



# HUMAN RIGHTS IN 2025 NDCs: WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?

## A Checklist

### WHY

#### IT'S AN OBLIGATION:

All Parties to the Paris Agreement have legally binding human rights obligations. In the Paris Agreement, they reaffirmed the need, in their climate action, to respect, protect and consider these obligations – along with a range of important related aspects such as the just transition, food security and gender equality – in the context of climate action.

→ As the main instrument for national implementation of the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) should be guided by human rights obligations, principles, and standards in their preparation, content, and implementation.

#### IT'S MORE EFFECTIVE:

Human rights-based climate action is also most effective as confirmed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

→ Ensuring that the NDC planning process and the NDCs include human rights considerations also empowers communities to contribute increasing public support for climate policies and ensure their effectiveness.

### How

- The planning process should build on effective and inclusive public participation and be informed by the human rights obligations of the State.
- Ambition levels should be set in line with science and international law to keep warming below 1.5°C, and ensure adaptation and redress for all affected by the climate crisis.
- Related policies and measures and their implementation should respect, protect and promote human rights.
- The human rights obligations of States should be reflected in and inform the monitoring and evaluation of the NDC.

In 2022, the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), published a [toolkit for practitioners on integrating human rights in NDCs](#). The toolkit elaborates on important questions to ask and international instruments to keep in mind when designing and implementing an NDC. It is available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

This document should be read in conjunction with it, as it complements the toolkit by including aspects based on more recent guidance such as the outcome of the Global Stocktake and the 6th Assessment Report of the IPCC, as well as various reports by UN human rights institutions and mechanisms. It aims to provide a practitioner-friendly overview of what needs to be included in the final submitted NDCs and can also serve as a tool for civil society to assess human rights-alignment in their countries' NDCs.

## WHAT

For an NDC to be aligned with international climate objectives and the human rights obligations of States, it should include – at a minimum – the following components, in line with international law and commitments.

→ To assess your country's NDC, feel free to use this list flexibly to guide your review, focusing on points that are of relevance according to your understanding of the context (e.g. whether there is presence of Indigenous Peoples, or whether or not your country has an obligation to provide international climate finance).

### 1. Mitigation Ambition and Fossil Fuel Phase Out

- An overall emission reduction goal aligned with equity and the imperative to limit warming to 1.5°C
- Consumption emissions included in the overall reduction target
- A commitment to and plan for an urgent and equitable phaseout of fossil fuel production and use
- No reliance on carbon offsets
- No reliance on technological false solutions such as Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)
- A plan to equitably phase-out and redirect subsidies for fossil fuels and other polluting industries and practices
- A plan to eliminate or restrict the application of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) and other international investment protections in relation to fossil fuel investments and climate change measures

### 2. Participatory Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

- A section explaining how the NDC is built on an inclusive and participatory consultation
- Dedicated measures to ensure inclusivity, participation and consultation of rightsholders and key societal actors in the implementation of NDCs, in particular for:
  - Indigenous Peoples and traditional knowledge holders
  - Groups in vulnerable situations such as women in all their diversity, youth and children, persons with disabilities, peasants, people in poverty, and migrants
  - National and local civil society and grassroots movements
  - National human rights and gender institutions and mechanisms
  - Trade unions

### 3. Integrating Human Rights

- An explicit commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights throughout the NDC, and a description of how the NDC does so, including
  - The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment
  - The rights of future generations
- Human rights-based social and environmental impact assessments and safeguards applying to all measures in NDC
- Policies to strengthen the effective protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders



- Mainstreamed policies to take into account individuals and groups with specific rights and contexts
- Measures to ensure access to remedy and justice for those whose human rights, including Indigenous Peoples' rights, are negatively affected by climate action/the NDC

#### 4. Mainstreaming Gender Justice

- An explicit commitment to mainstreaming gender equality and the rights of women and girls in all their diversity across all measures in the NDC, and a description of how the NDC does so
- Dedicated policies to overcome practical and cultural barriers to the participation of women, girls, and gender-diverse persons in climate action
- Gender budgeting and gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms
- Integration of unpaid work such as care work in Just Transition and other policies

#### 5. Respecting Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Traditional Knowledge

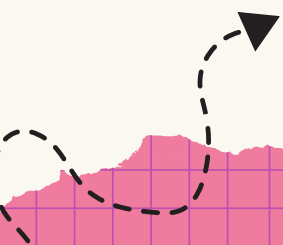
- Explicit commitment to respect, protect and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples in line with international law including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and a description of how the NDC does so
- Process for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent will be respected throughout the NDC's implementation
- Recognition of the important role of traditional knowledge and a commitment to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of Indigenous Peoples with respect to their knowledge

#### 6. Strengthening land Tenure and Community-Based Natural Resource Management

- Recognition of measurable and robust tenure and natural resource rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Measures and financial resources to strengthen community-based natural resource management and tenure systems

#### 7. Aligning with the Imperative of a Just Transition

- Explicit recognition of the importance of just transition in the design and implementation of the NDC and a description of how the NDC contributes to this
- Explicit commitment to respect, protect and fulfill core labor rights, including social dialogue, in the context of NDC policies and a description of how the NDC contributes to this
- Plans for the creation of decent work and quality jobs and a commitment to workforce re-training, including for youth and people in vulnerable situations
- A commitment to and measures to strengthen social protection for all
- Policies and measures to ensure that the climate transition does not lead to mining-related or other human rights violations, within or outside the country



## 8. Anchoring Adaptation and Loss and Damage

- Sector-specific adaptation objectives and a quantification of related financial needs
- Assessment of current and future loss and damage, including non-economic, and how this affects human rights in the national context
- Ongoing and planned policies and measures for addressing loss and damage, and a quantification of related financial needs

## 9. Moving Beyond Promises: Accountability for Effective Implementation

- An explanation and timeline of how the commitments in the NDC will be implemented through policies and law, including through the effective regulation of the private sector
- A debt-free international climate finance commitment for mitigation, adaptation and addressing loss and damage in line with fair share
- A quantification of debt burden and measures to address it, preventing debt burden from being an obstacle for climate action
- A plan for inclusive and participatory monitoring of the NDC
- Monitoring system based on the collection of gender-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data

## COLLECTIVE ASSESSMENT

→ If you assess your country's NDC using this checklist, you are very welcome to submit the results for collective understanding of the integration of human rights in 2025 NDCs.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- OHCHR & CIEL (2022) – Integrating Human Rights in NDCs: A Toolkit for Practitioners ([EN](#), [FR](#), [ES](#))
- Oxfam (2024) – Climate Plans for the People: Civil society and community participation in national action plans on climate change
- Climate Action Network (2024) – Guidelines for NDCs 3.0: Delivering on the GST outcome and beyond
- Land Gap Report (2024) – Land Use in NDCs: A Guide to High Ambition
- 350.org et al. (2024): NDC letter to govts, 10 key tests for 1.5C aligned NDCs
- UNICEF (2024) - Child- and youth-sensitive Nationally Determined Contributions
- Care About Climate (2024) - NDC Equity Tracker, Towards Inclusive Climate Commitments Gender and Youth at the Forefront
- International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2022) - Recognition of Indigenous Peoples in Nationally Determined Contributions
- Climate, Land, Ambition, and Rights Alliance (CLARA) guide to Nationally Determined Contributions

