

DECLARATION

of the participants of the International Baku Forum of Ombudsmen on the topic “Climate Change and Human Rights: The Role of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions” held on the initiative of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with the support of the Azerbaijani state and in partnership with the UN Development Program in Azerbaijan

Baku, October 02, 2024

We, the participants of the International Baku Forum of Ombudsmen on the topic “Climate Change and Human Rights: The Role of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions” held on October 02, 2024, upon the initiative of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with the support of the Azerbaijani state and in partnership with the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Azerbaijan,

Bringing to attention the desire to cooperate for the more effective provision and protection of human rights and freedoms as stipulated in the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, Declaration on the Right to Development, Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment Conference, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and other relevant international and regional human rights instruments, as well as following the recognition of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right (hereinafter, ‘right to a healthy environment’) by the UN Human Rights Council in 2021¹ and the UN General Assembly in 2022², and to take effective measures in the fight against climate change,

Expressing concern that global climate change - one of the most urgent problems in the modern era, has a significant negative impact on the sustainable development of countries and the social welfare of the population, and also causes several serious challenges in terms of the protection and provision of human rights,

Confirming that Azerbaijan takes up one of the leading positions as an active member of the international community among those countries that pay particular attention to the fight against climate change and its negative effects in compliance with the obligations following from the UN Sustainable Development Goals,

Welcoming the unanimous decision of the world countries to hold the 29th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29)

¹ UN Human Rights Council. Resolution A/HRC/RES/48/13 ‘The Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment’, 18 October 2021.

² UN General Assembly. Resolution A/RES/76/300 ‘The Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment’, 28 July 2022.

in Azerbaijan in 2024, which is considered one of the most prestigious international events due to the number and level of participants and the urgency of the discussed issues,

Stating the importance of strengthening joint cooperation in the fight against the facts of serious damage to the ecosystem due to contamination of the environment with radioactive, toxic, infectious, explosive, and other harmful substances, as well as mines, which leads to great danger to the living nature as a result of ecocide crimes committed during armed conflicts in the world in contrary to the universally accepted norms and principles of international law, as well as the requirements of international humanitarian law,

Noting the role of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in studying and applying advanced international practice at the national level regarding the promotion, protection, and monitoring of the ensuring status of the rights of everyone, including vulnerable population groups, in the context of climate change,

Taking into consideration the participation of heads of a number of international organizations, ombudsmen, representatives of National Human Rights Institutions, state bodies, civil society institutions, and the experts in the field of climate change and human rights in the International Baku Forum, which is highly important in terms of the promotion and protection of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment,

Welcoming the organization of the International Baku Forum of Ombudsmen at a high level in the city of Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dedicated to a very relevant topic, which serves the aim of discussing the problems caused by climate change and their solutions from the perspective of human rights, and sharing positive experiences in this field,

Understanding the significance of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment in terms of ensuring human rights,

Hereby declare that we have agreed to the following:

- to carry out measures related to studying and applying the best international experience in the field of monitoring the status of promotion, protection, and provision of the right to live in a healthy environment;
- to work out proposals for the elimination of the negative effects of climate change on human rights in compliance with the international agreements that the participating states are parties to and with advanced world experience;
- to develop the cooperation of Ombudsmen and NHRIs with parliaments regarding the adoption of new effective national legislative acts on climate change and human rights, improvement of the legislation in force in this field following the experience of advanced countries;
- to continue organizing various educational events (forum, conference, seminar, training webinar, etc.) at local, regional, and international levels related to climate change and human rights with the participation of ombudsmen, NHRIs, international organizations, relevant governmental bodies, foreign experts, civil society institutions, as well as other

stakeholders in order to enhance the knowledge and skills of interested parties in accordance with the global challenges faced by humanity and to conduct joint discussions based on mutual dialogue, effective cooperation, exchange of information and experience,

- to act following the principles of solidarity and mutual assistance in the field of protection and development of human rights, including the right to live in a healthy environment, which is one of the fundamental rights;

- to support the process of resolving armed conflicts in the world only through the achievement of a just peace following the main principles of international law, including the principle of territorial integrity of states, the formation and promotion of new norms and principles in the field of protection of human rights, especially environmental rights, which are an important component of it;

- to continually condemn contamination of the environment with radioactive, toxic, infectious, explosive, and other harmful substances, as well as with mines, and other such facts that seriously harm the ecosystem, and to fight resolutely in this direction at the international level;

- to support measures implemented at the local, regional, and international levels in order to avoid the negative effects of global climate change on human rights as much as possible.

Adopting the Declaration, taking into consideration the special role of Ombudsmen and NHRIs in the field of promotion, protection, and monitoring of human rights in the context of climate change, we draw attention to the need to strengthen the bilateral cooperation of these institutions and within the framework of international organizations of ombudsmen, to exchange information and experience, and to share positive work experience;

Expressing our satisfaction with the results of the Forum, we emphasize that this event significantly contributed to the further development of relations between ombudsmen, NHRIs and opened new perspectives, and we invite all stakeholders to make joint efforts and cooperate for the implementation of the provisions of this Declaration at the local, regional and international levels.

We express our gratitude to the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the UNDP in Azerbaijan for organizing the Forum at a high level.

This Declaration was signed in Baku on October 2, 2024, in 2 (two) original copies in Azerbaijani and English languages, all texts are of the same legal force.