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INTERPRETACIÓN SIMULTÁNEA **INGLÉS-CASTELLANO**

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Remarks by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, addressed to the panel on the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights during the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council.

Madam Vice-President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Our planet, our human rights, our very future are in profound danger.

Glaciers are melting. Oceans are warming. Rainforests are burning. Rivers and lakes are drying up.

And lives and livelihoods are being decimated. Some by sudden disasters, such as floods or fires, increasingly more intense as the effects of climate change take hold.

Others by slow-onset events like sea-level rise, the degradation of lands and forests, shrinking water sources or barren soils that simply cannot grow food.

There is an 80 per cent chance that in one of the next five years, the global annual average temperature will in fact surpass 1.5-degrees Celsius, compared to the pre-industrial baseline.

While such annual warming does not yet mean a permanent breach of the 1.5°C Paris Agreement goal, we are one terrifying step closer to an outcome we have all been fighting so hard to prevent.

We know that loss and damage resulting from climate change is now hitting people in vulnerable situations and developing countries the hardest, despite the fact they have contributed the least to it.



Indigenous Peoples and others dependent on the land and environment for livelihoods face the reality of dying, depleted ecosystems. While on mission, this issue has been shared with me, and that it is happening at a pace that should make us shudder.

Millions have already left their homes. The lands and resources they once relied on can no longer sustain them. And it is important to clarify that they often become internally displaced not people leaving their countries.

But climate change is impacting and will increasingly impact human rights for everyone, everywhere.

The rights to food and health, and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The right to an adequate standard of living. The right to life.

This climate chaos also has an enormous economic cost more broadly.

Recent research estimates that the world suffered at least 2.8 trillion USD in loss and damage from climate change between 2000 and 2019 – that equates to a cost of 16 million USD per hour.

Madam Vice-President,

With every passing day, the climate crisis is accelerating.

Even as we need to step up action to prevent it from becoming worse, we also must step up measures to respond to the extensive loss and damage that it is causing and will cause.

This includes ensuring livelihood resistance for individuals and communities that are directly affected.

Universal social protection systems, for example, must be part and parcel of all government policies to protect livelihoods in the face of climate risks, but also to assist those impacted by measures to transition to green economies.

It will be important to ensure adequate support to developing countries to be able to strengthen their social protection systems, as needed. This was one of the lessons learned from the COVID pandemic.

More broadly, we need a complete overhaul of the unsustainable, deadly fossil fuel-powered economic model.

A just transition to a human rights economy has never been more urgent. This means an economy that is fair, equitable and inclusive. That creates decent work opportunities, reduces inequalities and poverty, and invests in the wellbeing of people and planet.



We must empower and protect people who are using their voices to demand the transformation needed.

And ensure that people have access to justice and effective remedies for violations of their rights stemming from loss and damage.

This means authorities and businesses responsible for climate change related loss and damage need to be held accountable.

Colleagues,

Under existing frameworks, the countries most responsible for climate change have an obligation to provide climate financing to remedy human rights harms from climate-related loss and damage.

Such financing needs to match the scale of harm and be directly accessible to affected communities.

It needs to be grant-based, not loan-based, so that it does not lock countries into ever deepening cycles of debt.

States can – and must – ensure that people are able to recover financially from loss and damage as a result of climate change. And they can advance a just transition. Including by investing in sustainable and regenerative agriculture, healthy ecosystems, social security, capacity-building, and training – all anchored in human rights.

Madam Vice-President,

The climate crisis will result in more emergencies, more disasters, and more unknowns. I urge States to consider which new international mechanisms we may need now, and in the future to secure human rights and ensure accountability.

We have the ways and means to prevent an apocalyptic future, if we act now and with an utmost sense of urgency.

It is really up to us.

I hope the outcomes of today's panel discussion can help guide the way.

Thank you.