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HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

***IN RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR INPUTS - FOSSIL FUEL-BASED ECONOMY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS***

ADDRESSED TO:

***OHCHR SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
H.E ELISA MORGERA***

FROM

THE LEARNBLUE'S RESEARCH & POLICY DEPT.

***'Case Study of Human Rights and Climate Change in Mauritius: A Just Transition Away from
Fossil Fuels and Its Human Rights Implications'***

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1. INTRODUCTION

Small Island Developing States including Mauritius face excessive impacts from global climate change despite their limited greenhouse gas emission production. Mauritius faces increased environmental degradation and air pollution and heightened social-economic risks because it depends on fossil fuels such as oil and coal for its energy needs. The human rights of Mauritians are facing direct impacts from climate change through violations of their right to live and their right to good health and their right to adequate housing specifically affecting coastal and rural populations. Mauritius' move toward renewable energy requires thorough investigation of its human rights effects on marginalized populations while ensuring equitable access to renewable energy benefits for all citizens.

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The research examines Mauritius's human rights consequences of fossil fuel dependence and evaluates the effects of renewable energy adoption on human rights protection. The analysis relies on survey data alongside expert consultations to reveal essential human rights barriers while suggesting recommendations for creating an equitable rights-based energy transition.

1.2 Background and Context

Mauritius operates as an upper-middle-income economy that depends heavily on imported fossil fuels which make up 50 percent of its total energy use. The country has initiated exploration of renewable energy systems yet faces obstacles to achieve both successful implementation and inclusive integration. The human rights aspects of climate change have gained prominence while Mauritius faces new risks and opportunities to protect human rights during its shift to renewable energy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research demonstrates how climate change connects to human rights and the energy sector. Rajaram (2019) shows how climate change affects marginalized communities in Small Island Developing States through displacement and destroying livelihoods and creating health hazards. According to the United Nations Human Rights Council (2015) climate change poses a threat that diminishes human rights including life expectancy and health status and food security alongside access to water and housing.

Climate change intersects strongly with human rights issues across Mauritius' landscape. Lalita et al. (2021) explain how the poorest segments of the population face the greatest risk from climate change effects that grow worse because of their dependence on fossil fuels. The authors Sachs (2015) and Akhter (2018) maintain that renewable energy transitions need gender-sensitive approaches with age and disability inclusivity to stop new social inequities from forming.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research project utilizes both quantitative survey results with qualitative expert interviews to evaluate fossil fuel reliance impacts on human rights together with renewable energy transition effects in Mauritius.

3.1 Survey Design

The research study obtained data from 500 participants across various demographic groups who represented urban, rural, and coastal Mauritius populations. The survey aimed to assess the following:

- Human rights problems emerge from fossil fuel usage when it affects health status and forces population displacement.
- Perceptions of the transition to renewable energy and its human rights implications.
- The survey examined how energy access intersects with job stability and social support systems for groups who are most at risk.
- People show both awareness and concern regarding human rights effects caused by climate change.

The survey contained both structured and unstructured questions which enabled a combination of quantitative examination together with qualitative exploration of Mauritians' specific human rights issues.

3.2 Expert Consultations

Our research involved interviewing five experts who focus on human rights alongside climate change and energy policy within Mauritius. Representatives from governmental agencies and international organizations and NGOs who focus on climate change and human rights made up the group of experts.

The consultations aimed to:

- The energy sector in Mauritius presents several important human rights risks which need identification.
- An examination should be conducted about how human rights would be affected through renewable energy transitions.
- Examine the existing legal structures and policy mechanisms which protect rights-based energy transitions.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCY IN MAURITIUS

Mauritius depends heavily on fossil fuels to power its energy sector leading to substantial violations of human rights through environmental damage and decreased public health conditions.

Mauritius' dependence on fossil fuels produces multiple human rights impacts that affect the population.

4.1 Health Impacts of Fossil Fuel Consumption

The emission of contaminated air from fossil fuel-based electricity generation and transportation and industrial activities creates major health problems. According to survey findings urban residents experienced asthma and bronchitis at a rate of 68% due to fossil fuel pollution while 53% of coastal residents reported insufficient clean water supply because of contamination.

The consultation with experts confirmed that fossil fuel dependence worsens public health challenges most severely affecting children and older adults and people with existing medical problems. The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) establishes the right to health which pollution violations violate directly.

4.2 Displacement and Livelihood Threats from Climate Change

The people living in Mauritius' coastal regions face direct threats from climate change because they depend on tourism and agriculture and face increasing sea levels and stronger cyclones. The research study showed that climate-induced sea-level rise became a significant concern for 70% of residents who reside in coastal areas. The individuals affected by displacement depend on their homes for both their living space and their economic survival which represents violations of both their right to housing (UDHR, Article 25) and their right to economic security.

The experts emphasized that fossil fuel extraction expansion together with increased usage has worsened these risks due to the direct correlation between fossil fuel dependency and climate change effects on environmental degradation. The adverse effects of fossil fuel production and consumption work against the full enjoyment of several fundamental human rights including the right to live and the right to proper standard of living.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF TRANSITIONING AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS IN MAURITIUS

The promise of renewable energy transitions for climate change mitigation and human rights defense requires precise management to prevent worsening current social and economic disparities.

5.1 Economic and Job Impacts

A primary concern about this energy transition involves potential employment losses throughout the fossil fuel and energy sectors because 65% of surveyed participants fear their current jobs will disappear after fossil fuels become obsolete. Green economic transformation may worsen social inequalities because essential green job opportunities fail to reach all social groups.

Experts advocated for both retraining programs and social protections which must protect workers in lower-income areas from job displacement.

A sustainable energy transition needs to place the right to work (ICESCR Article 6) at its core because workers must have options to sustain their livelihoods while the nation transitions to cleaner energy.

5.2 Energy Access and Affordability

Many people view renewable energy technologies as costly systems that poor communities cannot use. The study discovered that price barriers represented by renewable energy systems including solar panels kept 58% of rural participants from adopting these technologies. Experts advocated that a rights-based transition must fulfill UN SDG 7 by making renewable energy both accessible and affordable for all.

6. INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mauritius follows multiple international human rights agreements which require human rights protection during climate change responses and energy transitions. Climate justice and economic fairness during low-carbon economy development find their basis within the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. The principles of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) need to guide Mauritius' efforts to obtain international financial support for a just transition.

6.1 Recommendations for a Rights-Based Transition

Based on the survey and expert consultations, the following human rights-based recommendations are proposed:

Inclusive Policy Development: Mauritius needs to establish policies which protect vulnerable populations by creating job transition programs and clean industry platforms to handle employment shifts.

Access to Clean Energy: Government policies should lower renewable energy technology prices to deliver both equitable and affordable access to energy for rural areas and low-income populations.

Public Health Initiatives: Government programs need expansion to handle fossil fuel health impacts through increased air quality monitoring and enhanced healthcare access for pollution illness victims.

Community Participation: All communities especially those living in coastal and rural regions need active involvement in energy transition decision-making because it ensures their rights and needs find proper consideration.

7. CONCLUSION

The switch from fossil fuels in Mauritius requires careful execution to combat climate change effects without harming human rights protection. This research has established that the shift toward renewable energy creates both helpful prospects and disruptive obstacles for human rights protection primarily targeting marginalized communities. Through rights-based policies together with inclusive practices and social justice focus Mauritius will establish a just transition which safeguards human dignity while leading global climate change mitigation efforts.

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