, Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change, USA

Steering Committee member of the Indigenous Peoples' Global Summit on Climate Change and former Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). ICC was formed in 1977 to defend the rights and further the interests of the 155,000 Inuit who live in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia.



Kirt Ejesiak, Vice-President, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada

Born and raised in Iqaluit, he has also lived in Nanisivik, Yellowknife, Ottawa, Wolfville, Boston and Spain. Kirt lives his life with a passionate eye on the future and an ear open to the past. Having travelled extensively in northern Canada, Greenland, Russia and Alaska Kirt can draw on his experience from visiting Inuit across the circumpolar Arctic.



Ronny Jumeau, UN Ambassador, Seychelles

Seychelles Ambassador to the United Nations and former Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Seychelles.



Margreet Wewerinke, Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group

Margreet Wewerinke is representative to the United Nations for North-South XXI, an international NGO founded by former presidents Ahmed Ben Bella and Nelson Mandela, and the organisation's lead person on climate change. She is also a member of the Human Rights & Climate Change Working Group, which is working to ensure that human rights protections are included in the final climate agreement.

Representative of South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) [tbc]

SPREP's mandate is to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

Background

The «ultimate objective» of the UNFCCC is to stabilize greenhouse gases «at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system» and that these levels should «ensure that food production is not threatened....»

At last year's COP in Copenhagen, Olivier De Schutter, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, said «[c]limate change is a ticking time bomb for global food security». De Schutter went on to say that global warming disproportionately affects some of the poorest countries – especially the most vulnerable, including small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples who depend on the land for their livelihoods.

The right to food has been recognized since the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has defined food security as a situation «when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life». Food security, it says, is «a pre- condition for the full enjoyment of the right to food».

Fundamentally, food security is influenced by weather and climate and so the question of how climate change will affect it, and how society will adapt is critical. Sir Nicholas Stern recognized this when he wrote in his 2007 landmark analysis, *The Economics of Climate Change*:

«Climate change will have a wide range of effects on the environment, which could have knock-on consequences for food production. The combined effect of several factors could be very damaging.»

Climate change affects not only food security but food quality and quantity, as well as health, culture, transportation, infrastructure, and trade.

Identified in the IPCC IV report as being among the regions most vulnerable to climate change, Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will be forced to address food security sooner than many other areas of the world. Working through the Many Strong Voices (MSV) program, they have already come together to address a number of climate change challenges. How they respond to this food security challenge may help provide valuable direction to others.

Coastal communities in the Arctic and in Small Island Developing States face common challenges due to a rapidly changing climate. Both regions continue to rely on the environment and natural resources for their livelihoods. Both have a wealth of indigenous and local knowledge which can be brought to bear on the challenges of a changing climate.

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