

# Interactive working session 10: Promoting a People-Centred Justice Approach to Climate Change

**Organiser:** International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Justice Canada

**Moderator:** Anne-Lise Bloch, Knowledge Sharing Officer, IDRC

**Duration:** 75 minutes from 14:00 – 15:15 on 10 October 2024

**Room:** Adam

## Background

Climate change is the defining global challenge of our time, and the justice sector has a critical role to play in responding to this crisis. The impacts of climate change are felt most acutely by vulnerable and marginalised populations, exacerbating existing inequalities. A people-centred approach to climate change and environmental justice is pivotal in supporting populations to cope with the multiple scales of transition anticipated as countries around the world identify strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change's impacts. By promoting a people-centred justice approach, we can better support communities in navigating the challenges posed by climate change and work towards more equitable and sustainable solutions.

## Session Description & Objectives

Through the interactive working session, participants will be invited to explore the important enabling role of SDG 16 in the realisation of sustainable development, and in addressing the climate crisis. The session objectives are:

- **Exploring and understanding the interlinkages between SDG 16** (peaceful, just, and inclusive societies) **and SDG 13** (climate action) within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with an emphasis on the enabling role of SDG 16 in addressing the climate crisis;
- **Identifying Access to Justice Issues that emerge from climate change and climate action**, highlighting the breadth and variety of these issues and identifying the role of the justice sector in addressing these justice needs;
- **Promoting people-centred justice approaches** and identifying collaborative strategies to support people and communities in navigating the justice challenges arising in the context of climate change.

## Format

This interactive working session will provide a platform for participants to share experiences and insights, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing the complex interplay between climate change and access to justice. The working session will begin with participants brainstorming examples of access to justice (A2J) issues in the context of climate change and environmental justice, setting the stage for a broader discussion on the variety and scope of A2J issues that arise in this context.

Following this, speakers will take turns presenting on specific examples from their work where A2J issues have emerged in the climate change context. The aim will be to highlight the breadth and variety of A2J issues that arise both in the fight against climate change, and in the design of climate action initiatives.

Following these presentations, participants will be invited to discuss the role of the justice sector and people-centred justice approaches in supporting the efforts of communities and national governments to address climate change and inequalities, focusing on justice strategies and tools to support communities and individuals, particularly vulnerable and marginalised communities.

## Discussion Topics

The working session will cover the role of the justice sector and people-centred justice approaches in supporting efforts to address climate change and inequalities, implementing large-scale green energy projects, carbon markets and green finance mechanisms, and disaster response. A spotlight will be placed on justice strategies to support communities and individuals, particularly vulnerable and marginalised communities, including national- and global-level collaboration among governments, private sectors, civil society organisations, and community leaders.

Examples of access to justice issues raised will include:

- The adverse impacts of climate change and climate action initiatives on Indigenous Peoples and their rights.
- The situation of climate and environmental human rights defenders, who face both the weaponisation of the justice system (through criminalisation, SLAPP lawsuits, and arbitrary detention) and harassment as the result of their work.
- The adverse human rights impacts of climate action initiatives, such as green energy and carbon market projects, on local communities – and the limited pathways for accessing justice and remedies for violations.
- The role that governments, working hand-in-hand with communities, can play in addressing environmental racism and advancing environmental justice through a people-centred approach.

## Speakers

The following participants will be presenting examples from their work on these issues:

- Heather O'Watch, Indigenous Peoples Rights International
- Carlos Quispe, Derechos, Ambiente, y Recursos Naturales
- Poorvi Chitalkar, Namati
- Abbas Luyombo, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies
- Laura Heidenheim, Environment and Climate Change Canada