

INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Request for an Advisory Opinion on the Climate Emergency and Human Rights submitted by the
Republic of Colombia and the Republic of Chile

**Amicus Brief Submitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights by the
Avaaz Foundation**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are children of Mother Earth. We are proposing solutions to postpone the end of the world.

- Txai Suruí, 26-year-old activist, member of Brazil's Paiter Suruí Indigenous community and founder of the Indigenous Youth Movement of Rondônia.¹

Siento ansiedad climática a diario. Hago todo lo que creo poder hacer poniendo de mi parte pero estoy resignado. Siento depresión, pérdida del sentido de vida y poco interés en pensar a futuro. No planeo, no tengo sueños ya.

(English translation: *I feel climate anxiety daily. I do everything I think I can to do my part, but I am resigned. I feel depressed, having lost the meaning of life, and with little interest in thinking about the future. I don't plan, I don't have dreams anymore.*)

- Ricardo León V.R., Avaaz member from Colombia

1. Humankind is facing quite possibly its most formidable challenge of all time. The disastrous effects of climate change pose grave threats to both human communities and the natural world. It is the prevailing consensus of the scientific community that, left unchecked, climate change will produce frequent and extreme weather events – from devastating hurricanes to unyielding droughts to all-consuming wildfires. Climate breakdown will jeopardize food and water supplies, disrupt ecosystems, and drive to extinction the flourishing biodiversity that this planet once had.
2. In the words of United Nations (“UN”) Secretary General António Guterres, “[c]limate change is here. It is terrifying. And it is just the beginning.”² No longer are these threats in the distant future. July 2023 was the hottest month ever documented, twinned by record low sea ice and record high ocean temperatures. Melting glaciers and rising seas threaten our coastal cities, wildfires are destroying forests and homes, deserts are enlarging, and forests are shrinking. Without immediate and comprehensive action, people and the planet may not survive this human-induced catastrophe. The only answer is a truly collective

¹ Time, “Txai Suruí”, available at <https://time.com/collection/time100-next-2023/6308542/txai-surui/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

² United Nations, Secretary-General’s opening remarks at press conference on climate, 27 July 2023, available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2023-07-27/secretary-generals-opening-remarks-press-conference-climate> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

response – with governments, individuals, communities, and corporations all having a role to play. Among those, States play the most central role in ensuring that the human rights of all, but particularly the most vulnerable groups in our society, are respected, protected and fulfilled.

3. Avaaz is a non-profit organization launched in 2007 with a mission to empower its now 70 million members across the globe to take collective action on pressing global, regional and national issues. We make this submission to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (the “**Court**”) to highlight the disproportionate effects that the climate crisis is having on some of the most vulnerable members of society: namely, children and Indigenous Peoples. Based on Avaaz’s work with young people and Indigenous communities, it is clear that those who contribute least to climate change are among those most harmed by it, while also having among the least participation and representation in political and decision-making processes.
4. Given the disastrous consequences of climate change, it is little wonder children and young people – who have contributed little to climate change but will feel its effects over the next several decades – are facing a level of hopelessness that has become a new mental health crisis. A growing body of scientific and medical research has identified a new psychological phenomenon: climate anxiety, which presents as deep psychological distress caused by the planet’s deterioration.
5. In the words of Avaaz member Sol A. from Argentina: *“Tengo 20 años y mi ansiedad climática es tan grande que desde que tengo 18 ya decidí que me iba a suicidar cuando todo llegue a su punto culminante. Me quitaron mi vida, mi esperanza a un futuro, mis ganas de vivir, pero no me van a quitar mi muerte. Yo quiero ser quien decida cómo morirme, y lo voy a hacer yo misma porque quiero sentir que tengo control sobre, al menos, en una mínima cosa en mi vida.”* (English translation: *“I am 20 years old and my climate anxiety is so great that ever since I was 18 I decided that I would commit suicide when everything reaches its climax. They took away my life, my hope for a future, my desire to live, but they are not going to take away my death. I want to be the one who decides how to die, and I’m going to do it myself because I want to feel like I have control over at least one small thing in my life.”*)
6. Under the American Convention on Human Rights (the “**ACHR**”), children and young people in the Americas like Sol A. are entitled to be protected from the harm caused by climate change, including climate anxiety. This is encompassed within Article 4 (the right to life), Article 5 (the right to mental integrity and protection against cruel, inhuman or

degrading treatment), and Article 11 (the right to be free from arbitrary and abusive interference with one's private life). States have breached these provisions of the ACHR by their action compounding the climate crisis and/or inaction in the face of the climate emergency. They are required to provide effective redress for these breaches and for their action and/or inaction contributing to climate change, and its attendant effects on the physical and mental health of children and young people – including climate anxiety.

7. For Indigenous Peoples, who rely on nature to foster their traditions and who serve as guardians of the extraordinary biodiversity that lives in their lands, climate change is an existential threat. In the words of Chief Raoni Metuktire: “*Minha preocupação não é só com os indígenas, mas com todo o mundo. Porque se eles desmatarem toda a floresta, o tempo vai mudar, o sol vai ficar muito quente, os ventos vão ficar muito fortes. Eu me preocupo com todos, porque é a floresta que segura o mundo. Se acabarem com tudo, não é só índio que vai sofrer. Minha preocupação é com o futuro das crianças e jovens que vão crescer neste planeta.*” (English translation: “*My concern is not only with the Indigenous Peoples, but with the whole world. Because if they cut down all the forest, the climate will change, the sun will get too hot, the winds will get too strong. I worry about everyone, because it is the forest that holds the world together. If they put an end to everything, it's not just the Indigenous Peoples who will suffer. My concern is with the future of the children and young people who will grow up on this planet.*”)³
8. Like other marginalized groups, Indigenous Peoples face the effects of climate change earlier and more acutely, owing to their dependence upon and centuries' long relationship with the environment and its resources. The rights of Indigenous Peoples to protection against the climate crisis, as accorded to them under the ACHR and elsewhere, must therefore be fiercely safeguarded. This Court should direct States to take concrete measures to effectively implement these rights, particularly their rights to natural resources, lands and communal property as well as their rights to be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes that affect them. Where these rights are violated or disrespected, States should hold bad actors accountable and be held accountable themselves. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' unique relationship to the climate and planet requires their full integration in key policy decisions related to conservation and the climate crisis.
9. In her 2020 op-ed, Brazil's now-Minister of Indigenous Peoples Sônia Guajajara captures the unique effects of the climate crisis and environmental degradation – and States'

³ Arayara, “Cacique Raoni: ‘É a floresta que segura o mundo. Se acabarem com tudo, não é só índio que vai sofrer’”, 20 November 2019, available at <https://arayara.org/cacique-raoni-e-a-floresta-que-segura-o-mundo-se-acabarem-com-tudo-nao-e-so-indio-que-vai-sofrer/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

contributions to it – for her people: “*My memories of childhood are of abundance. In the old days it used to be easy enough to find monkeys, pacas and tinamou here to eat, but now our government has opened our lands to mine for gold and iron, and to produce timber for paper and soy and cattle. They call our peoples and our traditions primitive and show disdain for our ceremonies. Prioritizing development at any cost is not just poisoning Brazil – it is threatening our way of life.*”⁴

10. In no uncertain terms, urgent action is needed now to save the lives and protect the rights of vulnerable populations, like children and Indigenous communities, from climate change. Avaaz, representing the voices of millions of people from across the planet, urgently calls on this Court to lead the way.

* * *

11. Following this executive summary (**Section I**), **Section II** describes Avaaz and details our experience relevant to these advisory proceedings. **Section III** addresses the obligations that States have to take action to prevent the disproportionate impact that climate change has on children. **Section IV** discusses the obligations of States to tackle the impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples. **Section V** sets out our conclusion.

II. STATEMENT OF INTEREST

12. Avaaz – which means voice in many languages – is a non-profit organization launched in 2007 with a mission to empower millions of people across the globe to take collective action on pressing global, regional and national issues, from corruption and inequality to human rights and climate change. Through its model of online organizing and across more than 20 languages, Avaaz takes various actions to leverage the power of its members – organizing petitions, launching media campaigns and direct actions; calling on governments, supporting local activists and movements, and setting up “offline” protests and events – to ensure that the views and values of the world’s people inform decisions that have global effect. Avaaz, along with its almost 70 million members worldwide, is an activist for activists, amplifying the voices, battles, demands and needs of groups across the world, to State authorities, regional bodies and international organizations like the UN.
13. Avaaz’s membership has consistently identified the climate crisis as the number one global issue to tackle. It stands out among the most pressing threats to the world’s collective existence. The consequences of the climate crisis are felt globally, but it inflicts

⁴ The New York Times, “Can Our Culture Survive Climate Change”, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/02/opinion/amazon-indigenous-people-brazil.html> (last accessed 6 October 2023).

disproportionate harm on certain regions and vulnerable populations, such as children and young people, as well as Indigenous Peoples and environmental defenders.

14. Since 2008, Avaaz has been committed to the fight to stop climate change at the local, regional and international level, with campaigns targeting countries, corporations and international bodies. Rallying its members across the globe, Avaaz has also fundraised to support humanitarian aid in response to the climate catastrophe. In addition, Avaaz is supporting and, through thousands of small member donations, helping fund climate change litigation suits brought before European, African, and American courts.
15. Through more than a decade of activism, Avaaz has built a particular expertise in the Americas region, especially as regards climate action, biodiversity protection and support for Indigenous Peoples' rights. Avaaz also supports and empowers Indigenous Peoples' leadership, rights and visibility across the world, especially in the Amazon.⁵
16. Avaaz makes this submission to offer this Court its expertise – bolstered by the voices of its almost 70 million members in approximately 194 countries – as the Court considers the nature and scope of States' obligations under the ACHR to respond to the climate emergency.⁶ We submit that those obligations include the respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of two particularly vulnerable groups – children and Indigenous Peoples – in specific ways.
17. The vulnerability and power of children and Indigenous Peoples present an interesting parallel problem and opportunity. Children are showing politicians, governments, and CEOs that “business as usual” is destroying our planet and that they are willing to take bold legal action to protect their rights from being eroded by climate change. Meanwhile, Indigenous Peoples are taking a public stand to show the world that their efforts to protect their territories and guard nature are strategically crucial in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. Avaaz has been and will continue to be a partner in both groups' calls to action.

⁵ See, e.g., Avaaz, “Urgent – sign this appeal to defend the Amazon and Indigenous lands!”, 31 May 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/a_fatal_blow_to_the_amazon_loc/ (last accessed 17 July 2023); Avaaz, “Power our fight for survival”, 7 October 2022, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/power_indigenous_voices_loc_rb/ (last accessed 17 July 2023); Avaaz, “Let's win a real plan to save life on earth!”, 10 September 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/protect_half_our_planet_2021_loc/ (last accessed 17 July 2023); Avaaz, “Stand with the Earth Defenders”, 28 June 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/100_indigenous_land_rights_rb/ (last accessed 10 July 2023).

⁶ In the preparation of this brief, we acknowledge Prof. Dr. Natasa Mavronicola's input and expertise offered to this submission. Prof. Mavronicola is Professor of Human Rights Law at Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham.

18. Accordingly, this submission addresses the following questions set out in the Request for an Advisory Opinion on the Climate Emergency and Human Rights submitted by the Republic of Colombia and the Republic of Chile:⁷

- *C. Pursuant to Article 19 of the American Convention, in light of the corpus iuris of international human rights law, including article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and recognizing the consensus of the scientific community which identifies children as the group that is most vulnerable in the long term to the imminent risks to life and well-being as a result of the climate emergency:*
 - *1. What is the nature and scope of the obligation of a State Party to adopt timely and effective measures with regard to the climate emergency in order to ensure the protection of the rights of children derived from its obligations under Articles 1, 4, 5, 11 and 19 of the American Convention?*
 - *2. What is the nature and scope of a State Party's obligation to provide children with significant and effective means to express their opinions freely and fully, including the opportunity to initiate or, in any other way, to participate in any administrative or judicial proceedings concerning prevention of the climate change that represents a threat to their lives?*
- *E. Pursuant to the obligations arising from Articles 1(1) and 2 of the American Convention and in light of article 9 of the Escazú Agreement:*
 - *1. What measures and policies should States adopt to facilitate the work of environmental human rights defenders?*
 - *3. What specific considerations should be taken into account to guarantee the right to defend a healthy environment and the territory based on intersectional factors and differentiated impacts, inter alia, of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples ... in the context of the climate emergency?*

⁷ On 9 January 2023, the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Colombia submitted to the Secretariat of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (“IACtHR”) a request for an advisory opinion regarding “*Climate Emergency and Human Rights*” under Article 64(1) of the American Convention on Human Rights. This advisory request is available at : https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/soc_1_2023_en.pdf (last accessed 18 October 2023).

III. STATES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT THE DISPROPORTIONATE HARM INFLICTED ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS A RESULT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Siento ansiedad climática a diario. Hago todo lo que creo poder hacer poniendo de mi parte pero estoy resignado. Siento depresión, pérdida del sentido de vida y poco interés en pensar a futuro. No planeo, no tengo sueños ya.

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- Ricardo León V.R., Avaaz member from Colombia

19. In preparing this submission, [Avaaz collected messages from 100 people from the Americas](#), including parents, grandparents, educators, and young people, who are feeling the impact of climate change and climate anxiety. Ricardo León V.R.'s words above reflect a common sentiment expressed in those messages and exemplify the distress being felt that more action is needed to avert the impending climate crisis which disproportionately affects children and young people. These 100 messages represent just a small portion of the many voices calling for change. Avaaz continues to collect them on a rolling basis at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/climate_litigation_hub/.
20. This **Section III** addresses the serious and disproportionate harm inflicted on children and young people as a result of the climate crisis, and in particular, the climate anxiety they suffer. As stated by Ms. Inger Andersen, Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, "*the climate crisis is taking a huge toll on the mental health of children. It is absolutely critical that we take on board the growing body of evidence on the impacts of the climate crisis on human health.*"⁸
21. The climate anxiety suffered by children is linked to and likely exacerbated by the conduct and failures of States to act appropriately to address the climate crisis, which is arguably the greatest existential threat of our time.
 - a. **Subsection A** sets out a brief overview of the serious, unjust and disproportionate impact of climate change on children and young people, and in particular, on their

⁸ Avaaz, "Government Inaction on Climate Change Linked to Profound Psychological Distress in Young People - New Study Shows", available at <https://secure.avaaz.org/page/en/media/pressreleases/1027.html>, (last accessed 25 September 2023).

mental health, as well as the imperative that States ensure the rights of children and young people to fully and freely express their opinions on matters affecting them.

- b. **Subsection B** deals with the rights of children and young people under the ACHR to be protected from the harm caused by climate change, including climate anxiety.
- c. **Subsection C** addresses States Parties' obligations under the ACHR to provide effective redress for their action and/or inaction contributing to climate change, and thereby, climate anxiety. Here, States Parties' obligations extend not only to their own action and/or inaction but also to the actions and/or inactions of private third parties, including corporations and multinationals, which are one of the largest contributors to climate change.⁹

A. Children are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis

- 22. Children are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis, including in terms of the adverse impact of climate change on their mental health. Due to their age, however, children have limited avenues to effect meaningful systemic change, including through the political or electoral process.
- 23. In the following subsections, we address the serious, unjust and disproportionate impact of climate change on children (**subsection i**), and in particular, on their mental health in the form of climate anxiety (**subsection ii**). We also set out in **subsection iii** the right of children to fully and freely express their views, to be heard and to have their concerns meaningfully taken into account by governments and those in power, and to make contributions to law, policy-making and other major decisions affecting climate change.

i. The serious and disproportionate impact of climate change on children has been recognized at the international level

- 24. The climate-related impacts on children have been well documented and include adverse health impacts, malnutrition and disease as a result of the consequences of climate change,

⁹ The Carbon Majors Database, CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017, July 2017, available at <https://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/cms/reports/documents/000/002/327/original/Carbon-Majors-Report-2017.pdf> (last accessed 8 September 2023); see also, Tess Riley, "Just 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions, study says", The Guardian, 10 July 2017, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change> (last accessed 25 September 2023).

such as severe drought, flooding, air and water pollution, the loss of biodiversity and water scarcity.¹⁰ According to one Save the Children report:¹¹

- a. Extreme temperature-induced familial poverty will lead to less food, less clean water, lower incomes and worsening health;
- b. Children's rapidly-developing immune systems will suffer, causing increased sensitivity to disease and pollution;
- c. 90% of diseases resulting from the climate crisis are likely to affect children under the age of five;
- d. By 2050, a further 24 million children are expected to be undernourished as a result of the climate crisis;
- e. By 2040, an estimated one in four children will be living in areas with extreme water shortages;
- f. Almost 160 million children are exposed to increasingly severe and prolonged droughts; and
- g. By 2050, an additional 143 million more migrants are expected as a result of the climate crisis.

25. A 2023 report by the United States Environmental Protection Agency warns:¹²

- a. Changes to seasons may increase exposure to allergens like pollen, leading to higher rates of seasonal allergies and asthma, affecting opportunities for outdoor recreation and play;

¹⁰ See e.g., UNICEF's photo essays, "The impacts of climate change put almost every child at risk", 19 August 2021, available at <https://www.unicef.org/stories/impacts-climate-change-put-almost-every-child-risk> (last accessed 8 September 2023); Save the Children, "Climate Change Is a Grave Threat to Children's Survival", available at <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/climate-change> (last accessed 25 September 2023).

¹¹ Save the Children, "Climate Change Is a Grave Threat to Children's Survival", available at <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/climate-change> (last accessed 25 September 2023).

¹² United States Environmental Protection Agency, "Climate Change and Children's Health and Well-Being in the United States", April 2023, available at https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-04/CLiME_Final%20Report.pdf (last accessed 5 October 2023).

- b. Climate-driven changes to air quality (e.g., ozone, dust and wildfire smoke) may increase visits to emergency departments, new asthma cases, general respiratory illnesses, and preterm birth and low birth weight;
 - c. Climate change may expand the ranges and active season lengths of insects and ticks that carry vector-borne diseases such as Lyme disease; and
 - d. Extreme heat exposure can impair learning – temperature increases of 2°C and 4°C of global warming are associated with, on average, 4% and 7% reductions in academic achievement per child.
26. The real and serious impact of climate change, as well as its disproportionate effects on children, have been repeatedly and consistently recognized by the international community more generally, and also specifically by this Court. For example:
- a. The “*Future We Want*” Declaration on sustainable development adopted by the UN General Assembly at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio on 19 June 2012 noted that “*the issues we are addressing have a deep impact on present and future generations*”;¹³
 - b. Article 8 of the Paris Agreement adopted on 12 December 2015 states that “*Parties recognize the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change*”, with the preamble expressly including children in the category of persons whose rights are at particular risk from climate change;¹⁴
 - c. The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to health of adolescents issued in April 2016 noted climate change as one of the “*profound challenges*” facing adolescents;¹⁵
 - d. In the same year, a Resolution was adopted by the Human Rights Council (“**HRC**”) on 1 July 2016, “[r]ecognizing that children are among the most vulnerable to climate change, which may have a serious impact on their enjoyment of the highest

¹³ The Future We Want – Outcome document, A/RES/66/288, available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 50.

¹⁴ Paris Agreement on Climate Change, UN Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1 Decision 1/CP.21, 12 December 2015 (“**Paris Agreement**”), Art. 8.

¹⁵ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”, 4 April 2016, A/HRC/32/32, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3232-report-right-health-adolescents> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 14.

attainable standard of physical and mental health, access to education, adequate food, adequate housing, safe drinking water and sanitation”;¹⁶

- e. This Court has, in its Advisory Opinion OC-23/17 of 15 November 2017 (the “**2017 Advisory Opinion**”), recognized that children are among the groups of persons “*especially vulnerable to environmental damage*.”¹⁷
- f. The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment issued in January 2018 (“**Special Rapporteur Report on a Sustainable Environment**”) stated that “[n]o group is more vulnerable to environmental harm than children”;¹⁸
- g. A Report by the UN Children’s Fund (“**UNICEF**”) in August 2021 noted that “[c]limate change is the greatest threat facing the world’s children and young people” and detailed the harms and disproportionate effects of climate change on children;¹⁹
- h. The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change issued in July 2022 (“**Special Rapporteur Report on Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change**”) noted that in 2020, when the hurricanes Eta and Iota hit Central America and the Caribbean, young people and children were forced to interrupt their education due to the displacement and initial isolation suffered by many communities;²⁰ and
- i. General Comment No. 26 issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in August 2023 (“**General Comment No. 26**”) states that States should “*set and enforce*

¹⁶ HRC, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 1 July 2016, 18 July 2016, A/HRC/RES/32/33, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/157/72/PDF/G1615772.pdf?OpenElement> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 2.

¹⁷ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 67.

¹⁸ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, 24 January 2018, A/HRC/37/58, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3758-report-special-rapporteur-issue-human-rights-obligations> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶¶ 15 and 69.

¹⁹ UNICEF, “The Climate Crisis is a Child Rights Crisis”, August 2021, available at <https://www.unicef.org/reports/climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

²⁰ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change”, 26 July 2022, A/77/226, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a77226-promotion-and-protection-human-rights-context-climate-change> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*environmental standards that protect children from such disproportionate and long-term effects.”*²¹

ii. Climate anxiety is having a real and serious detrimental impact on the mental health of children, closely linked to the insufficient action on climate change

Tengo 20 años y mi ansiedad climática es tan grande que desde que tengo 18 ya decidí que me iba a suicidar cuando todo llegue a su punto culminante. Me quitaron mi vida, mi esperanza a un futuro, mis ganas de vivir, pero no me van a quitar mi muerte. Yo quiero ser quien decida cómo morirme, y lo voy a hacer yo misma porque quiero sentir que tengo control sobre, al menos, en una mínima cosa en mi vida.

(English translation: I am 20 years old and my climate anxiety is so great that ever since I was 18 I decided that I would commit suicide when everything reaches its climax. They took away my life, my hope for a future, my desire to live, but they are not going to take away my death. I want to be the one who decides how to die, and I’m going to do it myself because I want to feel like I have control over at least one small thing in my life.)

- Sol A., Avaaz member from Argentina

27. In addition to its physical impact on children, climate change also has a significant mental and psychological impact on children in terms of the anxieties they face linked to the uncertainties and worsening consequences of climate change.

²¹ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, 22 August 2023, CRC/C/GC/26, ¶ 73, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

28. Published in 2021, the Lancet Planetary Health study on climate anxiety in children and young people (the “**Lancet Study**”),²² for which Avaaz funded the data collection,²³ surveyed 10,000 children and young people aged 16 to 25 years in 10 countries (Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America). The Lancet Study found that the psychological (emotional, cognitive, social and functional) burdens of climate change are being felt by large proportions of young people around the world.²⁴ Among the Lancet Study’s findings were that:
- a. The vast majority of respondents across all countries were worried about climate change (59% were very or extremely worried and 84% were at least moderately worried);
 - b. More than 50% of respondents reported negative emotions about climate change, including feeling afraid, sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty; the emotions least reported were those of optimism or indifference. These findings have practical consequences for children and young people, with large numbers clearly holding pessimistic beliefs about the future, such as: the future is frightening, humanity is doomed, they will not have access to the same opportunities their parents had, things they value will be destroyed, their security is threatened, and a hesitancy to have children;

²² Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023). The Lancet Study was conducted by a group of psychotherapists, psychologists, child psychiatrists, and academics, most specifically specializing in climate anxiety. The authors of the study include Caroline Hickman, MSc (Department of Social & Policy Sciences, University of Bath); Elizabeth Marks, ClinPsyD (Department of Psychology, University of Bath); Panu Pihkala, PhD (Faculty of Theology and Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, University of Helsinki); Susan Clayton, PhD (Department of Psychology, The College of Wooster); Eric Lewandowski, PhD (Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU Langone Health); Elouise Mayall, BSc (School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia); Britt Wray, PhD (Stanford University Center for Innovation in Global Health and Stanford and Woods Institute for the Environment, Stanford University; Centre on Climate Change and Planetary Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine); Catriona Mellor, MBChB (Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust); and Lise van Susteren, MD (Climate Psychiatry Alliance).

²³ Avaaz provided funding for data collection conducted by polling company Kantar. Avaaz had no role in data analysis, data interpretation, or writing of the study.

²⁴ See also, HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, 24 January 2018, A/HRC/37/58, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3758-report-special-rapporteur-issue-human-rights-obligations> (last accessed 25 September), section III.A; Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- c. More than 45% of respondents said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning, and many reported a high number of negative thoughts about climate change. Seventy-five percent said that they think the future is frightening and 83% said that they think people have failed to take care of the planet;
 - d. Respondents rated governmental responses to climate change negatively and reported greater feelings of betrayal than of reassurance. Sixty-five percent felt governments were failing young people, while 61% said the way governments deal with climate change was not “*protecting me, the planet, and/or future generations*”;
 - e. The failure of governments to adequately reduce, prevent, or mitigate climate change is contributing to psychological distress, moral injury, and injustice for children and young people;
 - f. Children and young people who expressed more worry and a greater impact on functioning tended to be from poorer countries and/or residents of the Global South – populations known to be more directly impacted by climate change;
 - g. Climate change, alongside governmental failures to act, constitute chronic, long-term and potentially inescapable stressors for children and young people. These factors are likely to increase the risk of developing mental health problems, especially in children and young people, who do not have the power to reduce, prevent, or avoid such stressors; and
 - h. There is an urgent need for governments and adults around the world to validate the distress of children and young people by taking urgent action against climate change.
29. The Lancet Study is exhibited in full at Annex A to this submission.²⁵
30. The adverse impacts of climate change on children’s mental health have been increasingly recognized, both by courts and international bodies.
31. Recently, the District Court of Montana stated in *Held v Montana* that the Youth Plaintiffs (ranging in age from 5 to 22 years old) had a constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, including the climate. In so holding, the District Court of Montana recognized the “*Plaintiffs’ mental health injuries stemming from the effects of climate*

²⁵ Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023).

change on Montana's environment, feelings like loss, despair, and anxiety."²⁶ The District Court of Montana also found that:

6. Every additional ton of GHG emissions exacerbates Plaintiffs' injuries and risks locking in irreversible climate injuries.

7. Plaintiffs' injuries will grow increasingly severe and irreversible without science-based actions to address climate change.

*8. Plaintiffs have proven that as children and youth, they are disproportionately harmed by fossil fuel pollution and climate impacts.*²⁷

32. Similarly, in *Neubauer et al v Germany*, the German Federal Constitutional Court, the highest court in Germany, recognized the significant psychological impact of climate change. In that case, the German Court found that by allowing high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, the German government was violating the fundamental rights of future generations. The decision cited the 2019 Monitoring Report on the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change which stated that “[c]hanges in weather and climate patterns [...] can increase social and psychological pressures and trigger disorders such as stress, anxiety attacks and depression [...]”.²⁸

33. The Committee on the Rights of the Child in General Comment No. 26 stated that:

*The clear emerging link between environmental harm and children's mental health, such as depression and eco-anxiety, requires pressing attention, both in terms of response and prevention programmes, by public health and education authorities.*²⁹

²⁶ *Rikki Held et al. v State of Montana et al.*, Case No. CDV-2020-307, Order, 14 August 2023, p. 86, ¶ 5.

²⁷ *Rikki Held et al. v State of Montana et al.*, Case No. CDV-2020-307, Order, 14 August 2023, p. 87, ¶¶ 6-8.

²⁸ *Neubauer et al v Germany*, Order of the First Senate, 24 March 2021, available at https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Entscheidungen/EN/2021/03/rs20210324_1bvr265618en.html (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 4(a). See also Umweltbundesamt, “2019 Monitoring Report on the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change”, August 2020, available at https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/421/publikationen/das_2019_monitoring_report_bf.pdf (last accessed 18 October 2023), p.31.

²⁹ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023 ¶ 41, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023). Avaaz took part in the public consultations on this General Comment, including by submitting a comment setting forth arguments, based on the Lancet Study, that “[a]dverse effects on children's mental health are linked specifically to climate change ...” and that “[e]co- and climate anxiety jeopardises the enjoyment and fulfilment of several rights of the child.” The full Avaaz comment can be found at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crc/gcomments/gc26/2023/cs/GC26-cs-avaaz.docx> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

34. The profound effects of climate change on children are borne out in the published testimonies of children and young people worldwide – capturing the impact on their mental health. For example:
- a. Grace Gibson-Synder, a plaintiff in *Held v Montana* (on why she had commenced action against the state of Montana): *“I wish lawmakers understood that this is the only way I see a future where I want to be there. And the youth don’t have a choice, we will be there one way or another.”*³⁰
 - b. Tahsin Uddin, a 22-year-old Bangladeshi climate activist: *“Though we the young people are not responsible for climate change, it will have a greater impact on us.”*³¹
 - c. Greandoll Oliva, a 16-year-old GreenRoots environmental activist: *“It’s scary to think about what awaits the future generations and [...] the world itself.”*³²
 - d. Another GreenRoots environmental activist, 15-year-old Darien Rodriguez: *“I’m very concerned because I want to be able to have kids and watch their kids grow up and have a family”, and “I feel like I won’t be able to experience that.”*³³
35. As noted above, Avaaz has collected messages from 100 individuals from the Americas. These messages are exhibited in Annex B and convey children and young people’s deeply felt anxiety about living in a world impacted by climate change, and also parents’ and grandparents’ worry for the future of their children and grandchildren. For example:
- a. Anna Carolina D.L.C. from Brazil: *“Tenho 23 anos, moro no Brasil e desde de muito criança lido com a ansiedade climática. É até um alívio saber que isso tem nome e que não estou sozinha nessa. Sabemos que nosso futuro vai ser triste, cinza e, com certeza, catastrófico, mas escrevo isso com a esperança de que meu relato possa fazer parte de um movimento de mudança. Os jovens ao redor do mundo clamam aos políticos e pessoas que detém o poder: FAÇAM ALGO!”*

³⁰ J Hill, “These kids sued over climate change — and won”, Vox, 12 June 2023, available at <https://www.vox.com/climate/2023/6/12/23755678/montana-climate-change-lawsuit-young-people-coal-global-warming> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

³¹ UNICEF, “Young climate activists demand action and inspire hope”, available at <https://www.unicef.org/stories/young-climate-activists-demand-action-inspire-hope> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

³² D Schechter, H Rush, C Horner, “As climate changes, climate anxiety rises in youth”, 2 March 2023, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/climate-change-anxiety-youth-mental-health/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

³³ D Schechter, H Rush, C Horner, “As climate changes, climate anxiety rises in youth”, 2 March 2023, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/climate-change-anxiety-youth-mental-health/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- b. Jonatan G. from Argentina: *“Siento y vivo con ansiedad climática desde que soy un niño. Se siente una gran impotencia al saber que estamos en manos de políticos que solo buscan la productividad de los recursos naturales y no les importa el daño que le causan a la naturaleza, mucho menos la destrucción que dejan para el futuro. Peor ¿hay futuro? Noches enteras lloré en mi cama imaginando cómo sería ese mundo sin agua potable. Hace unos días en un examen final de geografía ambiental, del profesorado de geografía que estoy cursando, lloré frente a mis profesores de la impotencia y la bronca que me daba exponer mi trabajo ambiental y que a los poderosos políticos que tienen herramientas para poder lograr un cambio, no les importe nada acerca del futuro del planeta y el de las personas que van a habitarlo.”*
- c. Nina N. from Canada: *“I feel grief and dread at what climate change is doing to vulnerable people all over the world. We are all vulnerable but I am especially aware of island nations and people in sub-Saharan Africa as well as Indigenous Peoples here in Canada. I am afraid the richer parts of the world, responsible for most of the greenhouse gases, will selfishly try to look out only for their own wealthier citizens. I am afraid this will become an ugly, ugly time. My own deepest sorrow is that we are destroying a beautiful, miraculous natural world for a burger in a styrofoam box. I have made a commitment to do what I can. I am camped out right now in a recovering clearcut, trying to stop a helicopter from spraying it with glyphosate-based herbicide to kill all the hardwoods in order to create an industrial tree farm. I have been arrested for blocking logging roads to protect endangered moose habitat. I deal with my anxiety by acknowledging it, feeling it, accepting that it is based in reality, then taking action. If all who care take some kind of action, we can turn the ship. If not, well, it is going to get uglier.”*
- d. Angel J.O. from Ecuador: *“Por los años 1990, el río el Pacche, era tan cristalino, lleno de peces multicolores, éramos muy jóvenes, íbamos a bañarnos. Hoy es un río tan contaminado por las plantas procesadoras de oro, plata, cobre y más minerales. Yo y más de 50 mil habitantes de Zaruma y Portovelo en la provincia de El Oro, república del Ecuador, vivimos con la ansiedad, tristeza y sobre todo preocupados por las consecuencias en nuestra salud, que esta contaminación provoca en nuestros organismos.”*
- e. Carina from Paraguay: *“Tengo ansiedad climática. Veo que lo estamos destruyendo todo. Siento un gran temor y tristeza enorme de que mi hija ya no podrá disfrutar de la naturaleza ya que el gobierno no hace nada para detener la tala indiscriminada de árboles, ni para frenar a las empresas contaminantes. Soy de*

Paraguay. Acá cada vez se siente más el calor y la contaminación ambiental. Nosotros los enfermos asmáticos y alérgicos nos llevamos la peor parte. La corrupción gigante que hay en el gobierno es desesperante. No les importa nada, son tan egoístas que no están dejando nada para las nuevas generaciones.”

- f. Monica Q.W. from Venezuela: “*Mi hijo de 8 años ve un futuro devastador, algunas veces me ha mencionado que no vale la pena estudiar y prepararse, pues dentro de 30 años el planeta ya no existirá. Es muy triste y angustiante ver qué nuestros niños crecen sin esperanza. Y efectivamente no vemos que las autoridades tomen acciones para darle un giro a esta crisis.”*

iii. Despite the impact of climate change on children, they have limited avenues to effect meaningful systemic change, including through the political or electoral process

It’s unfair for youth to be carrying this weight and to be robbed of hope. I’m questioning my family plans — I feel I have to choose between our planet and living the life I want. I educate myself, make lifestyle changes, mobilize when I can. But it never feels like enough without government action. The movement is headed in the right direction but will the timing work out? But I get strength from our unity, together we can topple the systems of inequity that don’t serve our planet!

- Talia N., Canada

36. Despite the overwhelming impact of climate change on children, as noted in the Special Rapporteur Report on Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change, those most affected by climate change have the least participation and representation in political and decision-making processes.³⁴ This is particularly so for children and young people who, on the whole, are ineligible to vote, run for public office, or otherwise have control over matters that affect climate change. Indeed, Ava Lazar, one of the plaintiffs in *Layla H. v Commonwealth of Virginia*, in explaining why she commenced legal proceedings remarked that: “*I’m only 17 years old. I don’t really have a voice, except through the court.*”³⁵

³⁴ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change”, 26 July 2022, A/77/226, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a77226-promotion-and-protection-human-rights-context-climate-change> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 2.

³⁵ L Galst, “Reasons to be hopeful: Six stunning environmental wins in 2022”, 23 December 2022, available at <https://www.edf.org/article/reasons-be-hopeful-six-stunning-environmental-wins-2022> (last accessed 18 October 2023). See case *Layla H. and ors v Commonwealth of Virginia*, February 2022.

37. The Lancet Study found that almost half (48%) of the youth surveyed who said they talked with others about climate change felt ignored or dismissed. The study therefore found that children and young people often face stress related to climate change alongside governmental failures to act “*without having the power to reduce, prevent, or avoid such stressors.*”³⁶
38. Yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, children are fighting to be heard on issues impacting climate change, issues which profoundly affect them. There have been increasing numbers of climate-related litigations brought by children and young people against governments for their actions and/or inactions in the face of climate change.³⁷ As a consequence of these cases, there has been increased attention on the impact of climate change on mental health. For example, in connection with the *Juliana v United States* litigation in the United States, one of the plaintiffs, Vic Barrett, provided written testimony before the US House of Representatives documenting his struggle with anxiety and depression. As he explained:
- As someone who already struggles with anxiety and depression from my understanding of climate change and what I experience, watching our government knowingly perpetuate the climate crisis is often overwhelming. I wrestle with this anxiety every day, from the moment that I wake up in the morning to the moment I fall asleep at night: If we keep going on with business as usual, both Honduras and New York, the places where my family and I are from, will forever be lost to the sea. That is one of my greatest fears: that climate change is going to take these places away from us.*³⁸
39. The youngest plaintiff in the *Juliana v United States* case, Levi Draheim, explained in an interview that he has lived most of his life on the beaches of a barrier island in Florida “*that’s a mile wide and barely above sea level*” and that his biggest fear is that he “*won’t*

³⁶ Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 871.

³⁷ Avaaz has supported such actions by children and young people by issuing grants to cover part of the legal fees, including in the *Juliana v United States* litigation in the United States and in the *Duarte Agostinho v Portugal* case before the European Court of Human Rights.

³⁸ Written Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, House Committee on Foreign Affairs and House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Hearing Entitled “Voices Leading the Next Generation on the Global Climate Crisis” Vic Barrett, Fellow, Alliance for Climate Education and Youth Plaintiff, *Juliana v United States*, 18 September 2019, available at <https://www.congress.gov/116/meeting/house/109951/witnesses/HHRG-116-FA14-Wstate-BarrettV-20190918.pdf> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*have a home here in the future.”*³⁹ Likewise, Plaintiff Kelsey Juliana explained in an interview her “*disappointment, disgust and rage*” at the issues facing young people in relation to climate change and expressed concern that her “*future is at risk in a way that isn’t the case for old people.*”⁴⁰

40. Similarly, one of the claimants in the *Duarte Agostinho v Portugal* litigation before the European Court of Human Rights (“ECtHR”), Cláudia Duarte Agostinho, explained in an interview her motivations for bringing the claim:

*I was driven to do this because of the anxiety I feel about what is happening, and what will happen if we don’t take any action. [...] I think to myself, ‘Do I want to bring children into this world if there is no good future for them?’, and I feel that something has to be done, the way we all live is not sustainable.*⁴¹

41. More recently, Cláudia, recalling the anxiety that her 11-year-old sister suffered after the wildfires in Portugal’s Leiria region that killed over 100 people in 2017, stated that “[i]t’s hard to see children suffering with anxiety for something that they have no control over.”⁴²
42. There has also been a rise in children and young people speaking out on climate change issues, including well-known climate activists such as Greta Thunberg, Haven Coleman, Vanessa Nakate, and Leah Namugerwa, as well as the significant number of young people participating in movements such as the youth climate strikes, which include large-scale marches like the New York Climate March led by Greta Thunberg in 2019.⁴³ As part of these broader efforts, a “Cease and Desist” Letter, spearheaded by youths such as Vanessa Nakate and Greta Thunberg, was sent to fossil fuel company CEOs at Davos this year, demanding an end to new fossil fuel exploration. This letter has since garnered over a

³⁹ S Kroft, “The climate change lawsuit that could stop the U.S. government from supporting fossil fuels”, 23 June 2019, available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/juliana-versus-united-states-climate-change-lawsuit-60-minutes-2019-06-23/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴⁰ J Cartner-Morley, “Kelsey Juliana: ‘What if fashion came to represent a new way of living?’”, 20 November 2019, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/nov/20/kelsey-juliana-what-if-fashion-came-to-represent-a-new-way-of-living> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴¹ S Laville, “‘It’s a human rights issue’: young adults take Portugal climate crisis to court”, The Guardian, 11 August 2022, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/11/its-a-human-rights-issue-young-adults-take-portugal-climate-crisis-to-court> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴² C Demony, “Upset at climate inaction, young people gird for European court battle”, Reuters, 23 August 2023, available at <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/upset-climate-inaction-young-people-gird-european-court-battle-2023-08-23/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴³ See Avaaz’s support for this initiative at Avaaz, “Sept 20 #ClimateStrike, All You Need To Know”, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/climate_strike_toolkit/ (last accessed 25 September 2023).

million signatures.⁴⁴ A similar level of support has been given to an urgent call to world leaders to finally face up to the climate emergency which was issued by youth activists such as Dominika Lasota and Mitzi Tan and backed by over 1.8 million people across the world.⁴⁵

43. Children have a fundamental right to express their opinions fully and freely on climate change within State legal and governmental processes. In an interview in 2019 on the global youth climate strikes, Greta Thunberg noted the value of large-scale demonstrations of people's desire for governments to act to prevent climate change:

*[I]f enough people get together and stand up for this then that can have a huge difference, to put pressure on the people in power, to actually hold them accountable and to say you need to do something now.*⁴⁶

44. The right to full and free expression is enshrined in Article 13 of the ACHR which provides at sub-paragraph (1) that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice.

45. The significance of this fundamental right to the freedom of expression has been emphasized by this Court in its Advisory Opinion OC-5/85 of 13 November 1985 and consistently in its subsequent jurisprudence:

Freedom of expression is a cornerstone upon which the very existence of a democratic society rests. It is indispensable for the formation of public opinion. [...] It represents, in short, the means that enable the community, when exercising its

⁴⁴ See Avaaz's support for this initiative at Avaaz, "Sign The Call From Greta, Vanessa, Helena And Luisa To Fossil Fuel CEOs", available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/davos_2023_21/ (last accessed 19 October 2023).

⁴⁵ See Avaaz's support for this initiative at Avaaz, "Sign the emergency appeal for climate action", available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/climate_action_now_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴⁶ M McFall-Johnsen, "2 striking photos taken just over a year apart show how Greta Thunberg's climate strike inspired millions", Business Insider, 21 September 2019, available at: https://www.businessinsider.com/2-photos-show-how-greta-thunbergs-climate-strike-inspired-millions-2019-9?r=US&IR=T&utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar (last accessed 19 October 2023)

*options, to be sufficiently informed. Consequently, it can be said that a society that is not well informed is not a society that is truly free.*⁴⁷

46. This right is enshrined in various international legal instruments, including:

- a. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (“UDHR”) which states that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;⁴⁸
- b. Article 19(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”) which provides that: “[e]veryone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice”;⁴⁹
- c. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“CRC”) which states that “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”;⁵⁰ and
- d. Article 24(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which states that: “[c]hildren [...] may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.”⁵¹

⁴⁷ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-5/85, 13 November 1985, ¶ 70. See e.g., *Case of the Maya Kaqchikel Indigenous Peoples of Sumpango et al. v Guatemala*, Judgment, 6 October 2021, ¶ 79; *Case of Palacio Urrutia et al. v Ecuador*, Judgment, 24 November 2021, ¶ 87; *Case of Moya Chacón et al. v Costa Rica*, Judgment, 23 May 2022, ¶ 63.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948 (“UDHR”), Art. 19, available at <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, Art. 19(2), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Art. 12, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁵¹ European Union, *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, 18 December 2020, 364/1, Art. 24(1), available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf (last accessed 18 October 2023).

47. It has also been observed in the Special Rapporteur Report on a Sustainable Environment that:

47. [...] The Committee on the Rights of the Child has called the right of children to be heard and be taken seriously, one of the four general principles of the Convention, which should be considered in the interpretation and implementation of other rights.

*48. The Committee's point that the views of children may add relevant perspectives and experience is especially relevant with respect to environmental harm. Children are not experts in air pollution, water management or toxicology, but neither are most adults. Once children have reached a certain level of maturity, they are capable of forming opinions and expressing views on proposals for measures that may affect them. Moreover, like adults, they know better than anyone else the circumstances of their own lives. They can provide invaluable insights, for example, into their use of water sources outside the home; the effectiveness of warnings about environmental hazards; and their access to green spaces and natural ecosystems. **In particular, the views of children should be taken into account with respect to long-term environmental challenges, such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity, that will shape the world in which they will spend their lives.***⁵²

48. Recently, General Comment No. 26 issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that:

*Children's voices are a powerful global force for environmental protection, and their views add relevant perspectives and experience with respect to decision-making on environmental matters at all levels. Even from an early age, children can enhance the quality of environmental solutions, for example, by providing invaluable insights into issues such as the effectiveness of early warning systems for environmental hazards.*⁵³

49. It further recommends that “[c]hildren’s views should be proactively sought and given due weight in the design and implementation of measures aimed at addressing the significant

⁵² HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, 24 January 2018, A/HRC/37/58, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3758-report-special-rapporteur-issue-human-rights-obligations> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶¶ 47-48 (emphasis added).

⁵³ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023, ¶ 26, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

and long-term environmental challenges that are fundamentally shaping their lives”⁵⁴ and that “States must ensure that age-appropriate, safe and accessible mechanisms are in place for children’s views to be heard regularly and at all stages of environmental decision-making processes for legislation, policies, regulations, projects and activities that may affect them, at the local, national and international levels.”⁵⁵

50. Accordingly, the right of children to fully and freely express their views, to be heard and to have their concerns meaningfully taken into account by governments and those in power, and to make contributions to law, policy-making and other major decisions affecting climate change, is of key importance, and must be protected and fulfilled.

B. The ACHR confers upon children the right to be protected from the harm linked to climate change, including climate anxiety

51. At the outset, it is important to emphasize, as this Court has, that the ACHR is a living instrument which must take into “*account the evolution of the times and the conditions of present-day life.*”⁵⁶ The effects of climate change and its consequential harms today and in the future may not have been specifically contemplated at the time the ACHR was signed in 1961, but nevertheless, its provisions are well able to encompass protections relating to these harms, and we respectfully submit that this Court should interpret its provisions as such.

i. The right to mental health is a key element of the protection enshrined under Article 4 of the ACHR on the right to life

52. Article 4(1) of the ACHR states that “[e]very person has the right to have his life respected”, and this provision includes protection of persons from serious mental harm.
53. The jurisprudence of this Court, supported by widespread international recognition,⁵⁷ has been clear that the right to life encompasses not just the right to life itself *per se*, but also

⁵⁴ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023, ¶ 26, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁵⁵ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023, ¶ 27, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁵⁶ *Case of Spoltore v Argentina*, Judgment, 9 June 2020, ¶ 87.

⁵⁷ See e.g., Constitution of the World Health Organization, 22 July 1946, available at <https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf> (last accessed 18 October 2023), preamble which states that “[h]ealth is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” and “[t]he enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being”; General Comment No. 36 on Article 6: right to life, 3 September 2019, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/general-comment-no-36-article-6-right-life> (last accessed 18 October 2023),

the right to health, and in particular, “*the right of everyone to enjoy the highest level of physical, **mental** and social well-being.*”⁵⁸ Such interpretation is consistent with the very first article of the ACHR which sets out the States Parties’ undertaking “*to respect the rights and freedoms recognized [in the ACHR] and to ensure to all persons subject to their jurisdiction the free and full exercise of those rights and freedoms.*”⁵⁹

54. Indeed, this Court has espoused the *vida digna* doctrine (the right to a dignified life), recognizing that the right to life “*encompasses the right to be free from conditions that impede or inhibit access to a decent life.*”⁶⁰ The importance of mental well-being for *vida digna* has been widely accepted. For example, Article 10(1) of the Protocol of San Salvador to the ACHR provides that “[e]veryone shall have the right to health, understood to mean the enjoyment of the highest level of physical, mental and social well-being”;⁶¹ and this Court in its 2017 Advisory Opinion considered health, i.e., “*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being*”, to be one of the conditions required for a decent life.⁶²
55. The international community has recognized the importance of mental health to the right to a dignified life:
- a. Article 25(1) of the UDHR states that “[e]veryone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family”;⁶³

¶ 54 which noted that “*ill-treatment, which may seriously affect the physical and mental health of the mistreated individual could also generate the risk of deprivation of life.*” Notably, a large majority of the States Parties to ACHR have acceded to the ICCPR.

⁵⁸ *Case of Manuela et al. v El Salvador*, Judgment, 2 November 2021, ¶ 184 (emphasis added). See also IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶¶ 108-109.

⁵⁹ Organization of American States, *American Convention on Human Rights “Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica”*, 22 November 1969, available at <https://www.cidh.oas.org/basicos/english/basic3.american%20convention.htm> (last accessed 9 October 2023) (“ACHR”), Art. 1.

⁶⁰ See e.g., *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶ 93. In this case, the Court specifically recognized that States have an obligation under Article 1(1) of the ACHR to respect the right to a healthy environment.

⁶¹ Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 10(1).

⁶² IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 110. See also World Health Organization, “Preamble” in the *Constitution of the World Health Organization*, 7 April 1948.

⁶³ UDHR, Art. 25(1), available at <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- b. Article 24(1) of the CRC provides that “*States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health*”;⁶⁴
 - c. In a resolution adopted by the HRC on 19 June 2020, the HRC acknowledged that good mental health should be defined “*by an environment that enables individuals and populations to live a life of dignity, with full enjoyment of their rights, in the equitable pursuit of their potential, and that values both social connection and respect through non-violent and healthy relationships at the individual and societal levels*”;⁶⁵
 - d. In a Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health issued in July 2015, the Special Rapporteur noted that “[b]eyond sheer survival, children have a right to thrive, develop in a holistic way to their full potential and enjoy good physical and mental health in a sustainable world”;⁶⁶ and
 - e. In a further Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health issued in April 2020, the Special Rapporteur recognized children as part of those “*most at risk from climate change*” and noted that “[g]reater attention should also be paid to the right to mental health in the context of adaptation strategies.”⁶⁷
56. In addition, States Parties have a special, added responsibility in terms of safeguarding children’s rights, and in particular, the right of a child to a standard of living adequate for mental development.⁶⁸ Article 19 of the ACHR provides that “[e]very minor child has the right to the measures of protection required by his condition as a minor on the part of his family, society, and the state.”⁶⁹ As such, it is incumbent upon States Parties to also take

⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Art. 24(1), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁶⁵ HRC, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 19 June 2020, 1 July 2020, A/HRC/RES/43/13, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/159/02/PDF/G2015902.pdf?OpenElement> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p.3.

⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”, 30 July 2015, A/70/213, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/238/25/PDF/N1523825.pdf?OpenElement> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p.2.

⁶⁷ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”, 15 April 2020, A/HRC/44/48, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/094/45/PDF/G2009445.pdf?OpenElement> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶¶ 71 and 75.

⁶⁸ *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶¶ 103-108.

⁶⁹ ACHR, Art. 19.

into account other legal instruments providing for children's rights,⁷⁰ including Article 3(1) of the CRC which states that “[i]n all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”,⁷¹ and Article 27(1) of the CRC which specifically provides that “States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”⁷²

57. As put by this Court in its recent decision in *Vera Rojas v Chile*:

104. [...] pursuant to Article 19 of the American Convention, the State is obligated to advance special protection measures in the best interests of children, carrying out its role as guarantor with greater caution and responsibility because of their unique vulnerability. The Court has established that the ultimate goal of protecting children is the development of children's personalities and the enjoyment of their recognized rights. Children thus have special rights, which call for specific duties on the part of families, society, and the State. Furthermore, their status necessitates special protection by the State, and this must be understood as an additional right, supplementing the other rights the Convention recognizes for all people.

[...]

107. [...] States must give central importance to the best interests of the child in all decisions affecting their health and development, including those decisions involving actions that have an impact on children's health. In this regard, the

⁷⁰ See e.g., *Case of Members and Activists of the Patriotic Union v Colombia*, Judgment, 27 July 2022, ¶ 387: “Article 19, in addition to granting special protection to the rights recognised in the American Convention, establishes an obligation on the State to respect and ensure the rights recognised for children in other applicable international instruments.” See also *Case of Mota Abarullo et al. v Venezuela*, Judgment, 18 November 2020, ¶ 79; *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶ 103. Indeed, this Court has, in its decisions and opinions, been cognisant of the rights provided to children under the CRC, as well as the statements issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. See IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-17/2002, 28 August 2002; *Case of Ramírez Escobar et al. v Guatemala*, Judgment, 9 March 2018; *Case of the Miskito Divers (Lemonth Morris et al.) v Honduras*, Judgment, 31 August 2021, ¶ 49; *Case of Valencia Campos et al v Bolivia*, Judgment, 18 October 2022, ¶ 212.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Art. 3(1), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁷² UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Art. 27(1), available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*committee has indicated that States must review the legal context and modify laws and public policies to ensure the right to health.*⁷³

58. In light of the foregoing, States Parties have an obligation under Article 4 of the ACHR to ensure the highest attainable level of health, which includes mental well-being, for children and young people. We respectfully submit that States Parties are in breach of this obligation by their action and/or inaction on climate change linked to the serious climate anxiety suffered by children and young people.

ii. Article 5 of the ACHR provides for the right to personal and mental integrity, as well as protections against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

59. Article 5 of the ACHR provides in pertinent part:

1. Every person has the right to have his physical, mental, and moral integrity respected.

*2. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.*⁷⁴

60. Both sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) of Article 5 provide for the protection of persons from serious mental harm.⁷⁵
61. Regarding Article 5(1) and the right to have one's mental integrity respected, this Court has considered that mental suffering resulting from State action or inaction can constitute a violation of the protection of mental integrity.⁷⁶ In this regard, this Court has found that causing a person to suffer "extreme stress" due to "uncertainty" can constitute a violation of a person's mental integrity,⁷⁷ and that causing feelings of loss, intense fear, uncertainty

⁷³ *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶¶ 104 and 107 (emphasis added).

⁷⁴ ACHR, Art. 5(2). See also UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Art. 37(a): "No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

⁷⁵ ACHR, Art. 5.

⁷⁶ See e.g., *Case of Julien Grisonas Family v Argentina*, Judgment, 23 September 2021, ¶ 243, *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶¶ 153-156; *Case of the Maya Kaqchikel Indigenous Peoples Of Sumpango et al. v Guatemala*, Judgment, 6 October 2021, ¶ 262.

⁷⁷ *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶ 154.

about their situation and fate, distress,⁷⁸ and “*anguish, stress and pain*”⁷⁹ can constitute a violation of Article 5 of the ACHR.⁸⁰

62. Likewise, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (“IACHR”) has considered that “*attacks on people’s mental and moral integrity [...] produc[ing] constant fear and distress, [...] amounts to a violation of the personal integrity of those affected*”,⁸¹ and that situations which lead to a well-founded fear for one’s life and physical integrity or to a “*state of uncertainty and fear*”⁸² can constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in violation of the ACHR. This is precisely the situation where States’ actions contributing to climate change and exacerbating its effects, as well as States’ inaction in the face of the urgent need to tackle climate change are directly linked to harms to children’s mental integrity through constant fear and distress, particularly due to an uncertain future for their homes, the planet, their lives and their loved ones’ lives.
63. With regard to Article 5(2) and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, this Court has found that action or inaction putting an individual “*in a particularly vulnerable position*” can be considered cruel and inhuman treatment and harmful to the psychological and moral integrity of the person in violation of Article 5 of the ACHR.⁸³ This Court has considered that action or inaction having a detrimental impact on a person’s psyche can constitute inhuman treatment,⁸⁴ and this interpretation finds support in the jurisprudence of international courts and tribunals:

⁷⁸ *Case of Movilla Galarcio et al. v Colombia*, Judgment, 22 June 2022, ¶ 186; *Case of Tzompaxtle Tecpile et al. v Mexico*, Judgment, 7 November 2022, ¶ 138. See also *Case of Roche Azana et al. v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 3 June 2020, ¶ 133.

⁷⁹ *Case of Valencia Campos et al v Bolivia*, Judgment, 18 October 2022, ¶ 200. See also, *Case of Britez Arce et al. v Argentina*, Judgment, 16 November 2022, ¶¶ 91-92.

⁸⁰ See also *Case of the 19 Merchants v Colombia*, Judgment, 5 July 2004, ¶¶ 211 and 217 where the causing of “*profound grief and anguish, to the detriment of their mental and moral integrity*” was found to be a breach of Article 5 of the ACHR; *Case of Anzualdo Castro v Peru*, Judgment, 22 September 2009, ¶ 85 and 86 where causing “*strong feelings of fear, anguish and defenselessness*” constituted a breach of Article 5 of the ACHR; *Case of the Barrios Family v Venezuela*, Judgment, 24 November 2011, ¶¶ 310 and 312 where exacerbation of “*feelings of frustration, helplessness, and anxiety*” amounted to a breach of Article 5 of the ACHR.

⁸¹ IACHR Report No. 25/20: Case 12.780, 22 April 2020, ¶ 70, available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2020/CO_12.780_EN.PDF (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁸² IACHR Report No. 49/99: Case 11.610, 13 April 1999, paras. 89-90, available at <https://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/98eng/Merits/Mexico%2011610.htm> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁸³ *Case of Suárez-Rosero v Ecuador*, Judgment, 12 November 1997, ¶ 90 read with *Velásquez Rodríguez v Honduras*, Judgment, 29 July 1988, ¶ 156 and *Case of Godínez-Cruz v Honduras*, Judgment, 20 January 1989, ¶ 164.

⁸⁴ See e.g., *Petro Urrego v Colombia*, Judgment, 8 July 2020, ¶ 142 where this Court considered that: “*threatening or creating a situation that threatens a person’s life can constitute at least inhuman treatment in some circumstances*”; *Case of the Village of Los Josefinos Massacre v Guatemala*, Judgment, 3 November 2021, ¶ 122: “*the continued deprivation of the truth regarding the fate of a disappeared person constitutes a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment for the close family*”; *Case of Dial et al. v Trinidad and Tobago*, Judgment, 21 November 2022, ¶ 71 where

- a. The ECtHR has held, inter alia, that causing “*feelings of fear, anxiety and powerlessness*”,⁸⁵ “*feeling afraid, depressed and hopeless*”,⁸⁶ “*constant mental anxiety*”;⁸⁷ “*feelings of fear, anguish or inferiority capable of inducing desperation*”,⁸⁸ “*serious distress*”,⁸⁹ “*trauma, whether physical or psychological, pain and suffering, distress, anxiety, frustration, feelings of injustice or humiliation, prolonged uncertainty, disruption to life*”⁹⁰ can constitute inhuman and/or degrading treatment.⁹¹
 - b. The UN Human Rights Committee held in *Mellet v Ireland* that the State’s implementation of a legal framework⁹² may amount to subjecting an individual “*to conditions of intense physical and mental suffering*”, and thereby constitute a violation of Article 7 of the ICCPR prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.⁹³
64. Further, this Court has held that the personal characteristics of individuals must be taken into account in determining whether they have been subject to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, including their age and vulnerability.⁹⁴ This is particularly relevant in the case of children and young people who are likely to experience mental suffering of a greater intensity linked to the effects of climate change, including climate anxiety.⁹⁵

this Court held that measures causing “*mental anguish, extreme tension and psychological trauma*” constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

⁸⁵ *Volodina v Russia*, App No 41261/17, Judgment, 9 July 2019, ¶ 75.

⁸⁶ *Preminyin v Russia*, App No. 44973/04, Judgment, 20 June 2011, ¶ 81.

⁸⁷ *Rodić and Others v Bosnia and Herzegovina*, App No 22893/05, Judgment, 27 May 2008, ¶ 73.

⁸⁸ *M.S.S. v Belgium and Greece*, App No 30696/09, Judgment, 21 January 2011, ¶ 263.

⁸⁹ *Yunzel v Russia*, App No 60627/09, Judgment, 13 December 2016, ¶ 48.

⁹⁰ *Varnava and others v Turkey*, App Nos 16064/90, 16065/90, 16066/90, 16068/90, 16069/90, 16070/90, 16071/90, 16072/90 and 16073/90, Judgment, 18 September 2009, ¶ 224.

⁹¹ See also Natasa Mavronicola, “The Future is a Foreign Country: State (In)Action on Climate Change and the Right against Torture and Ill-Treatment”, 2022/2, no. 6, Europe of Rights & Liberties, pp. 211-237, available at <https://www.europedeslibertes.eu/app/uploads/2022/11/Mavronicola-final-1.pdf> (last accessed 26 September 2023).

⁹² In that case, concerning abortion and termination of pregnancy.

⁹³ *Amanda Jane Mellet v Ireland*, Decision on merits, 31 March 2016, ¶ 7.4. And UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, Art. 7, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights#:~:text=the%20present%20Covenant.-,Article%207,to%20medical%20or%20scientific%20experimentation> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁹⁴ See e.g., *Case of Bissoon et al. v Trinidad and Tobago*, Judgment, 14 November 2022, ¶ 45; *Bedoya Lima et al. v Colombia*, Judgment, 26 August 2021, ¶ 100; *Case of Petro Urrego v Colombia*, Judgment, 8 July 2020, ¶ 141.

⁹⁵ UNICEF, “The Challenges of Climate Change: Children on the front line”, 2014, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/e-book/Climate-Ch-web-D215/files/assets/basic-html/index.html#toc> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 16;

65. The Special Rapporteur Report on a Sustainable Environment acknowledged that “[c]hildren are among the most vulnerable to climate change, which may have a serious impact on their enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” and that “[n]o group is more vulnerable to environmental harm than children.”⁹⁶ This is supported by the Lancet Study which demonstrates the deep and profound impact of climate change on the psyche of children and young people.⁹⁷
66. As the vulnerability of children to climate change magnifies the harms and risks involved, and in particular, in relation to their mental well-being, this enhances the obligation of States to protect them from such harms and risks.⁹⁸ Accordingly, government (in)action creating, contributing to or exacerbating the conditions that expose children to climate anxiety amounts to cruel, inhuman and/or degrading treatment in breach of Article 5(2) of the ACHR.
67. States Parties have an obligation under Article 5 of the ACHR to not subject children and young people to serious mental harm. They have breached this obligation by contributing to the constant fear, distress and anxiety experienced by children and young people through State action compounding the effects of climate change, such as through continued investment in and support of fossil fuels and allowing oil and gas exploration projects. States’ inaction has likewise compounded these harms, such as failing to adequately reduce emissions and take the necessary steps to counter climate change.

Singh et al, “Climate emergency, young people and mental health: time for justice and health professional action”, *BMJ Paediatrics Open* 2022, available at <https://bmjpaedsopen.bmj.com/content/6/1/e001375#ref-5> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁹⁶ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, 24 January 2018, A/HRC/37/58, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3758-report-special-rapporteur-issue-human-rights-obligations> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶¶ 10, 15 and 69.

⁹⁷ Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of *Elsevier*, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023).

⁹⁸ See *Case of Bissoon et al. v Trinidad and Tobago*, Judgment, 14 November 2022, ¶ 45; *Case of Bedoya Lima et al. v Colombia*, Judgment, 26 August 2021, ¶ 100; *Case of Petro Urrego v Colombia*, Judgment, 8 July 2020, ¶ 141. See also C Heri, “Climate Change before the European Court of Human Rights: Capturing Risk, Ill-Treatment and Vulnerability”, August 2022, 33(3) *European Journal of International Law* 925-951, available at <https://academic.oup.com/ejil/article/33/3/925/6717882> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

iii. Article 11 of the ACHR provides for the right of a person to have their honor respected and dignity recognized, as well as to be free from arbitrary or abusive interference with their private life

68. Article 11 of the ACHR provides that:

1. Everyone has the right to have his honor respected and his dignity recognized.

*2. No one may be the object of arbitrary or abusive interference with his private life, his family, his home, or his correspondence, or of unlawful attacks on his honor or reputation.*⁹⁹

69. The cornerstone of the protections in Article 11 of the ACHR is to allow a person the autonomy to develop their identity, personality, and aspirations. The IACHR has considered that the right to private life should be understood in a “*broad sense*” and as “*encompassing all spheres of the intimate realm and autonomy of an individual, including the development of his or her identity.*”¹⁰⁰

70. This Court has held in *Pavez Pavez v Chile* that “[t]he effective realization of the right to private life is decisive for the possibility of exercising personal autonomy in relation to the future course of events that are relevant for an individual’s quality of life”,¹⁰¹ and in *Olivera Fuentes v Peru* that the right to privacy protected under Article 11(2) includes “*the right to personal autonomy, personal development*” and “*encompasses a series of factors related to the dignity of the person, including, for example, the ability to develop one’s own personality [and] aspirations.*”¹⁰²

71. The protections under Article 11 are further bolstered by Article 19 of the ACHR which requires consideration of the need to promote the development of children and offer them “*the necessary conditions for them to live and develop their aptitudes with full use of their potential.*”¹⁰³

72. In this way, the right to private life under Article 11 encompasses protection from climate anxiety. Climate anxiety can prevent children and young people from fully exercising their

⁹⁹ ACHR, Art. 11.

¹⁰⁰ IACHR Report No. 71/99, 4 May 1999, available at <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2018/COPU11656EN.pdf> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 185.

¹⁰¹ *Case of Pavez Pavez v Chile*, Judgment, 4 February 2022, ¶ 58.

¹⁰² *Case of Olivera Fuentes v Peru*, Judgment, 4 February 2023, ¶ 94.

¹⁰³ *Case of Britez Arce et al. v Argentina*, Judgment, 16 November 2022, ¶ 95.

potential and their personal autonomy on matters relevant for their quality of life. The Lancet Study particularly identifies these concerns:

- a. More than 45% of respondents said that their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning (e.g., eating, concentrating, work, school, sleeping, spending time in nature, playing, having fun,¹⁰⁴ and/or maintaining relationships);
 - b. Approximately 55% of respondents said that they will not have access to the same opportunities that their parents had; and
 - c. Approximately 39% of respondents said that they are hesitant to have children.¹⁰⁵
73. Additionally, the Committee on the Rights of the Child noted in General Comment No. 26 that:

*Children have highlighted that education is instrumental in protecting their rights and the environment and in increasing their awareness and preparedness for environmental damage; however, the right to education is highly vulnerable to the impact of environmental harm, as it can result in school closures and disruptions, school dropout and the destruction of schools and places to play.*¹⁰⁶

74. This Court has considered that interference with a person’s private life is arbitrary and/or abusive where such interference does not “*seek a legitimate purpose, and comply with the requirements of suitability, necessity and proportionality; in other words, it [is not] necessary in a democratic society.*”¹⁰⁷ Further, judges of this Court have considered that in determining the proportionality of a measure, “*it is necessary to consider whether, despite the suitability and necessity of the measure, it has too great an impact on the*

¹⁰⁴ Play and recreation are particularly relevant given the statement by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that “[p]lay and recreation are essential to the health and well-being of children and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, self-efficacy and physical, social, cognitive and emotional strength and skills” and that “[p]lay and recreation contribute to all aspects of learning, are critical to children’s holistic development”: General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023 ¶ 59, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and-recommendations> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁰⁵ Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 868.

¹⁰⁶ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023 ¶ 51, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and-recommendations> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁰⁷ *Case of Fernandez Prieto and Tumbeiro v Argentina*, Judgment, 1 September 2020, ¶ 105.

*fundamental right concerned in relation to the importance of achieving the purpose sought. At this last stage of the analysis, it is necessary to weigh the antagonistic rights and interests.”*¹⁰⁸

75. Further, this Court has established that “*the ultimate goal of protecting children is the development of children’s personalities and the enjoyment of their recognized rights.*”¹⁰⁹
76. Given the catastrophic effects of climate change, including on the existence of life on the planet,¹¹⁰ any State action or inaction contributing to climate change cannot be said to be in compliance with the requirements of suitability, necessity or proportionality. Economic growth and averting climate change should not and cannot be mutually exclusive.¹¹¹ There can be no reasonable justification for shifting the immense burden of climate change onto younger generations, and the balance should weigh in favor of protecting children and young people.
77. In light of the above, we respectfully submit that States Parties’ action and/or inaction on climate change constitutes an arbitrary and abusive interference in the private lives of children and young people, in violation of Article 11 of the ACHR, preventing them from developing their identity, personality, and aspirations to their full potential.

C. States are obligated under the ACHR to provide effective redress for harms to children emanating from their action and inaction on climate change, including climate anxiety among children

78. In the Lancet Study, almost 60% of the respondents said that they felt betrayed by governments’ handling of the climate crisis and 64% said that governments are not doing enough to avoid a climate catastrophe.¹¹² It is time for States to step up and take action.

¹⁰⁸ *Case of Valencia Campos et al. v Bolivia*, Judgment, Reasoned Opinion of Judge Nancy Hernández López and Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch, 18 October 2022, ¶ 43.

¹⁰⁹ *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶ 104.

¹¹⁰ IPCC, “AR6 Synthesis Report”, 20 March 2023, available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/> (last accessed 26 September 2023).

¹¹¹ See e.g., LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, 7 June 2022, available at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/can-we-have-economic-growth-and-tackle-climate-change-at-the-same-time/> (last accessed 26 September 2023); Carton and Natal, “Further Delaying Climate Policies Will Hurt Economic Growth”, 5 October 2022, available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/10/05/further-delaying-climate-policies-will-hurt-economic-growth> (last accessed 26 September 2023).

¹¹² Hickman et. al., “Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey”, December 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 12 of Elsevier, available at [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext) (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 869, Table 3.

79. It is well established under international law that States are liable both for their actions and omissions,¹¹³ and States have by their action and/or inaction contributed to the current climate crisis and climate anxiety among children and young people.
80. The Paris Agreement is presently the most significant global climate agreement and aims to avoid the dangers of climate change by limiting global warming. However, States are failing to adhere to their commitments under this agreement. The Climate Action Tracker, an independent scientific analysis that tracks government climate action and measures it against the Paris Agreement, at present still does not list any country as on track to be Paris Agreement-compatible.¹¹⁴ The UN Climate Change secretariat's most recent 2022 report stated clearly that climate change is "*the enormous threat*" of our time and that "*we are still far from reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. Its outcome must push every government, every city and region, and every sector and business to accelerate climate action.*"¹¹⁵ The importance of taking action on climate change is underscored by the 2022 Nationally Determined Contributions Synthesis Report where the UN Climate Change secretariat emphasized concerns that States will not be able to keep warming below 2°C, let alone keep warming below 1.5°C and achieve net zero emissions this century.¹¹⁶
81. As the International Court of Justice ("ICJ") recognized in its *Nuclear Weapons* Advisory Opinion more than a quarter of a century ago, "*the environment is not an abstraction but represents the living space, the quality of life and the very health of human beings, including generations unborn. The existence of the general obligation of States to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction and control respect the environment of other States or of areas beyond national control is now part of the corpus of international law relating to the environment.*"¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, 2001, Art. 2.

¹¹⁴ Climate Action Tracker, available at <https://climateactiontracker.org/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹¹⁵ United Nations Climate Change, Annual Report 2022, available at <https://unfccc.int/annualreport> (last accessed 18 October 2023), pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁶ Synthesis report by the secretariat on Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, 26 October 2022, FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/4, available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/619180> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹¹⁷ *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, Advisory Opinion [1996] ICJ Rep 226, 8 July 1996, ¶ 29.

82. The Committee on the Rights of the Child similarly acknowledged in General Comment No. 26 that “[a] clean, healthy and sustainable environment is both a human right itself and necessary for the full enjoyment of a broad range of children’s rights.”¹¹⁸
83. Likewise, this Court has recognized in its 2017 Advisory Opinion the autonomous human right to a healthy environment in the context of the Inter-American Human Rights system.¹¹⁹ In particular, this Court observed that “*damage to the environment may affect all human rights, in the sense that the full enjoyment of all human rights depends on a suitable environment.*”¹²⁰
84. By their action and/or inaction, States have contributed to environmental damage and climate change, and this has had a profound impact on fundamental rights, including the rights of children to protection from serious mental harm. Such action and/or inaction by States is even more egregious considering Article 19 of the ACHR, under which States Parties have assumed a special position as guarantor with greater care and responsibility towards children.¹²¹ Indeed, in the Special Rapporteur Report on a Sustainable Environment, it was noted that “*States have heightened obligations to take effective measures to protect children from environmental harm.*”¹²²
85. Article 63 of the ACHR provides that where there has been a violation of a right protected in the Convention, “*the consequences of the measure or situation that constituted the breach of such right or freedom [should] be remedied.*” In light of States Parties’ breaches of their obligations under the ACHR, as detailed above, **States Parties have an obligation to remedy the negative consequences arising from such breach, including with respect to the climate anxiety suffered by children linked to climate change. States should be called upon to remedy this harm and human rights violations that children and young people suffer as a result of climate anxiety by taking sufficient, concrete steps to curb the climate crisis.**

¹¹⁸ General comment No. 26 (2023) on children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change, CRC/C/GC/26, 22 August 2023 ¶ 8, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-26-2023-childrens-rights-and> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹¹⁹ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶¶ 62-67. See also *Case of the Indigenous Communities of the Lhaka Honhat (Our Land) Association v Argentina*, Judgment, 6 February 2020, ¶ 208.

¹²⁰ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 64.

¹²¹ *Case of Angulo Losada v Bolivia*, Judgment, 18 November 2022, ¶ 98.

¹²² HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, 24 January 2018, A/HRC/37/58, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3758-report-special-rapporteur-issue-human-rights-obligations> (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 58.

86. Further, in addition to the negative obligation on States not to violate the rights provided for under the ACHR, and the duty to provide redress in cases of breach, **States are under a positive obligation to take proactive steps to uphold the rights afforded to children under the ACHR, including by drastically reducing fossil fuel emissions, transitioning to clean energy, adopting strategies and programs to counter climate change, and taking appropriate preventive measures to protect against environmental harms.** This positive obligation to take proactive steps is as required under Article 1 of the ACHR which obliges States “to ensure to all persons subject to their jurisdiction the free and full exercise of [the] rights and freedoms [provided for in the ACHR].” Indeed, this Court has emphasized on multiple occasions States’ obligation to take positive steps to ensure the enjoyment of the rights provided for under the ACHR.¹²³
87. Moreover, **States Parties’ responsibility to uphold the rights provided for in the ACHR extends also to the regulation of the conduct of private third parties, including businesses operating within the State.** This Court has recognized that “*the obligation of guarantee extends beyond the relations between State agents and the persons subject to their jurisdiction, and encompasses the duty to prevent third parties, in the private sphere, from violating the protected rights*”,¹²⁴ and more specifically that:

States should adopt measures to ensure that business enterprises have: a) appropriate policies for the protection of human rights; b) due diligence processes for the identification, prevention and correction of human rights violations, as well as to ensure decent and dignified work; and c) processes that allow businesses to remedy human rights violations that result from their activities, especially when these affect people living in poverty or belonging to vulnerable groups. The Court considers that, in this context, States should actively encourage businesses to adopt good corporate governance practices that focus on stakeholders and actions aimed at orienting business activity towards compliance with human rights and standards, including and

¹²³ See e.g., *Case of the Indigenous Communities of the Lhaka Honhat Association (Our Land) v Argentina*, Judgment, 6 February 2020, ¶ 137; *Case of Petro Urrego v Colombia*, Judgment, 8 July 2020, ¶ 93; *Case of the Maya Kaqchikel Indigenous Peoples of Sumpango et al. v Guatemala*, Judgment, 6 October 2021, ¶ 90; *Case of the Former Employees of the Judiciary v Guatemala*, Judgment, 17 November 2021, ¶ 111; *Case of Flores Bedregal et al. v Bolivia*, Judgment, 17 October 2022, ¶ 139.

¹²⁴ *Case of the Miskito Divers (Lemoth Morris et al.) v Honduras*, Judgment, 31 August 2021, ¶ 44. See also *Case of the Workers of the Fireworks Factory in Santo Antonio De Jesus and Their Families v Brazil*, Judgment, 15 July 2020, ¶ 117; *Case of Vera Rojas et al. v Chile*, Judgment, 1 October 2021, ¶ 83.

*promoting the participation and commitment of all the stakeholders involved, and the redress of affected persons.*¹²⁵

88. This is also recognized by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which set out principles for States to protect against human rights violations within their territory by third parties, including business enterprises.
89. Businesses are one of the largest contributors to the climate crisis¹²⁶ and States are currently failing to properly regulate them to ensure that business activity does not exacerbate the climate crisis. As such, it is important that States take steps to properly regulate businesses and their impact on climate change, including by implementing measures to reduce the emissions of businesses and ending subsidies to fossil fuel companies.¹²⁷
90. As the world grapples with the increasing threats of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and other climate-related disruptions, such as wildfires and floods, the mental toll on children and young people must be proactively addressed. The urgent need for States to address the climate crisis is underscored by the scientific consensus regarding the gravity of the situation, and specifically with respect to climate anxiety, the growing body of research demonstrating the link between climate change and psychological distress. In a broader sense, the duty of States to prevent climate anxiety reflects the interconnectedness of the environment and human wellbeing, as recognized by the ICJ in its *Nuclear Weapons* Advisory Opinion. It is therefore crucial for States to take appropriate measures, including the steps set out above, to address climate change, and thereby, climate anxiety experienced by children and young people.

IV. STATES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT THE DISPROPORTIONATE HARM INFLICTED ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS A RESULT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Minha preocupação não é só com os indígenas, mas com todo o mundo. Porque se eles desmatarem toda a floresta, o tempo vai mudar, o sol vai ficar muito quente, os

¹²⁵ *Case of the Miskito Divers (Lemoh Morris et al.) v Honduras*, Judgment, 31 August 2021, ¶ 49.

¹²⁶ The Carbon Majors Database, CDP Carbon Majors Report, July 2017, available at <https://cdn.cdp.net/cdp-production/cms/reports/documents/000/002/327/original/Carbon-Majors-Report-2017.pdf> (last accessed 18 October); See also, T Riley, “Just 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions, study says”, The Guardian, 10 July 2017, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jul/10/100-fossil-fuel-companies-investors-responsible-71-global-emissions-cdp-study-climate-change> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹²⁷ A Niranjani, “G20 poured more than \$1tn into fossil fuel subsidies despite Cop26 pledges – report”, The Guardian, 23 August 2023, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/aug/23/g20-poured-more-than-1tn-on-fossil-fuel-subsidies-despite-cop26-pledges-report> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*ventos vão ficar muito fortes. Eu me preocupo com todos, porque é a floresta que segura o mundo. Se acabarem com tudo, não é só índio que vai sofrer. Minha preocupação é com o futuro das crianças e jovens que vão crescer neste planeta.*¹²⁸

- Chief Raoni Metuktire

91. Working with Indigenous leaders and their communities, Avaaz has undertaken public campaigns, advocated, and fundraised in different parts of the world where Indigenous Peoples face discrimination, threats and other human rights violations in their defense of their territories and the ecosystems they steward. It is in this context that Avaaz has expressed the importance of harmonizing the language employed to refer to Indigenous Peoples in the three UN conventions: Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification, explicitly recognizing their human rights; their rights to the recognition of the lands which they have inhabited for millennia, before the formation of nations; that they value their ancestral knowledge and that any intervention in their territories by governments or companies follows the right to free, prior and informed consent. All these elements together are the fundamental axis contributing to the recovery of biodiversity and the ability to face the climate emergency.
92. Avaaz's most recent campaigns in support of Indigenous Peoples' human rights, land rights, voice, traditions and culture include:
- a. *A People's Declaration to Save the Amazon*: Launched with Indigenous youth activist Txai Suruí from Brazil, the campaign brings together in one declaration Avaaz's campaigns relating to the Amazon over the last twelve years, and calls on world leaders "*to adopt vital, science-based protections for the Amazon and its peoples*";¹²⁹
 - b. *Protect Peru's isolated peoples*: Urging the Peruvian Congress and national authorities to stop any attempts that could bring about the extermination of isolated Indigenous Peoples and those in initial contact, such as Bill No. 3518/2022-CR (known as the "Genocide Bill");¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Arayara, "Cacique Raoni: 'É a floresta que segura o mundo. Se acabarem com tudo, não é só índio que vai sofrer'", 20 November 2019, available at <https://arayara.org/cacique-raoni-e-a-floresta-que-segura-o-mundo-se-acabarem-com-tudo-nao-e-so-indio-que-vai-sofrer/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹²⁹ Avaaz, "Join the People's Declaration to Save the Amazon", 4 August 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/save_the_amazon_2023_loc/?slideshow (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁰ Avaaz, "Protect Peru's isolated peoples!", 14 June 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/stop_the_piacy_bill_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- c. *An appeal to defend the Amazon and Indigenous lands:* Urging the Brazilian Congress and President Lula da Silva to stop the vote on Bill 490/07, which will gut the government’s power to guard the rainforest, strip the rights of hundreds of Indigenous communities to their land, and roll back nearly 30 years of progress in protecting the Amazon and key biomes;¹³¹
 - d. *World leaders: Protect half of our planet:* Urging world leaders to meet existing targets to protect biodiversity, forge a new agreement that ensures at least 50% of the planet’s lands and oceans are conserved, protected and restored, and that the planet is completely sustainably managed, while taking into consideration the needs of human development, and with the active support and leadership of Indigenous Peoples;¹³²
 - e. *Stand with the Earth Defenders:* Requesting all world leaders, Parties of the Three Rio Conventions, and members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (“IUCN”) to ensure the community land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (“IPLCs”) are 100% recognized in multilateral agreements by 2025, as well as in national legislation and land tenure processes. Recognizing the community land rights of IPLCs and respecting their rights is key not only to ensuring their survival, but also one of the most effective ways to address the massive loss of biodiversity facing the world, and the climate disasters associated with it;¹³³ and
 - f. *Brazil: End the Amazon apocalypse:* Calling on the members of Brazil’s Congress, the government of then-president Jair Bolsonaro, to halt the rapid destruction of the Amazon rainforest, including passing laws to protect public forests and to end illegal deforestation.¹³⁴
93. Avaaz’s most recent fundraisers to support Indigenous earth defenders across the region include:

¹³¹ Avaaz, “Urgent – sign this appeal to defend the Amazon and Indigenous lands!”, 1 October 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/a_fatal_blow_to_the_amazon_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³² Avaaz, “World leaders: Protect half of our planet”, 9 December 2022, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/protect_half_our_planet_2022_shatner_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³³ Avaaz, “Stand with the Earth Defenders”, 28 June 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/100_indigenous_land_rights_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁴ Avaaz, “Brazil: End the Amazon apocalypse!”, 19 July 2019, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/amazon_apocalypse_loc/ Avaaz, “World leaders: Protect half of our planet”, 9 December 2022, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/protect_half_our_planet_2022_shatner_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- a. *Stand with Amazon defenders*;¹³⁵
 - b. *Power our fight for survival*;¹³⁶
 - c. *Power the Amazon Rescue*;¹³⁷
 - d. *Power the Amazon Spring*;¹³⁸ and
 - e. *Stand with these Amazon defenders*.¹³⁹
94. Drawing upon Avaaz’s long engagement with Indigenous Peoples within the context of the climate crisis, **Section IV** addresses the serious and disproportionate harm of climate change on Indigenous Peoples. In particular:
- a. **Subsection A** provides an overview of the serious, unjust and disproportionate impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples as a result of States’ action and/or inaction in the face of the climate crisis. Despite States’ responsibility to protect Indigenous Peoples against the effects of climate change and Indigenous Peoples’ efforts to mitigate climate change – which benefit all – such efforts are thwarted by States and by businesses operating within States’ jurisdiction; and
 - b. **Subsection B** deals with the rights of Indigenous Peoples under the ACHR and international human rights law, which protect them from the harm caused by climate change and its impact on their lives, territories, culture, traditional knowledge and customary practices with respect to their lands, including to protect biodiversity.
 - c. **Subsection C** addresses States’ responsibility regarding climate harm, deriving from States’ action and inaction, which also extends to the responsibility of businesses operating within the territory of the State.

¹³⁵ Avaaz, “Stand with Amazon defenders!”, 29 January 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/amazon_protections_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁶ Avaaz, “Power our fight for survival”, 7 October 2022, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/power_indigenous_voices_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁷ Avaaz, “Power the Amazon Rescue”, 16 September 2020, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/power_the_amazon_rescue_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁸ Avaaz, “Power the Amazon Spring”, 27 February 2020, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/defend_forest_defenders_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹³⁹ Avaaz, “Stand with these Amazon defenders”, 23 April 2019, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/amazon_spring_32/ (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- d. **Subsection D** discusses States' obligations to protect Indigenous Peoples from harm and intimidation in the context of the climate crisis.

A. Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis and thwarted in their efforts to mitigate climate change and protect biodiversity

My memories of childhood are of abundance. In the old days it used to be easy enough to find monkeys, pacas and tinamou here to eat, but now our government has opened our lands to mine for gold and iron, and to produce timber for paper and soy and cattle. They call our peoples and our traditions primitive and show disdain for our ceremonies. Prioritizing development at any cost is not just poisoning Brazil — it is threatening our way of life.

- Brazil's Minister of Indigenous Peoples Sônia Guajajara in a 2020 op-ed¹⁴⁰

95. Indigenous Peoples have a unique connection to their communal lands which form the fundamental basis of their cultures and traditions, which are cherished and protected by them as such. This means that Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately affected by the disastrous impacts of climate change on their lands, which they call home. In the following subsections, we address the serious, disproportionate and unjust impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples (**subsection i**), but also their crucial role as fervent natural defenders against climate change (**subsection ii**).

i. The serious and disproportionate impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples has been recognized at the international level

96. Indigenous Peoples suffer disproportionately and unfairly as a result of States' action and inaction in the face of the climate crisis. This has been recognized both at the regional level and internationally, including as follows:
- a. This Court in its 2017 Advisory Opinion recognized that Indigenous Peoples are “especially vulnerable to environmental damage.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Guajajara, “Can Our Culture Survive Climate Change?”, New York Times, 2 October 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/02/opinion/amazon-indigenous-people-brazil.html> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁴¹ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 67.

- b. The IACHR in Resolution 3/2021 acknowledged that the disproportionate impact on Indigenous Peoples occurs “*despite the fact that they have contributed marginally to greenhouse gas emissions, the main cause of the climate crisis.*”¹⁴²
 - c. The UN General Assembly has expressed concern that, while climate change affects individuals and communities around the world, “*the adverse effects of climate change are felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations owing to factors such as geography, poverty, gender, age, indigenous or minority status, national or social origin, birth or other status and disability.*”¹⁴³
 - d. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UN SRRIP”) has recognized that Indigenous Peoples “*are among those who have contributed least to the problem of climate change, yet they are the ones suffering from its worst impacts. They are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change because many of them depend on ecosystems that are particularly prone to the effects of climate change.*”¹⁴⁴
 - e. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that Indigenous Peoples “*are heavily dependent on lands and natural resources for their basic needs and livelihoods, such as food, medicine, shelter and fuel, and they are among the poorest and most marginalized people in the world.*”¹⁴⁵
97. One ILO report has identified six collective characteristics shared by Indigenous Peoples – and Indigenous Peoples alone – that put them at particular risk of the effects of climate change:¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² IACHR Resolution 3/2021, Climate Emergency: Scope of Inter-American Human Rights Obligations, 31 December 2021, p. 6.

¹⁴³ UN General Assembly Resolution 41/21, Human Rights and Climate Change, 23 July 2019, A/HRC/RES/41/21, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 1 November 2017, A/HRC/36/46, available at <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F36%2F46&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False> (last accessed 19 October 2023), ¶ 6.

¹⁴⁵ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 1 November 2017, A/HRC/36/46, available at <https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F36%2F46&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False> (last accessed 19 October 2023), ¶ 7.

¹⁴⁶ International Labour Office, “Indigenous peoples and climate change: From victims to change agents through decent work”, 2017, available at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_551189.pdf (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- a. Poverty: Indigenous Peoples are among “*the poorest of the poor*”, comprising 5% of the population but nearly 15% of the world’s poor.
 - b. Dependence on renewable natural resources for economic, social and cultural activities: Approximately 70 million Indigenous Peoples are dependent on forests to meet their livelihood needs.
 - c. Residence in vulnerable areas: Indigenous Peoples live in the polar regions, tropical forests, high mountains, small islands, coastal regions and arid/semi-arid lands – regions most vulnerable to climate change.
 - d. Climate-spurred migration: The combination of the above factors increases the likelihood that Indigenous Peoples are forced to migrate, rendering them more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and environmental hazards at their destination or en route.
 - e. Gender inequality: Gender inequality is exacerbated by climate change. Indigenous women may face discrimination inside and outside their communities, be forced into precarious conditions without adequate access to social protection, and exposed to gender-based violence.
 - f. Lack of recognition: Many Indigenous Peoples, their rights, and their institutions lack recognition and therefore have limited decision-making in the public policy regarding climate change.
98. The impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples is recounted by Indigenous leaders, including from Latin America, who describe their struggle to protect their lands, the threat that climate change poses to their communities and the biodiversity they steward. Indigenous leaders, including from the Amazon rainforest, have recounted the catastrophes suffered due to the climate crisis:
- a. Célia Xakriabá – Indigenous Brazilian Congresswoman stated that: “*[w]ithout the Amazon, and without the protection that Indigenous peoples’ lands offer to our forests, rivers and precious species, there is no way we’ll avoid global ecological apocalypse. This forest is the lungs for all of us.*”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Avaaz, “Urgent – sign this appeal to defend the Amazon and Indigenous lands!”, 1 October 2023, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/a_fatal_blow_to_the_amazon_loc/ (last accessed 18 October 2023) (emphasis added).

99. Indigenous Peoples have raised concerns regarding the global push towards the exploitation of natural resources, underscoring the negative impact on the ecosystems managed and governed by Indigenous Peoples and their livelihoods. For example:
- a. James Anaya, the UN SRRIP noted in his report to the HRC that “*degradation and destruction of ecosystems caused by extractive industries, as well as the devastating resultant effects on indigenous peoples’ subsistence economies, which are closely linked to these ecosystems*” are examples of the significant impact that extractive industries have had on Indigenous Peoples’ lands and resources.¹⁴⁸
 - b. Marlon Vargas, President of the Confederation of Indigenous nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon, stated that “[h]alf of the Ecuadorian Amazon is an oil block superimposed on our territories. More than half a century consuming water with oil while our lands have hidden spills everywhere, today, diseases in our bodies serve as evidence of a violent history. The oil legacy is not development. In Ecuador, Amazon populations have the highest rates of poverty, malnutrition, and cancer. [...] Despite everything, the government announces doubling oil production, that is, losing the last redoubts of intact jungle to continue with the nightmare we are living. They silence us. We demand [...] consent to define our future, one where there is no room for one more oil well.”¹⁴⁹
 - c. Patricio Jipa, a spokesman for the Kichwa community in Ecuador, told a press conference in 2013 that in the case of his community “*Sani Isla has said no to oil. That’s not easy because oil dominates. We are a tiny speck against a huge corporation. But we are doing this not just for us, but for the world.*”¹⁵⁰
 - d. Monica Chuji of the Federation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Amazon stated that Indigenous Peoples “*have a right to self-determination, but there is a huge global*

¹⁴⁸ HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya”, 11 July 2011, A/HRC/18/35, available at https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/18session/A-HRC-18-35_en.pdf (last accessed 18 October 2023), ¶ 30.

¹⁴⁹ Amazonia Against the Clock, “A regional assessment on where and how to protect 80% by 2025”, 2022, available at <https://amazonia80x2025.earth/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/diagramacion-ingles.pdf> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ J Watts, “Petition to halt oil exploration in Ecuadorean Amazon gets 1m signatures”, The Guardian, 6 February 2013, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/06/petition-oil-ecuadorean-amazon-signatures> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*push to exploit natural resources through mining with no heed to local communities.”*¹⁵¹

- e. Tabea Casique, member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-Ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (“AIDESEP”) has explained the efforts of AIDESEP as follows: *“AIDESEP is coordinating effective participation with regional organizations to ratify the Amazon Indigenous REDD+ alternative, with which the indigenous worldview is recognized and recognizing collective rights [...] Our demand as AIDESEP, raised to the Ministry of Environment, is that it sees mechanisms on how to protect and seek safeguards that prevent carbon piracy in communities.”*¹⁵²

ii. Indigenous Peoples lack the inclusion and recognition necessary to redress climate change effects

100. Indigenous Peoples are well aware of the destruction and devastating effects of the indiscriminate exploitation of the forests and natural resources, and the mounting challenges to their livelihoods caused by climate change. As guardians of nature, they have developed proposals to tackle the climate crisis yet these proposals often remain unheard. For example:

- a. José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal, leader of Wakuenai Kurripaco Indigenous Peoples, and former General Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin, stated that *“[w]e MUST protect the forests, rivers, and oceans that sustain us all, from the Amazon to Africa and Indonesia. Our survival depends on it. But too many of our [national] leaders are still blinded by short-term political compromises -- refusing to stop our forests from burning, our rivers from dying, and thousands and thousands of species going extinct.”*¹⁵³
- b. Jesús Amadeo Martínez, Main Counsellor of the Indigenous Council of Central America (Indígena de Centroamérica) and representative of El Salvador Indigenous National Coordinator Council (Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena

¹⁵¹ See, J Watts, “Petition to halt oil exploration in Ecuadorean Amazon gets 1m signatures”, The Guardian, 6 February 2013, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/06/petition-oil-ecuadorean-amazon-signatures> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁵² Youtube, “AIDESEP at the COP27!”, Timecode: 1:36-1:48 and 3:36-3:48, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfoqkeygzMw> (last accessed 13 October 2023).

¹⁵³ Avaaz, “Let’s win a real plan to save life on earth – this week!”, 10 September 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/protect_half_our_planet_2021_7me4/?wGHZPib (last accessed 18 October 2023).

Salvadoreño) stated that: *“in each of the countries, we try to approach the ministries of the environment to make proposals and see how to stop this agricultural and sugarcane advance that does a lot of damage, because what agricultural and sugarcane borders do is knock down many trees, destroying our forests. We see it from the perspective of the Indigenous worldview, which is the balance between man, woman and nature. On the other hand, the westerner sees it, more than anything, as a commercial question: what will give him more money? That is where we collide, but there we are - the Indigenous Peoples, always facing and making proposals to enable our very survival and to confront climate change with the knowledge and wisdom that we retain.”*¹⁵⁴

- c. Marciely Ayap Tupari, Secretary Coordinator of Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon noted that *“[m]any times, when we participate in these international meetings, we see little participation of [I]ndigenous leaders who are working with the territories. We need to participate in these spaces. Not only the leaders, but women and youth [as well] [...] We need to be there to talk about what our demands really are.”*¹⁵⁵
- d. Nelson Ole Reiyia, from Nashulai Maasai Conservancy in Kenya, noted that: *“Although we are poor we have chosen to see our land not as a commodity but as a commons. Each family could have sold off its own parcel of land, made some much - needed money and moved away. Instead, our people have rallied together to be stewards of this land, where the bones of our ancestors are buried and for the generations of our children yet to come.”*¹⁵⁶
- e. Dario Mejia Montalvo, indigenous leader of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (“ONIC”) and current president of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Affairs has explained that: *“What the indigenous peoples are proposing is that it is necessary to listen beyond science, beyond economics and beyond politics, because if not, it will not be adequately addressed, there will not be a comprehensive*

¹⁵⁴ J A Martínez, “La resistencia de las comunidades es la que está haciéndole frente al flagelo que vivimos”, Mongabay, 22 March 2022, available at <https://es.mongabay.com/2022/03/entrevista-jesus-amadeo-martinez-lider-indigena-lenca/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁵⁵ T Tintino, V Manolis and C Coxon, “Four Lessons from Cacoal, Brazil: How to Engage Indigenous Communities in Climate Finance”, Forest Trends, 3 April 2023, available at <https://www.forest-trends.org/blog/four-lessons-from-cacaoal-brazil/> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁵⁶ Avaaz, “Get up. And move the brackets! Avaaz document for the Fourth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”, 21-16 June 2022, available at <https://secure.avaaz.org/NairobiOEWG4>, p.2, (last accessed 18 October 2023).

*diagnosis of what the planet is experiencing and we would have to address it as what it is for indigenous peoples. For indigenous peoples, the planet, the Earth, is the Mother.”*¹⁵⁷

101. Considering the bond between life and land that is present in every Indigenous knowledge system, communities have long been fighting for the protection of their right to their ancestral lands and the territories they inhabit. Indigenous Peoples have sought to protect lands that have been invaded and degraded as a result of illegal activities or public policies that favor development and production in the Amazon without due regard for Indigenous Peoples’ rights. This is a fight in which far too many environmental and Indigenous defenders have lost their lives.

iii. Biodiversity, concentrated in Indigenous Peoples’ lands, has been identified as the strongest natural defense against climate change

102. Indigenous Peoples play a key role in offering protection for the climate, biodiversity and human health. For example, in the context of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Avaaz has noted, “[I]ndigenous [P]eoples have been the most effective actors in protecting our biodiversity and our climate, and they serve as a buffer against the pandemic in numerous ways: preventing the spread of disease by enabling wildlife to remain in its habitat, safeguarding the diverse ecosystems that can serve as a source of medicine, and improving food security.”¹⁵⁸
103. A 2019 report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (“IPBES”) stressed the importance of Indigenous stewardship of lands for protecting biodiversity:¹⁵⁹
- a. Nature managed by IPLCs is generally declining less rapidly than in other lands – but nevertheless still declining;
 - b. Approximately 35% of the area that is formally protected, and approximately 35% of all remaining terrestrial areas with very low human intervention, is traditionally owned, managed, used or occupied by Indigenous Peoples;

¹⁵⁷ UN, “Esperamos humildad de los Estados para reconocer que no andamos bien como sociedades”, 17 April 2023, available at <https://news.un.org/es/interview/2023/04/1520102> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁵⁸ Avaaz, “Protecting the Earth’s First Responders from Covid-19: How to Prevent the Extinction of Indigenous Communities in the Amazon”, available at <https://avaazimages.avaaz.org/AVAAZ%20COVID-19%20AMAZON%20REPORT.pdf> (last accessed 18 October 2023), p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ IPBES, The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 4 May 2019, available at <https://zenodo.org/record/6417333> (last accessed 18 October 2023).

- c. Recognition of the knowledge, innovations, practices, institutions and values of IPLCs, as well as ensuring their inclusion and participation in environmental governance, often enhances their quality of life *and* the restoration and sustainable use of nature; and
 - d. Studies have highlighted contributions by IPLCs in limiting deforestation – but in many regions the lands of Indigenous Peoples have become islands of biological and cultural diversity surrounded by areas in which nature has further deteriorated.
104. The urgent need to tackle the twin emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss is increasingly apparent. Progress can be made on both these fronts if States recognize the leadership and expertise of Indigenous Peoples who oversee some of the most healthy, biodiverse and well-conserved lands and waters on Earth.¹⁶⁰
105. The international community has recognized the close dependence that many IPLCs traditionally have on biological resources. For example, this recognition is reflected in the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 (“**Convention on Biological Diversity**”) which recognizes in its preamble “*the close and traditional dependence of many indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles on biological resources, and the desirability of sharing equitably benefits arising from the use of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices relevant to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.*”¹⁶¹ Article 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity calls for direct participation of Indigenous Peoples as follows: “*[s]ubject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.*”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ S Nitah, “Indigenous Peoples proven to sustain biodiversity and address climate change: Now it’s time to recognize and support this leadership”, One Earth, Volume 4, Issue 7, 23 July 2021, pp. 907-909, available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332221003572> (last accessed 18 October 2023). See also IPBES, “IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop on biodiversity and climate change – Scientific outcome” 24 June 2021, available at <https://www.ipbes.net/events/ipbes-ipcc-co-sponsored-workshop-biodiversity-and-climate-change> (last accessed 17 July 2023).

¹⁶¹ Convention on Biological Diversity, 5 June 1992 (“**Convention on Biological Diversity**”), Preamble.

¹⁶² Convention on Biological Diversity, Art. 8(j).

106. The 2010 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's ("UNFCCC") Conference of the Parties ("COP") in Cancun recognized the value of Indigenous Peoples' contribution to climate action, noting in its report that "***enhanced action on adaptation should be undertaken [...] and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.***"¹⁶³
107. However, it has been observed that "[i]n the global debate on climate change, [I]ndigenous [P]eople are not engaged, nor do we have any way to directly influence in this space."¹⁶⁴ This lack of participation renders Indigenous Peoples' collective rights vulnerable. Indeed, one of these risks is "*failing to establish clear policies that National States should adopt in favor of Indigenous Peoples when it comes to implementing climate change mitigation actions.*"¹⁶⁵
108. International legal recognition of the role of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and traditions in protecting biodiversity was strengthened in 2015 with the adoption of the Paris Agreement wherein it was stated that "***adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.***"¹⁶⁶
109. In 2022, the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which recognizes that reversing the loss of biological diversity, for the benefit of all living beings, is a common concern of

¹⁶³ UNFCCC, "Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Sixteenth Session held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010", 15 March 2011, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, ¶ 12 (emphasis added).

¹⁶⁴ COICA, "Coordinadora de las organizaciones indígenas de la cuenca amazónica", September 2010, available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/Documents/PDF/Nov2010/Posicion%20Politico%20de%20COICA%20Sobre%20REDDplus.pdf>, p. 3 (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁶⁵ COICA, "Coordinadora de las organizaciones indígenas de la cuenca amazónica", September 2010, available at <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/Documents/PDF/Nov2010/Posicion%20Politico%20de%20COICA%20Sobre%20REDDplus.pdf>, p. 3 (last accessed 18 October 2023).

¹⁶⁶ Paris Agreement, Art. 7(5) (emphasis added).

humankind.¹⁶⁷ With its implementation to be guided by the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (the “**Rio Declaration**”),¹⁶⁸ the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets out targets to reduce threats to biodiversity by 2030. Several targets focus on the importance of respecting Indigenous Peoples’ rights in this context. For example:

- a. Target 1 aims at ensuring that “*all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities*”;¹⁶⁹
- b. Target 3 aims at ensuring that “*by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.*”¹⁷⁰

110. International legal recognition of the importance of Indigenous Peoples’ involvement in climate action and biodiversity protection has been driven by Indigenous Peoples themselves. For example, at UNFCCC’s COP 23 in 2017, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (“**LCIPP**”) was created with the purpose of (i) strengthening the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of IPLCs related to addressing and responding to climate change; (ii) facilitating the exchange of experiences and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned on mitigation and adaptation in a holistic and

¹⁶⁷ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 19 December 2022, Section c(k), available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁶⁸ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 19 December 2022, Section c(k), available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁶⁹ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 19 December 2022, Section h, Target 1, available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf> (last accessed 19 October 2023) (emphasis added).

¹⁷⁰ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 19 December 2022, Section h, Target 3, available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf> (last accessed 19 October 2023) (emphasis added).

integrated manner; and (iii) enhancing the engagement of IPLCs in the UNFCCC process.¹⁷¹ A Facilitative Working Group for this same platform was created at COP 24 in 2018.¹⁷²

111. In 2021, Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin called for a comprehensive global agreement for the permanent protection of 80% of Amazonia by 2025,¹⁷³ which was agreed to by all Amazon governments and backed by Indigenous Peoples and the global community at the Marseille 2021 IUCN Congress.¹⁷⁴

B. States have an obligation to take action against climate change to prevent the harm suffered by Indigenous Peoples, including as a consequence of interference with their lands

112. As a living instrument, the ACHR can and should be interpreted in light of present-day conditions.¹⁷⁵ As such, it can readily be applied to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of the climate emergency. An articulation of States' intersecting obligations under the ACHR in this context – which Avaaz respectfully requests this Court to undertake in its advisory opinion in these proceedings – would build on this Court's own jurisprudence as it relates to both the right to a healthy environment and the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights, as well as other relevant regional and international legal instruments including the Protocol of San Salvador which recognizes the right to a healthy environment in Article 11.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ See UNFCCC, "The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform Becomes Operational at COP 23", available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/nwpstaging/News/Pages/Indigenous-Peoples-and-Local-Communities-Platform-Update.aspx> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁷² LCIPP, "The Facilitative Working Group", available at <https://www.iipfcc.org/facilitative-working-group-lcipp> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁷³ Amazonia, "Declaration: Endorse the 80x25 initiative by signing the declaration calling on world leaders to be a part of the solution and take action to avert the tipping point for Amazonia", available at <https://amazonia80x25.earth/declaration/> (last accessed 17 July 2023). See also Amazonia Against the Clock, "A regional assessment on where and how to protect 80% by 2025", 2022, p. 6, available at <https://amazonia80x25.earth/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/diagramacion-ingles.pdf> (last accessed 17 July 2023).

¹⁷⁴ IUCN Motion/Resolution 129, 129 – Avoiding the point of no return in the Amazon protecting 80% by 2025, 4 October 2021, available at <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/motion/129> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁷⁵ *Case of Spoltore v Argentina*, Judgment, 9 June 2020, ¶ 87. See also IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 43 ("human rights treaties are living instruments, the interpretation of which must evolve with the times and contemporary conditions").

¹⁷⁶ See also, e.g., Paris Agreement, Preamble ("Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities").

113. This Court explicitly recognized the interdependence of human rights, the environment and sustainable development in 2017 Advisory Opinion,¹⁷⁷ which considered the intersection of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and the environment.¹⁷⁸ Following this Court’s 2017 Advisory Opinion, the IACHR made clear that “*States must adopt measures to ensure that the climate crisis does not affect or jeopardize the effective protection of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant, tribal or peasant communities such as life, personal integrity, freedom of expression, protection of family life, water, food, the healthy environment, or communal property, among others.*”¹⁷⁹
114. In the following subsections, we consider Indigenous Peoples’ right to natural resources, land and communal property in the context of the climate crisis (**subsection i**); their right to participate in decision-making processes affecting their lands and environment (**subsection ii**); their right to defend their lands while also being protected from violence and bodily harm (**subsection iii**); and their right to be consulted in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent (**subsection iv**).

i. Indigenous Peoples have a right to natural resources, land and communal property in the context of the climate crisis

115. International human rights law recognizes that Indigenous Peoples have rights to natural resources, land, and communal property. These rights are connected with the right to self-determination recognized in Article 3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“**UNDRIP**”),¹⁸⁰ the exercise of which “*is [...] indispensable for indigenous peoples’ enjoyment of all their other rights, including, importantly, land rights [...] and political participation.*”¹⁸¹ Such land rights are also recognized in regional legal instruments applicable to the Americas, such as Article 21 of the ACHR, which recognizes the right to private property, and several provisions of the American Declaration on the

¹⁷⁷ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 54.

¹⁷⁸ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶¶ 67-68, 113, 138, 152, 156, 164, 166 and 169.

¹⁷⁹ IACHR Resolution 3/2021, Climate Emergency: Scope of Inter-American Human Rights Obligations, 31 December 2021, ¶ 23.

¹⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 2 October 2007 (“**UNDRIP**”), Art. 3. In the context of the Latin-American region, the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes that “[i]ndigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.” American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 3.

¹⁸¹ HRC, “Efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 4 August 2021, A/HRC/48/75, ¶ 14.

Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁸² These provisions recognize and protect the close relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their lands. Indeed, “[f]or indigenous communities, relations to the land are not merely a matter of possession and production but a material and spiritual element which they must fully enjoy, even to preserve their cultural legacy and transmit it to future generations.”¹⁸³

116. Because of the distinctive relationship that Indigenous Peoples maintain with their land, this Court and the IACHR have interpreted Article 21 of the ACHR in conjunction with the right of Indigenous Peoples to have their ancestral territories protected as part of Indigenous Peoples’ cultural identity, the protection of which is a human right recognized in several international human rights instruments.¹⁸⁴
117. This Court in *Comunidad Mayagna (Sumo) Awas Tingni v Nicaragua* explained that “Indigenous groups, by the fact of their very existence, have the right to live freely in their own territory; the close ties of indigenous people with the land must be recognized and understood as the fundamental basis of their cultures, their spiritual life, their integrity, and their economic survival.”¹⁸⁵
118. This Court has further underlined the right of Indigenous Peoples not only to their land but also to “the natural resources therein associated with their culture”,¹⁸⁶ including “their oral expressions and traditions, their customs and languages, their arts and rituals, their knowledge and practices in connection with nature, culinary art, customary law, dress, philosophy, and values.”¹⁸⁷ As such, “members of tribal and indigenous communities have

¹⁸² ACHR, Art. 21; American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Preamble, Arts. VI, XIX, XXV, XXVI(2), XXIX(4), XXX(4) and (5).

¹⁸³ *Mayagna (Sumo) Awas Tingni Community v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 31 August 2001, ¶ 149. See also IACHR, “Indigenous and Tribal People’s Rights over their Ancestral Lands and Natural Resources”, Chapter V, ¶ 56, available at <http://cidh.org/countryrep/indigenous-lands09/Chap.V-VI.htm> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

¹⁸⁴ See, e.g., UDHR, Art. 19; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966 (“ICCPR”), Art. 27; UNDRIP, Art. 8; ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (“ILO Convention No. 169”), Art. 2(b) (recognizing in respect of Indigenous Peoples the “full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions”).

¹⁸⁵ *Case of the Mayagna (Sumo) Awas Tingni Community v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 31 August 2001, ¶ 149.

¹⁸⁶ *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 137; *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶¶ 121-122. See also, *Case of Indigenous Communities Kuna de Madungandí and Emberá of Bayano and their Members v Panama*, Judgment, 14 October 2014, ¶ 112.

¹⁸⁷ *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 154.

*the right to own the natural resources they have traditionally used within their territory for the same reasons that they have a right to own the land.”*¹⁸⁸

119. Moreover, this Court, in its 2017 Advisory Opinion, has noted that “*the connection between the territory and the natural resources that have been used traditionally and that are necessary for the physical and cultural survival of these peoples and for the development and continuity of their world view must be protected to ensure that they can continue their traditional way of life and that their cultural identity, social structure, economic system, and distinctive customs, beliefs and traditions are respected, guaranteed and protected by States.*”¹⁸⁹ This Court further observed in its case law that, “*the special relationship of the [I]ndigenous [P]eoples with their ancestral lands is not merely because they constitute their main means of subsistence, but also because they are an integral part of their cosmovision, religious beliefs and, consequently, their cultural identity or integrity, which is a fundamental [...] right of the indigenous communities that must be respected in a multicultural, pluralist, and democratic society.*”¹⁹⁰
120. More recently, the Human Rights Committee in the Torre Straits case recognized “*the inalienable right of Indigenous Peoples to enjoy the territories and natural resources that they have traditionally used for their subsistence and cultural identity.*”¹⁹¹ In noting that the health of their land and the surrounding seas are closely linked to the cultural identity of the Torres Islanders,¹⁹² the Human Rights Committee found that Australia’s failure to take measures to fight the adverse impact of the climate crisis on the Torres Islanders breached Article 27 of the ICCPR because the climate crisis eroded the traditional lands and natural resources that Torres Islanders used for traditional fishing and farming, as well as for cultural ceremonies that can only be performed on the islands.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶ 121.

¹⁸⁹ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 169. See also *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶¶ 124, 135 and 137; *Case of the Kuna Indigenous Peoples of Madungandí and the Emberá Indigenous Peoples of Bayano and their Members v Panama*, Judgment, 14 October 2014, ¶ 112; *Case of the Punta Piedra Garifuna Community and its Members v Honduras*, Judgment, 5 October 2015, ¶ 167, and *Case of the Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v Suriname*, Judgment, 25 November 2015, ¶ 164.

¹⁹⁰ *Case of the Río Negro Massacres v Guatemala*, Judgment, 4 September 2012, ¶ 160; *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 217.

¹⁹¹ Human Rights Committee, Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3624/2019, CCPR/C/135/D/3624/2019, 22 September 2022, ¶ 8.13.

¹⁹² Human Rights Committee, Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3624/2019, CCPR/C/135/D/3624/2019, 22 September 2022, ¶ 8.14.

¹⁹³ Human Rights Committee, Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3624/2019, CCPR/C/135/D/3624/2019, 22 September 2022, ¶ 8.14.

121. Because of the strong link between Indigenous Peoples and their lands, the right to life enshrined in Article 4 of the ACHR is of particular relevance here.¹⁹⁴ As affirmed by this Court “*the right to life in the [ACHR] is essential because the realization of the other rights depends on its protection. Accordingly, States are obliged to ensure the creation of the necessary conditions for the full enjoyment and exercise of this right.*”¹⁹⁵ Compliance with this right – as established in the Court’s consistent case law – “*not only presupposes that no person may be deprived of his or her life arbitrarily (negative obligation) but also, in light of the obligation to ensure the free and full exercise of human rights, it requires States to take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve the right to life (positive obligation).*”¹⁹⁶
122. Based on this premise, this Court has ruled, a “*State’s non-compliance with its obligation to guarantee [Indigenous Peoples’] right to communal property*”, such as by allowing explosives to be placed on their territory, can create “*a permanent situation of risk and threat to the life and physical integrity of [the Indigenous community] members*” in violation of both Articles 4(1) and 5(1) of the ACHR.¹⁹⁷ This Court has similarly recognized that “*[i]n the case of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples, access to their ancestral lands and to the use and enjoyment of the natural resources found on them is closely linked to obtaining food and access to clean water.*”¹⁹⁸ Taking this into account, this Court went on to find that a State’s failure to guarantee members of an Indigenous community the right to communal property had “*a negative effect on the right of the members of the Community to a decent life, because it has deprived them of the possibility of access to their traditional means of subsistence, as well as to use and enjoyment of the natural resources necessary*

¹⁹⁴ See also Organization of American States, *Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Right*, 16 November 1999, Art. 11 (right to a healthy environment); UDHR, Arts. 3 (right to life) and 25 (right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being); UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 16 December 1966, Arts. 11 (right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions) and 12(1-2) (right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health); UN General Assembly, “Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment”, 15 December 1972, A/RES/2994, Principle 1; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 6; and Rio Declaration, Principle 1.

¹⁹⁵ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 108.

¹⁹⁶ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 108.

¹⁹⁷ *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶¶ 248-249.

¹⁹⁸ *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 167.

to obtain clean water and to practice traditional medicine to prevent and cure illnesses”¹⁹⁹ and amounted to a violation of Articles 4(1) and 5(1) of the ACHR.²⁰⁰

123. In the context of Indigenous Peoples, the right to life can also be read to include the right to a healthy environment as set out in Article 7(1) of the UNDRIP, and Article 4(1) of the Escazú Agreement. Indeed, this Court has “*referred to the relationship between a healthy environment and the protection of human rights, considering that these peoples’ right to collective ownership is linked to the protection of, and access to, the resources to be found in their territories, because those natural resources are necessary for the very survival, development and continuity of their way of life.*”²⁰¹
124. Therefore, the protection of Indigenous Peoples’ natural resources and lands is even more important in the context of the climate crisis, which directly and disproportionately affects the environment in which Indigenous Peoples develop their community, culture, tradition and ways of life.

ii. Indigenous Peoples are entitled to participate in decision-making and obtain prior informed consent in the context of the climate crisis

125. The right of Indigenous Peoples to participate in governmental processes in the context of the climate crisis stems from the foundational right of self-determination. Endorsing the universally accepted principle prescribed by the UDHR,²⁰² Article 23 of the ACHR grants every citizen the right and opportunity to participate in governmental processes, including the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and to vote and to be elected in genuine periodic elections.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 168.

²⁰⁰ *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 176.

²⁰¹ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 48. See also, *Case of the Yakye Axa Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 17 June 2005, ¶ 137; *Case of the Sawhoyamaya Indigenous Community v Paraguay*, Judgment, 29 March 2006, ¶ 118; *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶¶ 121 and 122; and *Case of the Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v Suriname*, Judgment, 25 November 2015, ¶ 173.

²⁰² UDHR, Art. 21. Article 21(1) and (3) of the UDHR recognize that “[e]veryone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives”, and that “[t]he will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government [...]”.

²⁰³ ACHR, Art. 23. Such right to participate in governmental processes which is equally endorsed in the UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, 21 December 1965, (“CERD”), Art. 5(c) and the ICCPR, Art. 25, is a manifestation of other basic rights recognized by the ACHR, UDHR and other relevant treaties, such as the right to freedom of conscience and religion (see ACHR, Art. 12; UDHR, Art. 18; CERD, Art. 5(d)(vii); and ICCPR, Art. 18 which in similar terms recognize the right to “*freedom of thought, conscience and religion*”) the right to freedom of thought and expression (ACHR, Art. 13; UDHR, Art. 19 and CERD, Art. 5(d)(viii) which recognize the right to freedom of “*opinion and expression*”, as well as ICCPR, Art. 19 which similarly protects the “*right to hold opinions without interference*” and “*the right to freedom of expression*”, including the “*freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers [...]*.”); and the

126. The UNDRIP affirms the extension of the right to participate in governmental processes to Indigenous Peoples by recognizing their right to participate fully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State,²⁰⁴ including in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights,²⁰⁵ and requires means to be established to ensure their participation on issues affecting them.²⁰⁶ The UNDRIP further imposes an obligation on States to establish and implement, in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process to recognize and adjudicate the rights pertaining to their lands, territories and resources and to grant them the right to participate in this process.²⁰⁷
127. The ILO Convention No. 169 similarly requires governments to establish means by which Indigenous Peoples can freely participate at all levels of decision-making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programs which concern them.²⁰⁸ Governments must also ensure Indigenous Peoples have the right to (i) decide their priorities for development purposes; and (ii) participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development affecting them directly.²⁰⁹
128. In the specific context of the environment and the climate crisis, the Escazú Agreement requires States to ensure the public right of access to environmental information and in particular to facilitate access and provide assistance to persons or groups in vulnerable situations, including Indigenous Peoples,²¹⁰ as well as the right to participation.²¹¹ In this respect, States are required to implement open and inclusive participation in environmental decision-making processes and to guarantee mechanisms for public participation in the decision-making processes with respect to projects and activities that have or may have a

right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (ACHR, Arts. 15 and 16; UDHR, Art. 20; CERD, Art. 5(d)(ix); ICCPR, Arts. 21 and 22).

²⁰⁴ UNDRIP, Art. 5.

²⁰⁵ UNDRIP, Art. 18. Article 19 goes further to require States to “*consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.*”

²⁰⁶ UNDRIP, Art. 41.

²⁰⁷ UNDRIP, Art. 27.

²⁰⁸ ILO Convention No. 169, Art. 6(1).

²⁰⁹ ILO Convention No. 169, Art. 7(1).

²¹⁰ Escazú Agreement, Art. 5(1), (3) and (4).

²¹¹ Escazú Agreement, Art. 7(1) and (2).

significant impact on the environment as well as other environmental matters of public interest.²¹²

129. Other international law instruments, such as the Rio Declaration, recognize that Indigenous Peoples and their communities “*have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices*” and to that end, require States to “*recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.*”²¹³
130. The Convention on Biological Diversity similarly endorses Indigenous Peoples’ right to participate in governmental processes by requiring States to:
- a. Respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of Indigenous Peoples;²¹⁴
 - b. Encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices;²¹⁵
 - c. Facilitate the exchange of information, from all publicly available sources, relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;²¹⁶ and
 - d. Encourage and develop methods of cooperation for the development and use of technologies, including Indigenous and traditional technologies, and promote cooperation in the training of personnel and exchange of experts.²¹⁷

²¹² Escazú Agreement, Art. 7(1) and (2).

²¹³ Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Principle 22. The Rio Declaration also recognizes in Principle 10 that “[e]nvironmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens at the relevant level” and requires States at the national level to grant each individual “*appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by the public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes*”; facilitate and encourage “*public awareness and participation by making information widely available*” and provide “*[e]ffective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy.*”

²¹⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Art. 8(j).

²¹⁵ Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Art. 8(j).

²¹⁶ Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Art. 17. Such exchange of information pursuant to Art. 17(2) includes exchange of results of technical, scientific and socio-economic research, as well as information on training and surveying programmes, specialized knowledge, Indigenous and traditional knowledge, and where feasible, repatriation of information.

²¹⁷ Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Art. 18(4).

131. This Court has recognized that States' duty to guarantee effective participation requires States to "*ensure that the members of the [I]ndigenous and ethnic communities [...] can participate, in equal conditions, in decision-making on matters and policies that affect or could affect their rights and the development of these communities, so that they can incorporate State institutions and bodies and participate directly and proportionately to their population in the conduct of public affairs, and also do this from within their own institutions and according to their values, practices, customs and forms of organization [...].*"²¹⁸
132. Political participation can be exercised through "*the rights to be elected and to vote*"²¹⁹ as well as through participation in environmental impact assessments, which must "*respect the the [I]ndigenous [P]eoples' traditions and culture*" and ensure their right to "*be informed about all proposed projects on their territory.*"²²⁰
133. Indigenous Peoples have for many years raised concerns about the impacts of climate change on their habitat and collective human rights, stressing the importance of allowing them to participate in policy making on climate change and taking into account and building upon their traditional knowledge.²²¹ Indeed, a study has shown that "*[i]ncorporating [I]ndigenous knowledge into climate change policies can lead to the development of effective adaptation strategies that are cost-effective, participatory and sustainable.*"²²²
134. The UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples established by the HRC ("EMRIP") also recognized that "*[d]ecision-making rights and participation by Indigenous Peoples in decisions that affect them is necessary to enable them to protect,*

²¹⁸ *Case of Yatama v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 23 June 2005, ¶ 225. See further, SUR, "International journal on human rights", v. 6, no. 11, December 2009, pp. 21-22.

²¹⁹ *Case of Yatama v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 23 June 2005, ¶ 19. The right to vote "*is an essential element for the existence of democracy*" and is one of the ways in which Indigenous Peoples may exercise the right to political participation. This assumes that "*citizens can stand as candidates in conditions of equality and can occupy elected public office, if they obtain the necessary number of votes.*" *Case of Yatama v Nicaragua*, Judgment, 23 June 2005, ¶ 206, in which the IACtHR further emphasizes that restrictions / limitations may only be imposed by the State if they are "*established by law, non-discriminatory, based on a reasonable criteria, respond to a useful and opportune purpose that makes it necessary to satisfy an urgent public interest, and be proportionate to this purpose.*"

²²⁰ See *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 206 as re-affirmed in *Case of the Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v Suriname*, Judgment, 25 November 2015, ¶ 215.

²²¹ HRC, "Report of the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights on the relationship between climate change and human rights", 15 January 2009, A/HRC/10/61, ¶ 52.

²²² HRC, "Report of the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights on the relationship between climate change and human rights", 15 January 2009, A/HRC/10/61, ¶ 52.

*inter alia, their cultures, including their languages and their lands, territories and resources.”*²²³

135. Connected to the right to participate in decision-making is the right to free, prior informed consent of Indigenous Peoples. The right is endorsed under the UNDRIP which requires States to consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous Peoples in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent: (i) “*before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them*”²²⁴ and (ii) prior to approving “*any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.*”²²⁵ The UNDRIP similarly imposes a duty on States to undertake effective consultations with Indigenous Peoples through appropriate procedures prior to using their lands or territories for military activities.²²⁶
136. Pursuant to Article 6(1) of the ILO Convention No. 169, States also have a duty to consult the Indigenous Peoples concerned through appropriate procedures whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly.²²⁷
137. States’ obligation to obtain consent from Indigenous Peoples consists of “*a qualitative process of dialogue and negotiation, with consent as the objective.*”²²⁸ The main purpose is to obtain Indigenous Peoples’ “*free and informed consent*”,²²⁹ which in turn is recognized as “*one of the most important principles, as a right, that Indigenous Peoples believe can further protect their right to participation.*”²³⁰

²²³ Expert Mechanism Advice No. 2: Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, 2011, ¶ 1, annexed to HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42.

²²⁴ UNDRIP, Art. 19.

²²⁵ UNDRIP, Art. 32(2).

²²⁶ UNDRIP, Art. 3.

²²⁷ ILO Convention No. 169, Art. 6(1).

²²⁸ HRC, “Free, prior and informed consent: a human rights-based approach”, Study of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 10 August 2018, A/HRC/39/62, ¶ 15.

²²⁹ IACHR, “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Rights Over their Ancestral Lands and Natural Resources”, IX. Rights of Participation, Consultation and Consent, 2009, available at http://cidh.org/countryrep/Indigenous-Lands09/Chap.IX.htm#_ftnref1 (last accessed 23 September 2023).

²³⁰ HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42, ¶ 63.

138. As indicated by the EMRIP, “[c]onsent is a significant element of the decision-making process obtained through genuine consultation and participation.”²³¹ Accordingly, States’ duty to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples is a “*substantive mechanism to ensure the respect of Indigenous Peoples’ rights.*”²³² Such duty is also grounded in a number of core human rights treaties, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (“**CERD**”) as confirmed by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (“**CERD Committee**”), which affirmed that discrimination against Indigenous Peoples falls under the scope of the CERD and that all appropriate means must be taken to combat and eliminate such discrimination. To this end, the CERD Committee called upon States to “*ensure that members of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples have equal rights in respect of effective participation in public life and that no decisions directly relating to their rights and interests are taken without their informed consent.*”²³³
139. The right to free, prior and informed consent consists of four elements: (i) “*free*” implies that there is “*no coercion, intimidation or manipulation*”; (ii) “*prior*” implies that “*consent is obtained in advance of the activity associated with the decision being made, and includes the time necessary to allow [I]ndigenous [P]eoples to undertake their own decision-making processes*”; (iii) “*informed*” implies that “*[I]ndigenous [P]eoples have been provided all information relating to the activity and that that information is objective, accurate and presented in a manner and form understandable to [I]ndigenous [P]eoples*”; and (iv) “*consent*” implies that “*[I]ndigenous [P]eoples have agreed to the activity that is the subject of the relevant decision, which may also be subject to conditions.*”²³⁴
140. The importance of Indigenous Peoples’ right to free, prior and informed consent was highlighted by this Court in *Saramaka v Suriname*²³⁵ and reaffirmed in *Kichwa Indigenous Peoples of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, where the Court held that a State must “*conduct an*

²³¹ Expert Mechanism Advice No. 2: Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, 2011, ¶ 21, annexed to HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42.

²³² Expert Mechanism Advice No. 2: Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, 2011, ¶ 21, annexed to HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42.

²³³ CERD Committee, “General Recommendation No. 23: Indigenous Peoples”, 18 August 1997, A/52/18, Annex V, ¶ 4(d).

²³⁴ Expert Mechanism Advice No. 2: Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, 2011, ¶ 23-25, annexed to HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42.

²³⁵ *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶¶ 129-131, and *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 12 August 2008, ¶¶ 26 and 27.

*appropriate and participatory process that guarantees the right to consultation” to ensure that any exploration or extraction of natural resources does not impact the survival of Indigenous Peoples.*²³⁶

141. As further noted by the Court, the respect for the right to free, prior informed consent of Indigenous Peoples “*is precisely recognition of their rights to their own culture or cultural identity [...], which must be assured*”;²³⁷ and is “*one of the fundamental guarantees to ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples and communities in decisions regarding measures that affect their rights and, in particular, their right to communal property.*”²³⁸ This right has equally been affirmed to arise from the obligations assumed by States under the ACHR.²³⁹
142. However, in reality, the right to consultation with the aim of obtaining free, prior and informed consent is often not respected. For example, Nicaragua has destroyed approximately 200,000 hectares of land by issuing mining concessions without proper and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples who own these territories under Nicaraguan law.²⁴⁰
143. As stated in its 22nd report, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues “*urges Member States to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are afforded full and effective participation in all planning and policy development to address climate change. Indigenous-led climate change policies incorporate the vital knowledge of Indigenous Peoples for land management and stewardship of natural resources while protecting health, equity, justice and sustainability.*”²⁴¹ In the same report’s regional dialogues summary, it also “*urges all the nine Amazonian States to legally recognize the ancestral territories of Indigenous*

²³⁶ *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 157.

²³⁷ *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 159.

²³⁸ *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 160.

²³⁹ *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶¶ 133-134.

²⁴⁰ Avaaz, “Stop illegal logging and mining, save our Indigenous People of Biosphere Bosawas now”, 26 February 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/community_petitions/en/united_nations_ohchrthe_vice_president_of_nicaragu_social_economic_liberation_for_the_indigenous_peoples_of_the_bosawas_via_reforestation_1/ (last accessed 19 October 2023).

²⁴¹ UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “Report on the twenty-second session”, 17-28 April 2023, E/2023/43-E/C.19/2023/7, ¶ 44, available at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N23/127/22/PDF/N2312722.pdf?OpenElement> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

*Peoples, covering 100 million hectares, through the expansion, regulation and collective titling in meeting the target of protecting 80% of the Amazon by 2025.”*²⁴²

144. Such obligations “*to consult the [I]ndigenous and tribal communities and peoples on any administrative or legislative measure that may affect their rights, as recognized under domestic and international law, as well as the obligation to guarantee the rights of Indigenous Peoples to participate in decisions on matters that concern their interests*” as emphasized by the Court are “*directly related to the general obligation to guarantee the free and full exercise of the rights recognized in the [ACHR] (Article 1(1)).*”²⁴³
145. However, as noted above, many States have failed to respect the participatory rights of Indigenous Peoples set out in international and regional instruments.²⁴⁴ Accordingly, it is vital that States guarantee the effective implementation of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in the context of the climate crisis. For instance, States have a duty to actively consult with affected Indigenous Peoples and communities. These consultations as expressed by the Court “*must be in good faith, through culturally appropriate procedures and with the objective of reaching an agreement*” and “*in accordance with their own traditions.*”²⁴⁵
146. There are different ways in which States can properly seek consultation and consent of Indigenous Peoples. However, as the EMRIP has indicated, the requirement for States to consult with Indigenous Peoples through appropriate procedures requires more than the mere establishment of general public hearing processes. The consultation procedures instead need to “*allow for the full expression of Indigenous Peoples’ views, in a timely manner and based on their full understanding of the issues involved, so that they may be able to affect the outcome and consensus may be achieved.*”²⁴⁶ Where States decide to develop laws to implement such a duty for instance, they must establish an adequate process

²⁴² UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, “Summary of regional dialogues between Indigenous Peoples and Member States”, 17 April – 5 May 2023, ¶ 19, available at https://social.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/Regional%20Dialogues_UNPFII%202023.pdf (last accessed 19 October 2023).

²⁴³ *Case of the Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku v Ecuador*, Judgment, 27 June 2012, ¶ 166.

²⁴⁴ HRC, “Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council: the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression is a Catalyst and Ingredient of Sustainable Development”, 23 June 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/06/special-rapporteur-human-rights-council-right-freedom-opinion-and-expression-catalyst> (last accessed 19 October 2023).

²⁴⁵ *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 28 November 2007, ¶ 133.

²⁴⁶ Expert Mechanism Advice No. 2: Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, 2011, ¶ 8, annexed to HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42.

to enable Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in the drafting and adoption of such measures.²⁴⁷

147. In its final report on the study on Indigenous Peoples and their right to participate in decision-making, the EMRIP established a list of indicators of good practice that States may take into account. The most significant indicator of good practice is “*the extent to which [I]ndigenous [P]eoples were involved in the design of the practice and their agreement to it.*”²⁴⁸ Other indicators include the extent to which the practice:
- a. Allows and enhances Indigenous Peoples’ participation in decision-making;
 - b. Allows Indigenous Peoples to influence the outcome of decisions that affect them;
 - c. Realizes Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination; and
 - d. Includes, as appropriate, robust consultation procedures and/or processes to seek Indigenous Peoples’ free, prior and informed consent.²⁴⁹
148. In the reports of the IACHR, further guidelines have been provided for the effective implementation of States’ duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples and ensure their participation in decision-making processes. In respect of *Maya v Belize* for example, the IACHR observed that “*one of the central elements to the protection of [I]ndigenous property rights is the requirement that states undertake effective and fully informed consultations with [I]ndigenous communities regarding acts or decisions that may affect their traditional territories.*”²⁵⁰ The IACHR went on to state that such a process of “*fully informed consent*” requires “*at a minimum, that all of the members of the community are fully and accurately informed of the nature and consequences of the process and provided with an effective opportunity to participate individually or as collectives.*”²⁵¹
149. A positive example of such participation in practice is the nationwide referendum recently held in Ecuador to close out an oil block at a site inside Yasuní National Park in Ecuador’s

²⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 21 July 2017, A/72/186, ¶ 62.

²⁴⁸ HRC, “Final study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 26 May 2011, A/HRC/EMRIP/2011/2, ¶ 13.

²⁴⁹ HRC, “Final report of the study on Indigenous Peoples and the right to participate in decision-making: Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 17 August 2011, A/HRC/18/42, ¶ 13.

²⁵⁰ *Maya indigenous communities of the Toledo District v Belize*, Case 12.053, Report No. 40/04, IACHR, 12 October 2004, ¶ 142.

²⁵¹ *Maya indigenous communities of the Toledo District v Belize*, Case 12.053, Report No. 40/04, IACHR, 12 October 2004, ¶ 142.

eastern Amazon. Millions of people participated, resulting in more than 5.2 million people voting in favor compared with 3.6 million against, “*solidifying protections for Indigenous communities living in voluntary isolation.*”²⁵²

150. Recognizing the community land rights of Indigenous communities over their territories is key to ensuring their survival and one of the most effective ways to address the massive loss of biodiversity and attendant climate disasters, as they are essential guardians of nature.
151. Notably, the jurisprudence of this Court has acknowledged that the property rights of Indigenous Peoples are not defined exclusively by entitlements within a State’s formal legal regime, but also include Indigenous communal property that arises from and is grounded in Indigenous custom and tradition. This Court has held that “*the acceptable level of impact, revealed by environmental impact assessments, that would allow a State to grant a concession in [I]ndigenous territory may differ in each case, without it ever being permissible to negate the ability of members of [I]ndigenous and tribal [P]eoples to ensure their own survival.*”²⁵³

iii. Indigenous Peoples are entitled to defend their lands and be protected against violence and bodily harm

152. Indigenous Peoples have been recognized to be among “*the first to face the direct consequences of climate change owing to their dependence upon and close relationship with the environment and its resources.*”²⁵⁴
153. Being disproportionately affected by climate change, Indigenous Peoples have unique standing to pursue their claims against States due to States’ failure and/or inaction to address the climate crisis, acting as guardians of forests and human rights defenders, whose important role has been recognized by the HRC in its Resolution No. 40/11 of 2019.²⁵⁵

²⁵² M Radwin, “Ecuador referendum halts oil extraction in Yasuní National Park”, Mongabay, 21 August 2023, available at <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/08/ecuador-referendum-halts-oil-extraction-in-yasuni-national-park/> (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁵³ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 138. See also *Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname*, Judgment, 12 August 2008, ¶ 42, *Case of the Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v Suriname*, Judgment, 25 November 2015, ¶ 214 and Advisory Opinion OC-23/17 2017, ¶ 156 (“*an environmental impact assessment constitutes a safeguard to ensure that the restrictions imposed on indigenous or tribal peoples in relation to the right to ownership of their lands, owing to the issue of concessions within their territory, does not entail a denial of their survival as a people*”).

²⁵⁴ HRC, Resolution No. 40/11 Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, 2 April 2019, A/HRC/RES/40/11, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ HRC, Resolution No. 40/11 Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, 2 April 2019, A/HRC/RES/40/11, ¶ 2 To this end, the HRC urged all States, among other things, to take all measures necessary to ensure the rights,

154. However, rather than having control over their lands, Indigenous Peoples face the risk of harassment, intimidation and targeting for defending their lands in the context of the climate crisis.²⁵⁶ In 2021, for example, despite several appeals to the government to protect a community of 27,000 Yanomami people, dozens of women and their children were subjected to gunfire attacks by miners who surrounded their lands.²⁵⁷
155. These and similar actions are in violation of Indigenous Peoples' right to personal liberty and security prescribed under Article 7(1) of the ACHR and many international legal instruments including the UDHR,²⁵⁸ the UNDRIP²⁵⁹ and CERD which guarantees protection by the State against violence or bodily harm whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual, group or institution.²⁶⁰ In accordance with the Escazú Agreement, States are specifically required to "*guarantee a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, so that they are able to act free from threat, restriction and insecurity.*"²⁶¹
156. The targeting of Indigenous Peoples affects the Indigenous communities as a whole, with attacks being undertaken "*with the express intent to silence their voices, disrupt their*

protection and safety of environmental human rights defenders, "*who exercise, inter alia, the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association*" (¶ 3); ensure that all legal provisions and their application affecting human rights defenders are "*clearly defined, determinable and non-retroactive*" to avoid potential abuse (¶ 7); prevent and put an end to arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders (¶ 8); combat impunity by conducting prompt, impartial and independent investigations and pursuing accountability for all attacks and threats by State and non-State actors against environmental human rights defenders (¶ 10).

²⁵⁶ HRC, Resolution No. 40/11 Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, 2 April 2019, A/HRC/RES/40/11, p. 2. To this end, the HRC urged all States, among other things, to take all measures necessary to ensure the rights, protection and safety of environmental human rights defenders, "*who exercise, inter alia, the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association*" (¶ 3); ensure that all legal provisions and their application affecting human rights defenders are "*clearly defined, determinable and non-retroactive*" to avoid potential abuse (¶ 3); prevent and put an end to arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defenders (¶ 8); combat impunity by conducting prompt, impartial and independent investigations and pursuing accountability for all attacks and threats by State and non-State actors against environmental human rights defenders (¶ 10). Avaaz, "*Stand with Earth defenders*", 28 June 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/100_indigenous_land_rights_rb/ (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁵⁷ Avaaz, "*Stand with the Yanomami mothers*", 26 May 2021, available at https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/yanomami_11/ (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁵⁸ UDHR, Art. 3.

²⁵⁹ UNDRIP, Art. 7(1).

²⁶⁰ CERD, Art. 5(b).

²⁶¹ Escazú Agreement, Art. 9(1).

organization and impede their ability to express their concerns over matters affecting their communities.”²⁶² As emphasized by Indigenous climate activist Jacob Johns:²⁶³

*We’ve been locked, out our voices silenced [...] The climate collapse is coming, we are literally fighting for our lives. If we’re not allowed to advocate for our future, who will? It’s shameful.*²⁶⁴

157. At an interactive dialogue held in June 2023, the HRC acknowledged that members of Indigenous communities who protest against development projects continue to be the targets of threats and attacks, and reiterated the need for States “to create an enabling environment for [these] vulnerable groups to exercise freedom of opinion and expression.”²⁶⁵ Similarly, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed in a recent statement the need for States to “end impunity for attacks against environmental human rights defenders, including notably those who are members of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples.”²⁶⁶
158. The combination of their activism and marginalization results in disproportionate harms against Indigenous Peoples, against which States have an obligation to protect. As such, States have further obligations to address the violent attacks against Indigenous human rights defenders. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples has issued a list of recommendations for States to adopt. These recommendations, which should be implemented by States in line with their human rights obligations, include requirements to:

²⁶² HRC, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples”, 10 August 2018, A/HRC/39/17, ¶ 71.

²⁶³ A Hedge, “He would paint it. He would march it. He would sing it.”, Range, 1 October 2023, available at <https://rangemedia.co/jacob-johns-spokane-water-protector-new-mexico-shooting/> (last accessed 20 October 2023); N Gilmore, “Sheriff’s official IDs suspected shooter in violence at planned site of Oñate statue”, Santa Fe New Mexican, 29 September 2023, available at https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/sheriffs-official-ids-suspected-shooter-in-violence-at-planned-site-of-o-ate-statue/article_631b4766-5d63-11ee-a392-db0eabb068dc.html (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁶⁴ N Lakhani, “‘Shameful’ UN silencing Indigenous voices, say banned COP27 activists”, The Guardian, 18 November 2022, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/18/shameful-un-silencing-indigenous-voices-say-banned-cop27-activists> (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁶⁵ HRC, “Human Rights Council Holds an Interactive Dialogue on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy and their Family Members and Concludes a Dialogue on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression”, 23 June 2023, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/06/human-rights-council-holds-interactive-dialogue-elimination-discrimination-against> (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁶⁶ V Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Statement, “Addressing climate and digital challenges: International Geneva”, 26 June 2023, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/06/addressing-climate-and-digital-challenges-international-geneva> (last accessed 20 October 2023).

- a. Promptly and impartially investigate and take measures to provide for effective redress and reparation;
- b. Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to the killing of and violence against Indigenous human rights defenders at the highest level of government;
- c. Ensure that legislation creates due diligence obligations for companies registered in their jurisdiction and their subsidiaries where there is a risk of human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples; and
- d. Adopt legislation and policies, in close consultation with the Indigenous Peoples concerned, to expressly support the protection of Indigenous defenders and their communities both individually and collectively.²⁶⁷

iv. States must recognize Indigenous Peoples' land rights

159. The IACHR has noted that the application of the American Declaration on Indigenous Peoples requires the taking of special measures to ensure recognition of the particular and collective interests that Indigenous Peoples have in the occupation and use of their traditional lands, resources and their right not to be deprived of this interest except with fully informed consent, under conditions of equality, and with fair compensation.²⁶⁸
160. As such, States are urged to recognize the collective land rights of Indigenous Peoples.²⁶⁹ However, according to a report by the Rights and Resources Initiative, Latin America lags behind in the collective titling and legal recognition of the land rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities. Globally, communities gained legal recognition for 102.8 million hectares between 2015 and 2020. In Latin America, in 2020 the total area with community legal recognition had reached 21 million hectares. This is less than 1% of the total land in the 16 Latin American countries included in the report, which is slow progress considering the region's recent positive moves on land rights. Even in recognized areas, communities face insecurity of land tenure due to occupations by miners and extractive industries. The report concludes that, in the 16 Latin American countries analyzed, around 79% of the land is State or private property. Meanwhile, 17.6% is owned by Afro-descendant or Indigenous communities and 3.2% has been designated for

²⁶⁷ HRC, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples", 10 August 2018, A/HRC/39/17, ¶ 91.

²⁶⁸ *Maya indigenous communities of the Toledo District v Belize*, Case 12.053, Report No. 40/04, IACHR, 12 October 2004, ¶ 117.

²⁶⁹ HRC, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples", 10 August 2018, A/HRC/39/17, ¶ 91(f).

the collective use of these populations. Areas for collective use increased by four million hectares, from 3% in 2015 to 3.2% in 2020. At the same time, the land actually owned by these communities grew by 17 million hectares, from 16.7% to 17.6%. Latin America has been a leader in the legal recognition of land and forest rights for communities. But since 2015 land recognition in the region has suffered a period of stagnation.²⁷⁰

161. Moreover, measures taken by States to respond to climate change could pose particular challenges for the full realization of Indigenous Peoples' rights.²⁷¹ The UN SRRIP has recommended that States must, when planning and implementing projects aimed at mitigating against and adapting to the climate crisis, ensure the consultation and participation of concerned communities, such as Indigenous Peoples, and recognize their local knowledge and local environments.²⁷² This would enable governments to become more responsive to human rights vulnerabilities and better positioned to effectively strengthen the resilience of communities, homes and infrastructure systems.²⁷³
162. Finally, as discussed above, States must uphold the rights provided for in the ACHR and international human rights instruments, which concern also the conduct of private third parties, including businesses operating within the State. As this Court noted in its 2017 Advisory Opinion, States must regulate business activities that could cause significant environmental damage in a way that reduces any threat to the rights to life and to personal integrity²⁷⁴ as well as regulate the activities of companies carrying out activities outside the State's territory.²⁷⁵ These obligations apply also in the case of activities of businesses carried out in Indigenous Peoples' lands.

²⁷⁰ F Koop, *Diálogo Chino*, "Latin America slows recognition of Indigenous lands", 22 June 2023, available at <https://dialogochino.net/en/infrastructure/371869-latin-america-slows-recognition-of-indigenous-lands/#:~:text=The%20collective%20use%20areas%20increased,and%20forest%20rights%20to%20communities>. (last accessed 20 October 2023). See also Rights and Resources Initiative, "Who Owns the World's Land: Global State of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and Local Community Land Rights Recognition from 2015-2020", June 2023, available at https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf, p. 8 and ¶ 4.2, (last accessed 20 October 2023).

²⁷¹ See UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context", 6 August 2009, A/64/255, ¶ 62.

²⁷² UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context", 6 August 2009, A/64/255, ¶ 73.

²⁷³ UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context", 6 August 2009, A/64/255, ¶ 63.

²⁷⁴ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion, OC 23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 149.

²⁷⁵ IACtHR, Advisory Opinion, OC 23/17, 15 November 2017, ¶ 151.

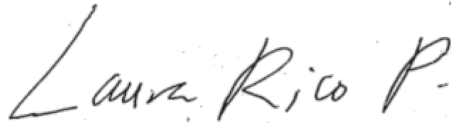
V. CONCLUSION

163. States have wide-ranging obligations to respect, protect and fulfill human rights in the context of the climate crisis. In the present advisory proceedings, Avaaz respectfully requests the Court to articulate these obligations under the ACHR consistent with States' obligations under international human rights law and international environmental law. The Court's advisory opinion will lead the way globally on the intersection of human rights law and the climate emergency. We ask the Court to give due consideration in its opinion to the disproportionate effects of climate change on children and young people and on Indigenous Peoples and what this requires of States.
164. As set out above, children suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change, including in terms of their mental health and the climate anxiety they experience linked to States' action compounding the climate crisis and/or inaction in the face of the climate emergency. Children are entitled under the ACHR to be protected from the harm caused by climate change, including climate anxiety, and States are required not only to remedy the harms arising from their breaches of the ACHR, but also to take proactive steps to uphold and ensure respect for the rights afforded to children under the ACHR. **States are required to take the appropriate and necessary measures to address and counter climate change, and thereby, the climate anxiety experienced by children and young people.**
165. Equally, this Court should consider the major impact that the climate crisis has on Indigenous Peoples and direct States to take concrete measures to implement effectively the rights of Indigenous Peoples under the ACHR and international human rights instruments, particularly their rights to natural resources, lands and communal property as well as their rights to be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes that affect them. **States should be held accountable when they do not respect Indigenous Peoples' human rights and fully integrate them in key policy decisions in the context of the climate crisis.**

Respectfully submitted,
AVAAZ FOUNDATION



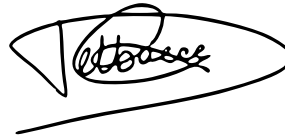
Bieta Andemariam
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Annex A

Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

Caroline Hickman*, Elizabeth Marks*, Panu Pihkala, Susan Clayton, R Eric Lewandowski, Elouise E Mayall, Britt Wray, Catriona Mellor, Lise van Susteren



Summary

Background Climate change has important implications for the health and futures of children and young people, yet they have little power to limit its harm, making them vulnerable to climate anxiety. This is the first large-scale investigation of climate anxiety in children and young people globally and its relationship with perceived government response.

Methods We surveyed 10 000 children and young people (aged 16–25 years) in ten countries (Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, the UK, and the USA; 1000 participants per country). Invitations to complete the survey were sent via the platform Kantar between May 18 and June 7, 2021. Data were collected on participants' thoughts and feelings about climate change, and government responses to climate change. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each aspect of climate anxiety, and Pearson's correlation analysis was done to evaluate whether climate-related distress, functioning, and negative beliefs about climate change were linked to thoughts and feelings about government response.

Findings Respondents across all countries were worried about climate change (59% were very or extremely worried and 84% were at least moderately worried). More than 50% reported each of the following emotions: sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty. More than 45% of respondents said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning, and many reported a high number of negative thoughts about climate change (eg, 75% said that they think the future is frightening and 83% said that they think people have failed to take care of the planet). Respondents rated governmental responses to climate change negatively and reported greater feelings of betrayal than of reassurance. Climate anxiety and distress were correlated with perceived inadequate government response and associated feelings of betrayal.

Interpretation Climate anxiety and dissatisfaction with government responses are widespread in children and young people in countries across the world and impact their daily functioning. A perceived failure by governments to respond to the climate crisis is associated with increased distress. There is an urgent need for further research into the emotional impact of climate change on children and young people and for governments to validate their distress by taking urgent action on climate change.

Funding AVAAZ.

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Introduction

Climate anxiety and eco-anxiety (distress relating to the climate and ecological crises) are gaining attention worldwide as people become increasingly aware of the current and future global threats associated with our warming planet.¹ The climate crisis has important long-term implications for physical and mental health as a result of acute and chronic environmental changes, from storms and wildfires to changing landscapes, and increasing temperatures.² Climate anxiety is complex,³ and is recognised to often be based on constructive or practical anxiety.¹ Although painful and distressing, climate anxiety is rational and does not imply mental illness. Anxiety is an emotion that alerts us to danger,

which can cause us to search for more information about the situation and find potential solutions. In threatening and uncertain situations such as the climate crisis, this response can be seen as what is sometimes referred to as practical anxiety^{1,4} because it has the beneficial effect of leading people to reassess their behaviour in order to respond appropriately. However, because the climate crisis is so complex and lacks a clear solution, anxiety can easily become too intense and even overwhelming.^{5–7}

Climate anxiety can be connected to many emotions, including worry,⁸ fear,⁹ anger,¹⁰ grief, despair, guilt, and shame,¹¹ as well as hope,¹² although the presence of these vary between individuals. As research in this field emerges, certain emotions have received more attention,

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Research in context

Evidence before this study

Previous studies have shown that psychological distress about climate change exists, with affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. The direct impacts of climate change disproportionately burden children and young people, at the same time as they are developing psychologically, physically, socially, and neurologically. Emerging evidence suggests that young people are also more burdened by the indirect impacts of climate change, such as climate anxiety, which affects psychosocial health and wellbeing, and might exacerbate pre-existing mental health problems in some children. Before the study (between 2016 and 2021), several of the coauthors had conducted a range of conceptually guided explorations of the scarce literature on children's emotions in relation to climate change, and existing psychological measures of climate anxiety, in English and Finnish. Findings from these searches, and resulting publications, inform this study. We also considered legal reports from the past 2 years relating to human rights and climate change.

Added value of this study

To our knowledge, this is the largest and most international survey of climate anxiety in children and young people to date. It shows that the psychological (emotional, cognitive,

social, and functional) burdens of climate change are being felt by large proportions of young people around the world. Furthermore, it is the first study to offer insight into how young people's perception of governments' responses to climate change is associated with their own emotional and psychological reactions. These reactions are reported by young people from a diverse set of countries with a range of incomes and differing levels of direct exposure to severe effects of climate change.

Implications of all the available evidence

Distress about climate change is associated with young people perceiving that they have no future, that humanity is doomed, and that governments are failing to respond adequately, and with feelings of betrayal and abandonment by governments and adults. Climate change and government inaction are chronic stressors that could have considerable, long-lasting, and incremental negative implications for the mental health of children and young people. The failure of governments to adequately address climate change and the impact on younger generations potentially constitutes moral injury. Nations must respond to protect the mental health of children and young people by engaging in ethical, collective, policy-based action against climate change.

especially climate grief, worry, and fear, tied to current and anticipated losses. Research into other emotions has only begun more recently, such as how people might feel guilty for their own contributions to climate change or feel shame about the climate damage caused by humanity more broadly. Complex and sometimes competing feelings are often experienced together and can fluctuate in response to personal and world events.^{13,14} These experiences have been argued to be understandable, congruent, and healthy responses to the threats we face, but such threats can be experienced as an unrelenting psychological stressor.^{1,3}

Substantial levels of climate-related distress are reported globally,¹⁵ with children and young people particularly vulnerable.¹⁶ This distress is understandable, given that a 2021 review found that children of present and future generations will bear an unacceptably high disease burden from climate change,¹⁷ and a 2021 UNICEF report estimates that one billion children are at extremely high risk as a result.¹⁸ Qualitative research has found that many children have pessimistic views of climate futures.¹⁹ Interviews conducted with children in various countries between 2016 and 2021 found intense forms of climate and eco-anxiety.^{3,13} Parents and educators also report hearing great concern about climate change from young people.^{20,21} Quantitative research on a global scale is missing but is vital considering that contemporary children will live with the climate crisis for their whole lives.

Climate change poses a risk to mental health that can be understood through stress–vulnerability models of

health.²² Exposure to chronic stress in childhood has a long-lasting impact and increases the risk of developing mental health problems. Understanding the stress of climate change requires understanding how multiple factors interact. Changing climate and weather-related disasters have diverse impacts, both direct (eg, destruction and trauma) and indirect (eg, strained personal and public resources, interrupted community functioning),² as well as resulting in climate anxiety. Children and young people are thus facing numerous stressors but have few resources to mitigate or avoid them. This experience is compounded by additional psychosocial risk factors, such as inadequate social services for many children around the world.²³ Children facing a future severely damaged by climate change will need support.²⁴

The psychological stress of climate change is also grounded in relational factors; studies among children have shown that they often experience an additional layer of confusion, betrayal, and abandonment because of adult inaction towards climate change.^{3,25} Children are now turning to legal action based on government failure to protect ecosystems, young citizens, and their futures.²⁶ Failure of governments to protect them from harm from climate change could be argued to be a failure of human rights and a failure of ethical responsibility to care,²⁷ leading to moral injury (the distressing psychological aftermath experienced when one perpetrates or witnesses actions that violate moral or core beliefs).²⁸ This might include an awareness of or failure to prevent harmful unethical behaviour. Research is required to understand

the relationship between children and young people's climate anxiety and their feelings about the adequacy of governmental response.

This study aimed to better understand the feelings, thoughts, and functional impacts associated with climate change among young people globally. It explores and discusses the relationships between climate-related distress and perceived government responses. We aimed to answer the following research questions: how children and young people around the world report emotional, cognitive, and functional responses to climate change; how children and young people around the world perceive governmental responses to climate change and whether those perceptions suggest feelings of betrayal or of reassurance; and whether relationships exist between the cognitive and emotional responses to climate change and the perceptions of governmental responses.

Methods

Study design and participants

Data were collected from 10 000 young people via the participant recruitment platform Kantar. Participants were drawn from Kantar's LifePoints online research panel (45 million people from 42 countries in 26 languages). Additional respondents were sourced from other double opt-in panels (ie, after registering to join a panel, respondents are required to click on a confirmation email) in the Kantar network in some countries (appendix p 2). The LifePoints panel draws membership from anyone who voluntarily signs up, as long as they pass quality checks that detect fraudulent panellists. Kantar uses a diverse set of recruitment sources (opt-in email, co-registration, e-newsletter campaigns, internal and external affiliate networks, and social media) specifically to maximise inclusivity. All panel members are reminded at regular intervals to complete surveys as part of their membership and to collect points.

For this study, participants were eligible if they were aged 16–25 years and living in one of the ten countries selected (Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, the UK, and the USA). These countries were chosen to reflect populations from different countries, representing a range of cultures, incomes, climates, climate vulnerabilities, and exposure to differing intensities of climate-related events.

Invitations to participate were available to eligible panellists between May 18 and June 7, 2021. Before accessing surveys, participants were informed of the survey length but not the topic. 15 543 people began the survey and 10 000 (68%) completed it. Data quality tools removed fraudulent survey data, such as from respondents who attempted to complete the survey multiple times, or those completing it far more quickly than the average. Data collection ended in each country once 1000 complete, anonymised responses were obtained. Quota sampling was used, based on age,

gender, and region. There was an approximately even split in terms of gender (51·4% male, 48·6% female) and age group (49% aged 16–20; 51% aged 21–25 years; mean age 20·82 years [SD 2·54]; appendix p 2). Because quota sampling did not lead to complete representativeness by country, collected data were weighted based on statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for each country by age group, gender, and region. All reported findings are based on these weighted data. The study was approved by the University of Bath Psychology Ethics Committee (#21-090).

Procedures

A survey was developed by 11 international consultants with expertise in climate change emotions, clinical and environmental psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, human rights law, child and adolescent mental health, and young people with lived experience of climate anxiety. The group met weekly for 2 months (February to March, 2021), reviewing existing climate anxiety measures and evidence for the psychological impact on young people. Several of the main authors had recently completed and published articles with targeted literature searches into climate and eco-anxiety,^{1,4,6} which were synthesised and used to generate survey items. These were discussed and refined iteratively, leading to eight broad questions about emotional, functional, and psychological experiences related to climate change and governmental response. The survey was piloted with 17 young people, with resulting adjustments to language and scaling. The survey domains were: climate-related worry (level of worry about climate change); climate-related functional impact (feelings about climate change negatively affecting functioning); climate-related emotions (presence of 14 positive and negative key emotions about climate change); climate-related thoughts (presence of seven key negative thoughts about climate change); experience of being ignored or dismissed when talking about climate change; beliefs about government response to climate change (presence of nine positive and negative key beliefs); and emotional impact of government response to climate change (presence and intensity of feelings related to reassurance and betrayal). The individual questions are shown in the appendix (pp 3–4). Items were developed to be clear and have appropriate equivalents in different cultures and languages, and they were translated as required.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the following constructs: worry, climate-related functional impairment, climate-related emotions, negative thoughts about climate change, experience of having one's climate change concerns dismissed, and beliefs about and emotional impact of governmental responses to climate change. Differences between the countries were cautiously explored. Pearson's correlation analysis was

See Online for appendix

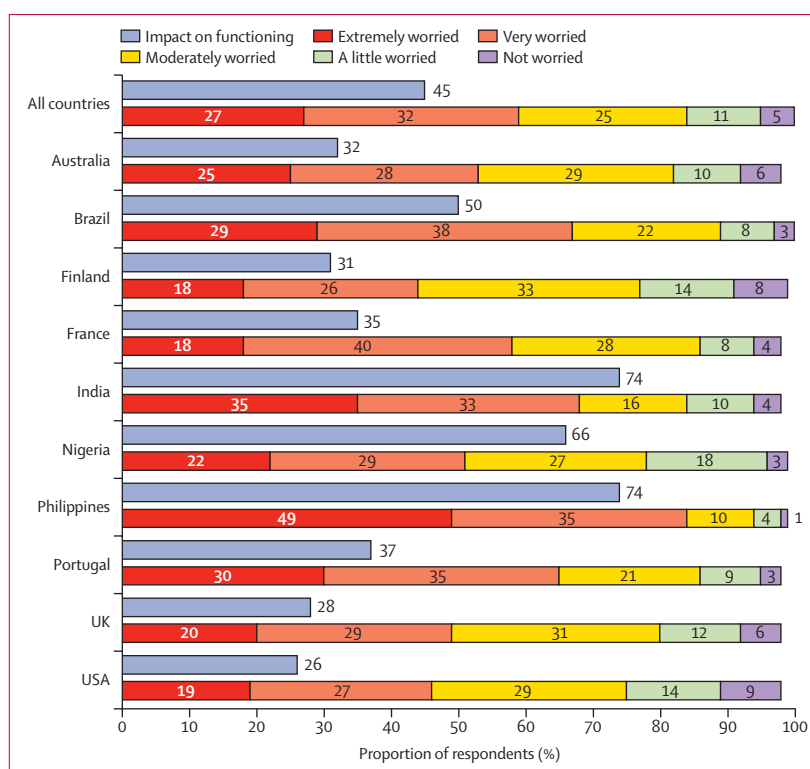


Figure 1: Worry about climate change and impact on functioning

The graph shows the proportion of the sample reporting a negative impact on functioning from their feelings about climate change and various levels of worry about climate change. Data are shown for the whole sample (n=10 000) and by country (n=1000 per country)

done to explore whether climate-related distress, functioning, and negative beliefs about climate change were linked to thoughts and feelings about government response.

To allow for comparison between constructs, scales were made from items within each domain (climate-related thoughts, beliefs about government response, emotional impact of government response). Negative thoughts about climate change were summed to create an overall score (ranging from 0 to 7), based on evidence that people with higher levels of concern about climate change tend to report more negative thoughts.²⁹ Perceptions that government has failed to respond adequately were recorded and summed to form a variable called negative beliefs about government response. Nine statements were included, each of which was scored 1 or 2. Items were reverse-coded such that a higher number always indicated a more negative evaluation of the government's response (ie, 9 was the most positive possible response and 18 was the most negative possible response).

Emotional impacts of government response were split into two scales reflecting a positive or a negative emotional response. The reassurance scale was constructed from the mean of the four positive feelings items scored on a scale from 1 to 5 ("I am reassured by governments' action on climate change" and each of "When I think about how my

government is or how other governments are responding to climate change I feel valued/protected/hopeful"). Cronbach's α was 0.82. The betrayal scale was constructed from the mean of the six negative feelings items scored on a scale from 1 to 5 ("When I think about how my government is or how other governments are responding to climate change I feel anguished/abandoned/afraid/angry/ashamed/belittled"). Cronbach's α was 0.89. The label betrayal scale was chosen because it reflects the type of distress commonly experienced (anger, anxiety, anguish, and so on) when individuals are harmed by deliberate acts of omission or perpetration by the institutions upon which they rely for support, protection, or even survival.³⁰

Questions regarding government action were phrased broadly as "my government is/other governments are" in order to assess how children and young people experience global inaction by governments in power. Even if their own country was perceived to be responding well, negative thoughts and feelings would persist if other countries were ignoring or downplaying climate change. By allowing respondents to indicate dissatisfaction or distress towards governments generally (rather than tied to their own government), it was felt that individuals could answer more openly, regardless of country of residence.

We report aggregate results for all respondents, and results by country. Aggregated results combining all countries are offered to provide a picture of the overall findings, while recognising that such results are not globally representative because sample sizes were the same for each country and not weighted by population size. Due to the size of the sample and number of comparisons, we only report findings that are significant at the $p \leq 0.001$ level. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 27.

Role of the funding source

AVAAZ arranged for data collection to be conducted by Kantar. It had no role in data analysis, data interpretation, or writing of the report.

Results

In response to our first research question, which was how children and young people around the world report emotional, cognitive, and functional responses to climate change, respondents across all countries reported a large amount of worry, with almost 60% saying they felt "very" or "extremely" worried about climate change (mean score of 3.7 on a scale from 1 to 5 [SD 1.7]). More than 45% of respondents said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily lives; the proportion of respondents varied by country but was consistently high (figure 1; appendix p 4). Countries expressing more worry and a greater impact on functioning tended to be poorer, in the Global South, and more directly impacted by climate change; in the Global North, Portugal (which had dramatic increases in wildfires since 2017) showed the highest level of worry.

Many respondents reported negative emotions; feeling afraid, sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty were each reported by more than 50% of respondents (table 1; appendix p 5). The emotions least often reported were optimism and indifference. Respondents also reported a range of negative beliefs,

	All countries	UK	Australia	USA	India	Philippines	Nigeria	France	Finland	Portugal	Brazil
Sad											
Yes	6669 (66.7%)	631	641	569	735	909	615	638	536	705	690
No	3152 (31.5%)	345	332	414	256	87	362	338	442	273	303
Prefer not to say	176 (1.8%)	24	27	17	8	3	22	24	22	22	7
Helpless											
Yes	5095 (50.9%)	546	595	462	634	636	438	511	541	327	405
No	4720 (47.2)	437	381	519	351	356	549	449	444	647	587
Prefer not to say	186 (1.9%)	18	24	19	15	8	13	39	15	26	9
Anxious											
Yes	6181 (61.8%)	599	650	578	640	830	660	501	493	605	625
No	3641 (36.4%)	380	324	405	339	165	331	467	486	372	372
Prefer not to say	180 (1.8%)	21	26	16	21	6	10	32	21	23	4
Afraid											
Yes	6734 (67.3%)	615	644	542	743	897	658	667	536	707	725
No	3111 (31.1%)	364	325	441	246	98	334	309	445	279	270
Prefer not to say	156 (1.6%)	20	31	17	11	5	9	24	19	15	5
Optimistic											
Yes	3089 (30.9%)	253	274	242	456	460	473	227	263	223	218
No	6663 (66.6%)	717	696	731	522	524	512	739	683	763	776
Prefer not to say	250 (2.5%)	30	31	28	23	16	15	34	54	13	6
Angry											
Yes	5685 (56.8%)	553	574	482	623	702	433	604	485	589	640
No	4125 (41.3%)	420	397	494	362	283	558	363	493	400	355
Prefer not to say	192 (1.9%)	26	29	23	16	15	10	34	22	12	5
Guilty											
Yes	5020 (50.2%)	528	506	417	572	744	282	511	434	538	488
No	4793 (47.9%)	447	471	563	408	250	710	461	543	436	504
Prefer not to say	187 (1.9%)	25	23	20	20	6	8	28	23	26	8
Ashamed											
Yes	4562 (45.6%)	514	531	442	495	682	206	480	383	393	436
No	5249 (52.5%)	467	445	534	485	313	772	495	589	592	557
Prefer not to say	191 (1.9%)	18	25	24	20	6	22	26	28	15	7
Hurt											
Yes	4283 (42.8%)	414	445	383	611	781	448	311	250	336	304
No	5496 (55%)	561	524	597	378	212	538	649	717	633	687
Prefer not to say	219 (2.2%)	24	30	20	11	7	14	40	33	31	9
Depressed											
Yes	3864 (38.6%)	365	402	343	532	525	340	224	329	387	417
No	5940 (59.4%)	610	566	635	456	458	648	746	649	598	574
Prefer not to say	198 (2.0%)	25	32	22	13	17	12	31	22	15	9
Despair											
Yes	4418 (44.2%)	410	421	332	520	581	392	492	494	368	408
No	5348 (53.5%)	556	540	636	450	405	598	478	490	611	584
Prefer not to say	233 (2.3%)	33	38	32	30	14	10	30	17	21	8
Grief											
Yes	4151 (41.5%)	353	400	352	549	624	320	452	578	231	292
No	5632 (56.3%)	622	569	621	428	362	667	526	403	739	695
Prefer not to say	216 (2.2%)	25	30	27	23	14	13	22	19	30	13

(Table 1 continues on next page)

	All countries	UK	Australia	USA	India	Philippines	Nigeria	France	Finland	Portugal	Brazil
(Continued from previous page)											
Powerless											
Yes	5598 (56%)	554	606	482	589	643	426	683	471	577	567
No	4210 (42.1%)	425	371	498	398	350	557	292	505	390	424
Prefer not to say	192 (1.9%)	21	24	20	13	7	16	25	24	33	9
Indifferent											
Yes	2902 (29%)	259	295	261	463	481	305	181	300	150	207
No	6827 (68.3%)	704	654	711	515	502	678	785	664	834	780
Prefer not to say	272 (2.7%)	37	52	29	22	17	17	34	36	16	12

Data are number (%) of respondents in the whole sample (n=10 000) or number within each country (n=1000 in each country). Participants were asked "Does climate change make you feel any of the following?"

Table 1: Emotions about climate change

	All countries	UK	Australia	USA	India	Philippines	Nigeria	France	Finland	Portugal	Brazil
I am hesitant to have children											
Yes	3908 (39.1%)	378	432	356	407	473	232	367	422	365	476
No	5700 (57.0%)	579	535	599	531	506	751	578	536	586	499
Prefer not to say	390 (3.9%)	43	33	46	62	21	17	54	42	48	24
Humanity is doomed											
Yes	5566 (55.7%)	510	504	457	740	733	422	480	431	616	673
No	4065 (40.7%)	448	442	492	234	251	557	449	530	357	305
Prefer not to say	366 (3.7%)	41	54	50	26	16	21	71	39	26	22
The future is frightening											
Yes	7549 (75.5%)	725	763	679	804	915	702	738	562	806	855
No	2219 (22.2%)	248	206	283	179	76	289	226	404	170	138
Prefer not to say	231 (2.3%)	27	31	38	16	9	10	36	34	24	6
I won't have access to the same opportunities that my parents had											
Yes	5487 (54.9%)	531	572	439	671	705	493	610	425	537	504
No	4210 (42.1%)	438	396	516	307	282	501	331	539	416	484
Prefer not to say	305 (3.0%)	31	32	45	22	13	6	60	37	47	12
My family's security will be threatened (eg, economic, social, or physical security)											
Yes	5167 (51.7%)	393	483	348	652	769	553	496	296	524	653
No	4516 (45.2%)	566	469	616	321	215	431	440	675	443	340
Prefer not to say	317 (3.2%)	41	48	36	27	16	16	64	29	33	7
The things I most value will be destroyed											
Yes	5483 (54.8%)	470	523	423	692	736	535	450	425	587	642
No	4162 (41.6%)	487	429	539	285	251	457	475	526	370	343
Prefer not to say	357 (3.6%)	43	48	38	24	14	8	76	48	43	15
People have failed to take care of the planet											
Yes	8256 (82.6%)	795	807	780	860	927	757	768	750	889	923
No	1533 (15.3%)	175	165	191	124	64	241	195	220	89	69
Prefer not to say	210 (2.1%)	29	28	29	16	9	2	37	29	22	9
When I try to talk about climate change other people have ignored or dismissed me											
Yes	3928 (39.3%)	355	392	304	597	465	476	238	294	342	465
No	4189 (41.9%)	384	346	393	316	455	379	533	524	475	384
I don't talk to other people about climate change	1884 (18.8%)	262	262	303	87	80	146	229	182	183	150

Data are number (%) of respondents in the whole sample (n=10 000) or number within each country (n=1000 in each country). Participants were asked "Does climate change make you think any of the following?"

Table 2: Negative beliefs about climate change and dismissal

	All countries	UK	Australia	USA	India	Philippines	Nigeria	France	Finland	Portugal	Brazil
Taking my concerns seriously enough											
Yes	3003 (30.0%)	265	291	214	426	418	302	273	341	264	209
No	6382 (63.8%)	653	627	699	530	559	672	633	562	677	770
Prefer not to say	617 (6.2%)	82	82	87	45	23	26	94	97	59	22
Doing enough to avoid a climate catastrophe											
Yes	3076 (30.8%)	262	308	242	437	422	363	260	300	283	199
No	6442 (64.4%)	686	625	678	523	559	609	667	644	670	781
Prefer not to say	483 (4.8%)	53	67	80	40	19	28	73	56	47	20
Dismissing people's distress											
Yes	6010 (60.1%)	580	637	586	586	534	580	574	481	648	804
No	3399 (34.0%)	348	291	341	362	427	381	333	447	293	176
Prefer not to say	591 (5.9%)	72	72	73	52	39	40	93	71	59	20
Acting in line with climate science											
Yes	3645 (36.5%)	321	334	278	527	524	398	281	382	379	221
No	5719 (57.2%)	607	589	631	424	448	570	614	523	562	751
Prefer not to say	636 (6.4%)	72	77	90	49	28	33	104	95	60	28
Protecting me, the planet, and/or future generations											
Yes	3306 (33.1%)	314	315	250	490	467	351	273	338	330	178
No	6105 (61.0%)	624	614	674	471	502	617	618	575	616	794
Prefer not to say	591 (5.9%)	63	71	76	40	31	32	109	87	54	28
Can be trusted											
Yes	3126 (31.3%)	278	296	213	505	404	311	234	345	323	217
No	6157 (61.6%)	645	621	676	446	550	642	660	558	607	752
Prefer not to say	718 (7.2%)	77	83	111	49	46	47	106	97	71	31
Lying about the effectiveness of the actions they are taking											
Yes	6437 (64.4%)	613	657	620	674	686	659	582	543	623	780
No	2894 (28.9%)	315	267	291	288	285	284	295	367	305	197
Prefer not to say	669 (6.7%)	72	76	89	38	29	57	123	90	72	23
Failing young people across the world											
Yes	6489 (64.9%)	648	674	630	714	679	644	549	467	694	790
No	2977 (29.8%)	293	265	293	243	298	306	357	468	266	188
Prefer not to say	534 (5.3%)	59	61	77	43	23	51	94	64	40	22
Betraying me and/or future generations											
Yes	5847 (58.5%)	572	595	563	663	563	551	487	462	621	770
No	3467 (34.7%)	347	324	353	288	392	403	388	459	316	197
Prefer not to say	686 (6.9%)	81	81	84	49	45	46	125	79	62	34

Data are number (%) of respondents in the whole sample (n=10 000) or number within each country (n=1000 in each country). Participants were asked "In relation to climate change I believe that my government is/other governments are...".

Table 3: Government-related beliefs

with 75% saying the future was frightening (table 2; appendix p 6). Among those who said they talked with others about climate change (81% of the sample), almost half (48%) reported that other people had ignored or dismissed them (table 2). Results for thoughts and feelings about climate change varied considerably by country but negative feelings were strikingly present in all populations.

Pertaining to our second research question, which was how children and young people around the world perceive governmental responses to climate change, participants tended to rate government response negatively (mean score 14.96 on the 9–18 scale [SD 2.57]). More than half

of respondents agreed with the negative statements (59–64%) and considerably less than half agreed with the positive statements (30–37%; table 3; appendix p 7). Across all countries, participants reported greater feelings of betrayal (mean score 2.7 [SD 1.0]) than of reassurance (2.22 [SD 0.93]; $p<0.0001$) and pairwise t tests showed that betrayal ratings were significantly higher than reassurance ratings within each country ($p<0.0001$; figure 2; mean scores by country are shown on appendix p 8).

To better understand patterns underlying responses to climate change, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to explore correlations among variables

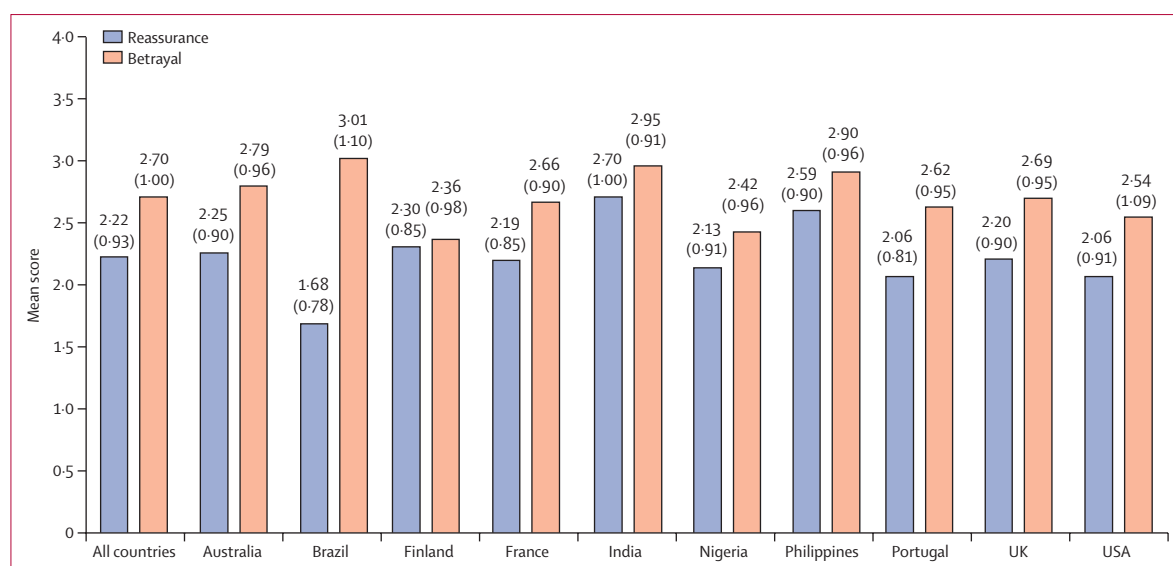


Figure 2: Feelings of reassurance and betrayal relating to government response to climate change

Data are shown for the whole sample (n=10 000) and by country (n=1000 per country). The values on the graph are mean (SD).

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1: Worried about climate change	..	..	..	..	..	..
2: Negative thoughts about climate change	0.48	..	..	..	..	..
3: Negative beliefs about government response	0.21	0.26	..	..	..	..
4: Feeling betrayed by government	0.43	0.47	0.36	..	..	..
5: Feeling reassured by government	0.01 (NS)	-0.04	-0.59	-0.02 (NS)	..	..
6: Negative functional impact	0.22	0.32	-0.1	0.25	0.21	..

Correlation coefficients (r) are shown. All correlations reported are significant at the p<0.0001 level unless otherwise indicated by NS. NS=not significant.

Table 4: Correlation matrix for the study variables

(table 4). Of note, negative thoughts, worry about climate change, and impact on functioning were all positively correlated and showed correlations with feelings of betrayal and negative beliefs about government response. Feelings of reassurance were not significantly correlated with worry and showed a very low but significant correlation with negative thoughts; the reassurance scale possibly confounded people who were not worried about climate change and people who were worried but considered the governmental response adequate. The relationship between negative thoughts and betrayal could be explained by the fact that they were both associated with worry about climate change. For this reason, a partial correlation was calculated while holding the level of worry constant. The correlation remained

significant ($r=0.32$, $p<0.0001$), suggesting that even among people feeling the same level of worry about climate change, those who reported feeling betrayed by the governmental response reported an increased number of negative thoughts. Similarly, negative thoughts remained significantly correlated with a perception of government failure while holding worry constant ($r=0.19$, $p<0.0001$).

Discussion

According to our study, children and young people in countries around the world report climate anxiety and other distressing emotions and thoughts about climate change that impact their daily lives. This distress was associated with beliefs about inadequate governmental response and feelings of betrayal. A large proportion of children and young people around the world report emotional distress and a wide range of painful, complex emotions (sad, afraid, angry, powerless, helpless, guilty, ashamed, despair, hurt, grief, and depressed). Similarly, large numbers report experiencing some functional impact and have pessimistic beliefs about the future (people have failed to care for the planet; the future is frightening; humanity is doomed; they won't have access to the same opportunities their parents had; things they value will be destroyed; security is threatened; and they are hesitant to have children). These results reinforce findings of earlier empirical research and expand on previous findings by showing the extensive, global nature of this distress, as well as its impact on functioning. Climate distress is clearly evident both in countries that are already experiencing extensive physical impacts of climate change, such as the Philippines, a nation that is highly vulnerable to coastal flooding and typhoons. It is

also evident in countries where the direct impacts are still less severe, such as the UK, where populations are relatively protected from extreme weather events. Distress appears to be greater when young people believe that government response is inadequate, which leads us to argue that the failure of governments to adequately reduce, prevent, or mitigate climate change is contributing to psychological distress, moral injury, and injustice.

Such high levels of distress, functional impact, and feelings of betrayal will negatively affect the mental health of children and young people. Climate anxiety might not constitute a mental illness, but the realities of climate change alongside governmental failures to act are chronic, long-term, and potentially inescapable stressors. These factors are likely to increase the risk of developing mental health problems, particularly in more vulnerable individuals such as children and young people, who often face multiple life stressors without having the power to reduce, prevent, or avoid such stressors.^{2,18,22,23} As severe weather events linked with climate change persist, intensify, and accelerate, it follows that, in the absence of mitigating factors, mental health impacts will follow the same pattern. We are already seeing increased severe climatic events that act as the precipitating and perpetuating factors of psychological distress; as of September, 2021, numerous unprecedented weather events have occurred since our data collection (including the heat dome and wildfires in the Pacific Northwest, catastrophic storms and floods in Germany, Iran, China, London, and New York, and heat records repeatedly broken in Northern Ireland and North America).

Factors known to protect against mental health problems include psychosocial resources, coping skills, and agency to address and mitigate stressors. In the context of climate anxiety, this protection would come in the form of having one's feelings and views heard, validated, respected, and acted upon, particularly by those in positions of power and upon whom we are dependent, accompanied by collective pro-environmental actions. However, this survey shows that large numbers of young people globally regard governments as failing to acknowledge or act on the crisis in a coherent, urgent way, or respond to their alarm. This is experienced as betrayal and abandonment, not just of the individual but of young people and future generations generally. The results here reflect and expand upon the findings of an earlier interview study, in which young people described their feelings about climate change as being "stranded by the generational gap" and feeling "frustrated by unequal power, betrayed and angry, disillusioned with authority, drawing battle lines".²⁵

Defence mechanisms against the anxiety provoked by climate change have been well documented, including dismissing, ignoring, disavowing, rationalising, and negating the experiences of others.²⁷ These behaviours, when exhibited by adults and governments, could be seen as leading to a culture of uncaring.²⁷ Thus, climate anxiety in

children and young people should not be seen as simply caused by ecological disaster, it is also correlated with more powerful others (in this case, governments) failing to act on the threats being faced. Our findings are in line with this argument and, alongside pre-existing evidence, lend weight to the proposal that climate distress in children and young people can be regarded as unjust and involving moral injury.²⁸ Young people's awareness of climate change and the inaction of governments are seen here to be associated with negative psychological sequelae. Moral injury has been described as "a sign of mental health, not disorder... a sign that one's conscience is alive",²⁷ yet it inflicts considerable hurt and wounding because governments are transgressing fundamental moral beliefs about care, compassion, planetary health, and ecological belonging. This sense of the personal, collective, and ecological perspective is summarised in the words of one 16-year-old: "I think it's different for young people. For us the destruction of the planet is personal".¹³

By endangering and harming fundamental human needs, the climate crisis is also a human rights issue. Legal bodies recognise an intersection between human rights, climate change, and climate anxiety. Subjecting young people to climate anxiety and moral injury can be regarded as cruel, inhuman, degrading, or even torturous.^{31,32} This provides further understanding for the current phenomenon of climate criminology,³³ in which children and young people are voicing their concerns through legal cases as an attempt to have their distress legitimised and validated legally in the face of government inaction.

A complete understanding of climate anxiety in children and young people must encompass these relational, psychosocial, cultural, ethical, legal, and political factors. Current narratives risk individualising the so-called problem of climate anxiety, with suggestions that the best response is for the individual to take action.³ Our results suggest that such action needs to particularly be taken by those in power. To protect the mental health and wellbeing of young people, those in power can act to reduce stress and distress by recognising, understanding, and validating the fears and pain of young people, acknowledging their rights, and placing them at the centre of policy making.²³ Before we can offer younger generations a message of hope, we must first acknowledge the obstacles that must be overcome.¹²

Limitations of this study include the use of non-standardised measures to investigate the experience of climate anxiety and how people think and feel about government responses, which are complex and nuanced subjects. Unfortunately, no appropriate standardised measures existed for our purposes. The construct of climate anxiety itself is new and complex, with varying definitions across the literature. Although our results show that many young people report difficult thoughts, emotions, and functional impairment related to climate change, we cannot indicate how severe this is in

comparison to normative samples. We aimed to investigate whether certain emotions and thoughts were present across different countries in the world, rather than to assess the degree to which these thoughts and feelings are felt. Therefore, we chose to use a three-factor response scale (yes, no, or prefer not to say) to encourage a high response rate and to facilitate valid responses from those less familiar with Likert scales. Although dichotomous response scales can exaggerate acquiescence, having a third, neutral option can mitigate this. This is supported by our finding that statements on negative emotions and beliefs were more commonly endorsed than positive or neutral statements.

Without measures of mental health, these results cannot assess how or whether climate anxiety is affecting mental health outcomes in these populations. The study did not measure the severity of climate anxiety by any psychological scale, although it should be noted that some results related to youth cognitions indicate strong emotions, such as the belief that “humanity is doomed”. Of note, the data were based on equal sample sizes per country and were not weighted according to population size, so aggregated results must be interpreted with caution because they are not globally representative. However, more populous countries (eg, India with more than 1.3 billion people) reported greater levels of worry, functional impairment, negative beliefs, and so on, indicating that our aggregated findings are probably a conservative estimate of distress levels globally. Other limitations arose from the use of an online polling company, for which completion required internet access, and sometimes the ability to speak English. Thus, although the samples should not be biased towards those who are especially concerned about climate change, they are not fully representative of the countries’ populations. Finally, the polling company provided data on gender defined only as male or female, which fails to recognise the non-binary nature of gender.

This study’s strengths include its large sample size and global reach, and it is a novel and timely investigation into climate anxiety and perceived government response. It offers good representation within countries by using a polling company with proven inclusive participant selection and minimisation of respondent bias by not advertising the nature of the study (eg, climate-related) in advance. We present the results as an initial attempt to quantify the global scale of the psychological impact of climate change and of inadequate government responses upon young people.

To conclude, our findings suggest that climate change, climate anxiety, and inadequate government response are all chronic stressors that could threaten the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people around the world. This survey offers a preliminary overview; further, detailed research is required to explore the complexities and wide variety of climate feelings. Climate anxiety is a collective experience,²⁷ and based on our results, children and young people would

benefit from having a social discourse in which their thoughts and feelings are respected and validated, and their concerns are acted upon by people in positions of power. Climate anxiety indicates the care and empathy that young people have for our world. As one young person said: “I don’t want to die. But I don’t want to live in a world that doesn’t care about children and animals.”¹³

As a research team, we were disturbed by the scale of emotional and psychological effects of climate change upon the children of the world, and the number who reported feeling hopeless and frightened about the future of humanity. We wish that these results had not been quite so devastating. The global scale of this study is sufficient to warrant a warning to governments and adults around the world, and it underscores an urgent need for greater responsiveness to children and young people’s concerns, more in-depth research, and immediate action on climate change.

Contributors

All authors contributed to the study design and conceptualisation. Literature searches were done by CH, PP, and SC. The underlying data were verified and analysed by SC, REL, EM, and EEM. The manuscript was drafted by CH, PP, EM, REL, SC, EEM, CM, and BW. All authors revised and commented on the manuscript and approved the final version. All authors had full access to the data and accept responsibility for publication.

Declaration of interests

We declare no competing interests.

Data sharing

Individual, unidentified participant data that underlie these results will be made available, beginning 3 months and ending 5 years after publication, to researchers who provide a methodologically sound proposal, to achieve aims in said approved proposal. Proposals will be considered by a small team of the authors and requests should be directed to c.l.hickman@bath.ac.uk, e.marks@bath.ac.uk, or panu.pihkala@helsinki.fi. To gain access, data requestors must sign a data access agreement.

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Annex B



FROM CLIMATE ANXIETY TO

CLIMATE ACTION

Messages from Avaaz Members in the Americas



FROM CLIMATE

ANXIETY

>> TO CLIMATE

ACTION



**TEMOR POR MIS HIJOS,
NO POR MÍ.
SIENTO TRISTEZA
E IMPOTENCIA**

**MARÍA EUGENIA M.
MÉXICO**



O que mais me angustia é que o governo, grandes empresários e instituições financeiras não levam em consideração as consequências climáticas de suas ações, pois só têm o capital como foco.

GISELA D.
BRASIL



Como madre de dos hijos jóvenes, siento ansiedad y preocupación por el futuro que les espera a mis hijos en este escenario de crisis climática. Siento que los gobiernos no están haciendo lo suficiente. Y siento impotencia como ciudadana, al ver que el sistema está colapsado y que hace falta un cambio radical.

TANIA D.R.
BOLIVIA

Me siento impotente porque creo que no puedo hacer nada para cambiar esto. Tengo 16 años y a mi corta edad pude ver la extinción de numerosas especies de flora y fauna como consecuencia de las acciones del hombre. Tal parece que nuestros líderes aún no han podido asimilar la gravedad del asunto, su inacción complica más las cosas. Esta generación podría ser la última que pueda hacer algo para cambiar el oscuro futuro que le depara a la tierra, y me siento responsable de eso. **Salvemos la Tierra.**

ANONYMOUS
PARAGUAY

No sé cómo describirlo, pero francamente siento que soy una muerte viviente. Todo esto del cambio climático es muy preocupante y con el cambio de estación estoy más sensible, siento una cárcel mi casa.

AMIRA A.
PERÚ



Siento una angustia permanente ya que el Estado en Colombia no hace lo necesario para controlar la deforestación, ni la contaminación industrial, ni vehicular. Todos los ríos van llenos de basuras y químicos y sus peces así, los consumimos, son un veneno. Y la corrupción no deja recursos para atender estos vicios de los políticos y la población en general, que no tomamos conciencia, de lo que se nos avecina, acabando con el planeta.

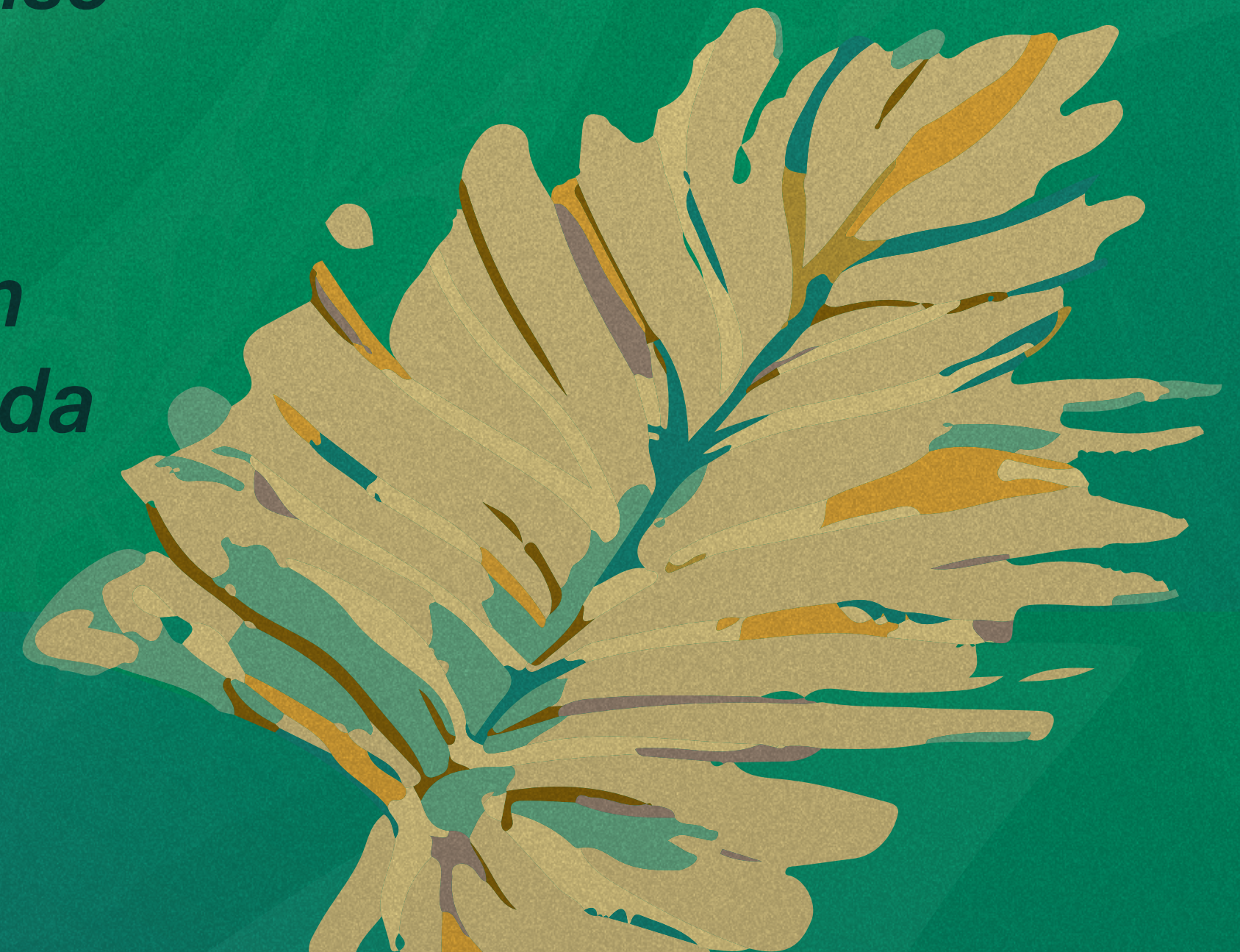
RAFAEL EDUARDO R.B.

COLOMBIA



¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Totalmente de hecho no sabía que tenía hasta leer esto. Soy madre de un niño de casi 2 años y a veces me cuestiono por qué lo traje al mundo, principalmente por el cambio climático, la gente es demasiado individualista y solo quiere más y más. Yo lo amo pero siento mucha ansiedad siempre por el futuro que nos espera. Trato de salir, caminar y vivir el presente. Hacer lindos días para que mi hijo los disfrute. Y así es la única manera en que puedo pensar en otra cosa ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Ver basura en la calle me duele, pienso enseguida en el mar como un basurero, las industrias explotando la Naturaleza me mata ya que es solo por poder y ambición. Ocupar pañales no biodegradables en mi bebé me hace sentir pésima persona porque enseguida pienso que estarán en el mundo más de lo que yo viviré.

CAMILA B.
CHILE



J'ai 51 ans. À l'âge de 15 ans, un professeur de sciences avait donné un travail de recherche sur un problème environnemental à faire à chacun des 27 étudiants de ma classe. Chaque présentation des étudiants se terminait par: « si nous continuons à agir de la même manière, nous sommes foutus en tant qu'espèce » ou « une espèce animale va disparaître ». Ce fut une révélation pour moi qui aimait profondément la nature et l'humain. Depuis, quand mon regard se pose sur la beauté du monde, c'est toujours avec une admiration teintée de chagrin face à l'idée que nous sommes en train de tout détruire. Quand j'ai eu mon premier enfant, cette tristesse s'est transformée en anxiété. Je me réveillais la nuit avec le sentiment urgent de devoir agir pour protéger mes enfants. J'ai distribué les dépliants portant sur l'environnement que le gouvernement canadien imprimait à l'époque. J'ai écrit une chronique au travail sur les gestes à poser, j'ai organisé des conférences... mais les gens me regardait comme une personne étrange. Par la suite, j'ai assumé la direction artistique d'une encyclopédie de la connaissance, qui comportait un tome sur le climat et l'environnement. Le sujet commençait à être plus populaire et j'ai commencé à avoir de l'espoir. C'était en 1999. Aujourd'hui, j'essaie de ne pas trop lire sur le sujet, parce que c'est anxiogène. Je me concentre sur les gestes que je peux poser et sur le moment présent. La destruction se poursuit, malheureusement,

et une opposition au mouvement environnementaliste s'est levée. Cette résistance au changement est normale. Il faut le voir comme un signe que la pression pour le changement se fait sentir. Je constate qu'un nombre significatif de personnes est au courant de la situation, ce qui est encourageant. L'étape à franchir, c'est celle de se rassembler pour faire changer les choses. De faire comprendre que c'est une action collective qui est nécessaire. Que de changer nos valeurs et notre manière de vivre peut être agréable. Qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de répondre à toutes nos envies de consommation et de nouveauté. Que de bien vivre, ça peut être de simplement profiter du moment présent. Avec ceux que nous aimons.

RIELLE L.
CANADA



When I first heard of global warming back in the eighties, it was a source of worry, but I thought we still had time to turn things around. I joined local ecology groups and started trying to raise awareness of the problem, but everyone acted like it was not their problem, and that was when anxiety started for me. It became even worse when summers got hotter and winters milder year after year, often reaching record temperatures, and when I visited the Perito Moreno glacier and learned that it was getting smaller every year. Hearing about floods and other tragedies caused by climate change all over the world did not make it any better, and it's been so frustrating every time a government signs a contract to make things worse rather than better! At this point I think I might live to see the end of civilization as we know it. It could even be the last thing I see. I still have hope, especially now that I know so many people are concerned about it. There is more awareness now, not on behalf of the governments yet, but among people who may have a chance in the near future. If things start changing, I'll be on the side of change. But we don't have much time.

GABRIELA S.
ARGENTINA
—»

I do feel climate anxiety - I feel sometimes that we are destined for a future that is going to be impoverished of life and love, a future I don't really want to live in. Worse, my daughter doesn't want to live through it, and is angry as hell that she is being landed with it. How do I live with it? I do what little I can, but mostly I am forced to just deal with my daily reality of earning enough money to live. Which brings me to one of my greatest complaints. Avaaz and other organizations give me a voice in all this, which is great. That is empowering. But we also get a lot of messages in the media and from government and corporate interests that "our choices

make a difference". Suggesting that our choices, like taking public transit instead of driving a car, insulating our homes, not using plastic bags and plastic straws, give us the power to change the course of this crisis. And that's a bunch of hooey, designed to divert our attention from the much more important, impactful changes that governments and large corporations need to make to change the course of this crisis. I am so tired of messaging designed to make me feel guilty for my choices, many of which I actually have no choice about, with my income level. So thank you, Avaaz, for giving us all tools and actions that can make a REAL difference in the so-called corridors of power.

HEATHER U.
CANADA
—»

Infelizmente, o futuro é incerto e preocupante. A maior sensação é a de raiva, pois as pessoas mais velhas têm boa parte de responsabilidade sobre o que estamos vivendo atualmente e o que ainda vamos viver, mas poucos parecem se preocupar em tentar fazer com que nosso futuro seja melhor, muitos não nos dão esperança e, ainda pior, há governantes que negam que a crise climática esteja acontecendo. Eu penso "é fácil fechar os olhos para algo que não te afeta", pois já estamos sofrendo algumas consequências, mas as piores virão quando eles não estiverem mais aqui. E tem gente que não percebe o desastre, porque tem dinheiro para sobreviver melhor a eles.

HENRIQUE S.
BRASIL
—»

En la zona de la Tierra llamada Chile, hay "zonas de sacrificio", es decir, lugares geográficos, dentro del Estado-nación, que son explotados sin ningún resguardo socioambiental. Esto es, la generación de energías mediante hidroeléctricas, la producción de combustibles, las plantaciones industriales, la pesca industrial de arrastre, el uso indiscriminado de pesticidas (Bayer, entre otros), el control de las semillas por Monsanto, la erosión de los suelos producto de los monocultivos madereros, en síntesis, el extractivismo neoliberal. Están destruyendo a poblaciones enteras, afectando la salud de infantes y personas adultas, porque se provocan malformaciones fetales, abortos, cáncer, producto de la excesiva contaminación. La ansiedad climática podría comprenderse como un aspecto de la salud mental individual, pero en Chile, en el Congo, en Perú, en Brasil, en China, en Tailandia, en Estados Unidos, en México, los residuos tóxicos derivados de la explotación de la Tierra y las personas están generando un ecocidio que afecta a la flora, fauna, grupos humanos y al planeta completo, no solo a individualidades que ven afectada su salud mental, porque la salud mental también es grupal y cultural. Ansiedad, dolor, frustración y decepción respecto de nuestra especie es lo mínimo que podemos sentir al ver la constante destrucción a la que los grandes capitales de las clases dominantes nos arrastran.

DANIEL V.
CHILE
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Siento una profunda desilusión ante la falta de políticas públicas efectivas, la indiferencia e ignorancia de gran parte de la población y de los gobiernos de mi país y del mundo, sobre todo de las grandes potencias del mundo respecto del cambio climático, la destrucción del medioambiente y la carencia de sanciones efectivas ante los diversos delitos ambientales. Me angustia el porvenir de mis hijos y nietos.

ELIDA ISABEL G.

ARGENTINA

—»

As a Brazilian it is totally depressing, looking at the sky and seeing that it is no longer blue as it used to be, the predominant smell of smoke coming from the forest fires, the heat that stays by day and night, the dry weather. It's frustrating to know that our government does nothing, a feeling of powerlessness is in the atmosphere, fear of the future, fear of knowing that I can see with my eyes the end of humans.

ALICIA A.

BRASIL

—»

Claro que siento ansiedad climática desde hace tiempo. ¿Qué planeta vamos a dejar a las siguientes generaciones? Hago lo que más está a mi alcance. Reciclo y enseño a reciclar. Ahorro luz y agua. Hago mi huerto. Siento miedo de catástrofes como tornados, inundaciones, falta de alimentos y de nuevas pandemias.

PILAR G.

COLOMBIA

—»

The hardest part of climate anxiety for me is thinking about the future for my children, and their potential children to come. I feel immense guilt for bringing kids into the world in its current state, and I struggle to explain it all to kids. I worry about climate collapse and being a single mom, and potentially having to try to survive in different ways without support and help of another adult. I cry for our animals and plants and earth. It's a heavy feeling, all the time.

JEN L.

CANADA

—»

Ansiedad quizás no es mi principal sentimiento. Es pena e ira. No sólo por el cambio climático. También por la destrucción masiva de ecosistemas. Frente a esta situación trabajo con diversas personas en acciones dirigidas a lograr un cambio.

FERNANDO P.V.

ECUADOR

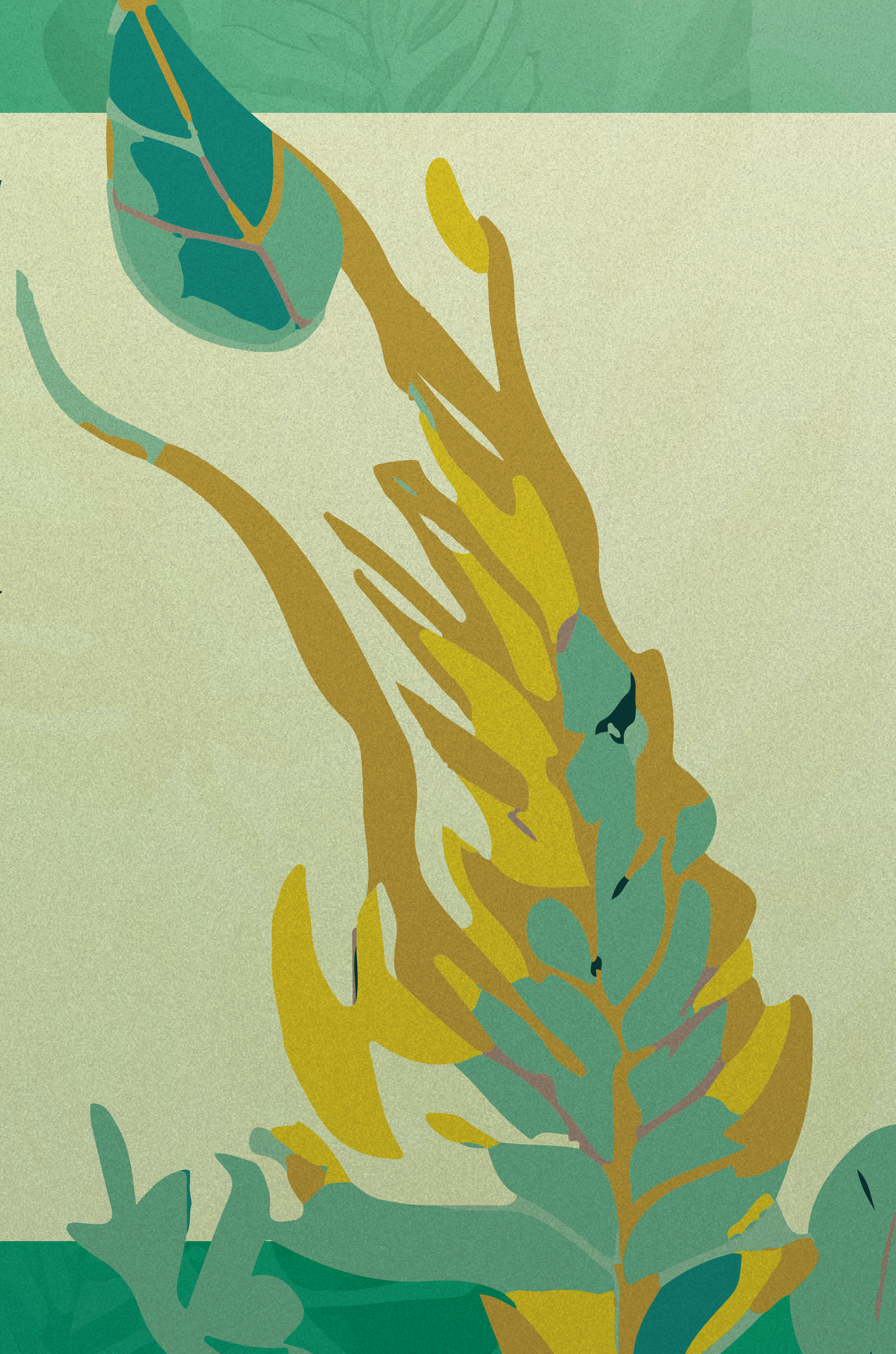
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Não tive filhos por considerar o futuro perigoso para as futuras gerações. Crise climática, falta de água potável, guerras e violência. Tudo isso é assustador!

SONIA G.

BRASIL

—»





TENHO OS MESMOS MEDOS DE VÁRIAS PESSOAS:

MEDO DO FUTURO,

MEDO PELAS GERAÇÕES FUTURAS
QUE ESTÃO SENTINDO AS MUDANÇAS CLIMÁTICAS

LITERALMENTE NA PELE.

ESPERO QUE POSSAMOS NOS AJUDAR PARA REVERTER

O QUANTO ANTES ESTA SITUAÇÃO.

JOÃO PAULO L.
BRASIL



As a teen who has taken a green tech class, I've felt a bit powerless in a sense. I am in a semi-permanent state of high alert as I watch counties across the country on fire, after which we are left with ashes while firefighters are spread thin. I feel sadness as the ashes are raining down and the smoke & smog are choking my friends. This is causing panic attacks as I wish to breathe clean air.

BILLY C.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Desde la pandemia vivimos en el campo. Criamos gallinas y pavos y cultivamos café y comida. Miro los árboles y el paisaje con nostalgia y rabia. Nostalgia porque sé que va a desaparecer. Rabia porque nos han engañado y nos siguen engañando sobre el clima. Siento tristeza por mi nieto de 7 años. Sé qué viene para él y sé que no podré acompañarlo.

JAVIER M.
COLOMBIA

Climate change is one of the top reasons I decided not to have kids. My partner and I made medical decisions to ensure we will never procreate. Given the overwhelming evidence of intensifying disasters and the recurring lack of policy change to address climate change, I never want to bring children into the unsafe reality we inhabit. Climate change also impacts my decision of where to live, as coasts are flooding and California is burning down year after year.

MARIA P.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tengo 35 años y desde niña recuerdo tener miedo de vivir en un mundo sin agua limpia que beber, con altos niveles de contaminación en el aire, eventos climatológicos extremos. Hoy veo esta situación pasando, sumándose a las olas de migrantes causadas por los desastres "naturales" y también veo la inacción de los gobiernos y las empresas. Esta situación me hace dudar sobre tener hijos o no. La acción climática es una situación de derechos humanos.


LESLY A.
MÉXICO



Climate change is a threat to international peace and security. The effects of climate change intensify competition for resources such as land, food and water, exacerbating socio-economic tensions and, increasingly, causing massive displacement. Science tells us that climate change is irrefutable, but it also tells us that it is not too late to stop its advance. Fundamental transformations will be needed in all aspects of society: growing food, using land, transporting goods, and fostering our economies. While technology has contributed to climate change, new and efficient technologies can help us reduce net emissions and *create a cleaner world.*

KATIA V.R.
CANADA





***J'ai peu confiance en l'avenir.** Des fois, j'ai l'impression que tout ce que je fais ne sert à rien puisque nous sommes condamnés. Mon conjoint et moi avons décidé de ne pas rajouter d'autres humains sur la planète en me faisant pas d'enfants, mais surtout, de ne pas les condamner à vivre dans ce monde qui fonctionne sur des valeurs que nous ne partageons pas. Nous adorons la nature et essayons de passer le plus clair de notre temps dans les bois, mais nous constatons avec effroi et frustration qu'il y a de plus en plus de gens partout et que tout le monde ne respecte pas le sacré de la nature comme nous.*

KIM F.
CANADA



When I was young, I used to be quite excited about the future.

I had goals and plans for things I wanted to do and places I wanted to see. The world felt like a playground waiting to be explored. Growing up and watching Star Trek as a child, I assumed humanity would naturally move away from polluting practices and work together to create a bright, green, and healthy future. I didn't realize how radically optimistic their vision of the future was. These days, I live my life one day at a time. I don't dare make plans for the future, and I've given up on most of my dreams, because I don't really feel like there will be a future in which I can survive, let alone thrive. The world is on fire. I feel the grief of our collective assault on the biosphere every day. It makes me feel weak and small. I mourn the loss of the flora and fauna we are dooming to extinction. When you're not excited or even hopeful

about life, you stop living. It's hard even to read the news anymore. It makes me want to curl up into a ball and hide away from everything, because it feels like there's nothing at all I can do. And yet we are forced to continue to go to work and pay our bills and carry on as if we are not facing an existential crisis. Some days I can barely get out of bed, because it all seems so pointless. Why go on, when all signs point to our collective annihilation? And yet so few of us seem appropriately alarmed by the path we are on. Part of me still feels obligated to raise my voice and fight, despite what little difference it might make. Perhaps there is a morbid curiosity for how this will all turn out, to bear witness as our civilization falls apart; all so that a select few may reap enough profits to live like gods while the rest of us suffer the eternal consequences.

**RUDY S.
CANADA**

Tengo 38 años, vivo en la zona tropical de los llanos y en las últimas décadas ha sido impresionante la devastadora deforestación y contaminación a causa de la actividad extractivista principalmente del petróleo, lo cual ha generado la desaparición de muchas especies nativas. Desde hace un par de décadas he sentido una mayor ansiedad climática manifestada por la falta de un oxígeno, más frío o falta de humedad en el aire, lo cual me causa estrés al sentir que el aire no es fresco y se me dificulta respirar porque siento que el aire es demasiado caliente. Debido a falta de un oxígeno fresco o falta de humedad en el aire, me ha tocado optar por conseguir elementos para acondicionar el aire artificialmente, situación con la cual no me siento bien porque con ello lo que se hace es contribuir a la contaminación pero recurro a ello por la incompetencia de los gobiernos de implementar métodos como la reforestación en la ciudad y el campo para bajar naturalmente la temperatura. Siento frustración por la incompetencia de la comunidad y los gobiernos que no hacen nada por remediar el cambio climático.

ALBEIRO O.
COLOMBIA
—»

El cambio climático es un hecho, y la verdad la ansiedad climática es como las olas del mar, baja y sube. Yo llegué al punto de odiar a la humanidad, ya que somos inconscientes en muchos aspectos y han creado una especie de burbuja para idiotizar a las personas especialmente para los que viven en ciudades. Esta brecha que cada vez es más grande que separa a la humanidad de la naturaleza nos tiene en jaque además sumado a la pobre educación ambiental y al encubrimiento del poder y del mercado hace que esta lucha sea injusta. Para los ecuatorianos el cambio climático es una cosa que pasa en otros países, porque vivimos un lugar privilegiado donde no se nota tanto, y para mi estamos divididos

en 3 grupos los que sabemos que está pasando y tratamos de hacer algo por detenerlo, los que saben pero no les conviene decir o hacer algo y los que realmente no saben. Para mí la solución fue reencontrarme con la Naturaleza. Dejar todo y empezar nuevamente en la ruralidad, conocer de dónde vienen mis alimentos, de dónde viene el agua, encontrar la simbiosis entre los seres vivos, desaprender todo lo que más puedo, para luego dar un respiro y sentirme parte de un todo, vivir en armonía y comprender y respetar a cada ser vivo. Hay formas de sumar tu granito de arena solo decídetelo y empieza hoy.

GALO C.
ECUADOR
—»

¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí cada día más, observando los tremendos incendios e inundaciones en todas partes del mundo. ¿Cómo vives con ella? Es bien difícil porque uno ya es mayor, yo tengo 56 años y pienso que posiblemente ya no veré lo que sucederá pero pienso en mis hijos, en mis nietos, y en las generaciones futuras que no son responsables por lo que sucede, los grandes países sí lo son y deberían preocuparse por el mundo y su conservación no solo por el dinero que se obtiene. ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? A tal grado que pienso que ya no deberían de tener más hijos las futuras generaciones porque solo vendrán a sufrir la insensibilidad de las grandes naciones. Nosotros que somos países tercermundistas al final sufrimos mucho más las consecuencias del cambio climático. Sinceramente es super preocupante. Da una ansiedad enorme ver que nadie hace nada.

ANA CELIA B.R.
GUATEMALA
—»

¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí la he sentido y cada día soy más consciente de ella. ¿Cómo vives con ella? Me he estado motivando a realizar pequeñas acciones que ayuden a revertir el daño al medio ambiente, como recogida de plásticos, siembra de árboles, evitar el consumo de envases plásticos, hablándole a la gente a mi alrededor del daño que está haciendo el ser humano con su insensibilidad, etc. ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Mal, muy mal, pues me inquieta, me asusta por mis hijos y nietos. Es una sensación de impotencia y a la vez, me hace dudar de mis enseñanzas cristianas en lo referente a qué debo amar a mi prójimo, cuando veo tantas acciones negativas del ser humano y tanta insensibilidad ante la naturaleza y los animales. En ocasiones hasta me cuestiono si es válido seguir viviendo por muchos años si lo que voy a vivir y vivirán mis hijos y nietos son tantos desastres naturales y tanto sufrimiento.

AGUSTIN T.L.
REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA
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Tengo 61 años y me ha tocado ver la extinción de una gran cantidad de especies y presenciar el cambio del clima en el lugar donde vivo. Me preocupa desde hace muchos años la inconsciencia de la gente. El poder de uno es hacer algo, en mi caso cambié mis hábitos de consumo y me uní a grupos de ciudadanos que trabajamos por el bien común. Los políticos no tienen más poder que el que le damos los ciudadanos a través de nuestro comportamiento sumiso. No es un momento para quedarnos cruzados de manos.

MAINOR P.
COSTA RICA

—»

Tenho 21 anos e, cada vez que vejo as notícias, fico muito triste e desesperada. Tenho tantos planos para o futuro, mas eles podem ser interrompidos a qualquer momento. Faço a minha parte, mas o governo e as grandes empresas só querem saber de lucro e, assim, o desmatamento, as queimadas e poluição continuam sem freio. Vamos fazer a nossa parte e cobrar os nossos governantes!

CAROLINA S.
BRASIL

—»

Siento angustia por lo que les espera a los niños y las niñas con el mundo que les estamos heredando. Es triste ver que el sistema imperante sigue priorizando el dinero por encima de todas las formas de vida, condenando a las generaciones actuales y las venideras.

DIANA S.
COLOMBIA

—»

Siento ansiedad cuando veo y escucho los gobiernos hablar del clima en forma frugal y sin darle importancia. Para ellos lo primero es el dinero, nada les importa más que lucrarse explotando los recursos naturales en forma indiscriminada. Vivo en medio de la ansiedad climática. Siento inseguridad y mucha preocupación y tristeza por lo que irán a vivir mis nietos. La corrupción de los gobiernos ha dejado ocurrir este desastre climático en todo el planeta y los países desarrollados han sido los más culpables.

MARIA ELIANA B.M.
CHILE

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Claro que siento ansiedad y preocupación por el cambio climático y sus consecuencias para el presente y futuro de las próximas generaciones. Me preocupa la devastación de los bosques, el deshielo de los polos, el agotamiento de los recursos minerales e hídricos, etc. Sé que todo este marasmo está ligado con el modo de producción capitalista y lucho para cambiarlo por un sistema donde seamos amigos de la naturaleza y no depredadores, ¡abrazos!

ENZO
URUGUAY

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Todos os dias, morro de medo de que seja meu último. Que, ao acordar, algo terrível vai estar acontecendo, e que tudo isso se dá através desse clima maluco que estamos presenciando.

RHADIJA R.R.
BRASIL

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SIENTO ANSIEDAD CLIMÁTICA A DIARIO.

HAGO TODO LO QUE CREO PODER HACER PONIENDO DE MI PARTE

PERO ESTOY RESIGNADO.

SIENTO DEPRESIÓN,

PÉRDIDA DEL SENTIDO DE VIDA

Y POCO INTERÉS EN PENSAR A FUTURO.

NO PLANEEO, NO TENGO SUEÑOS YA.

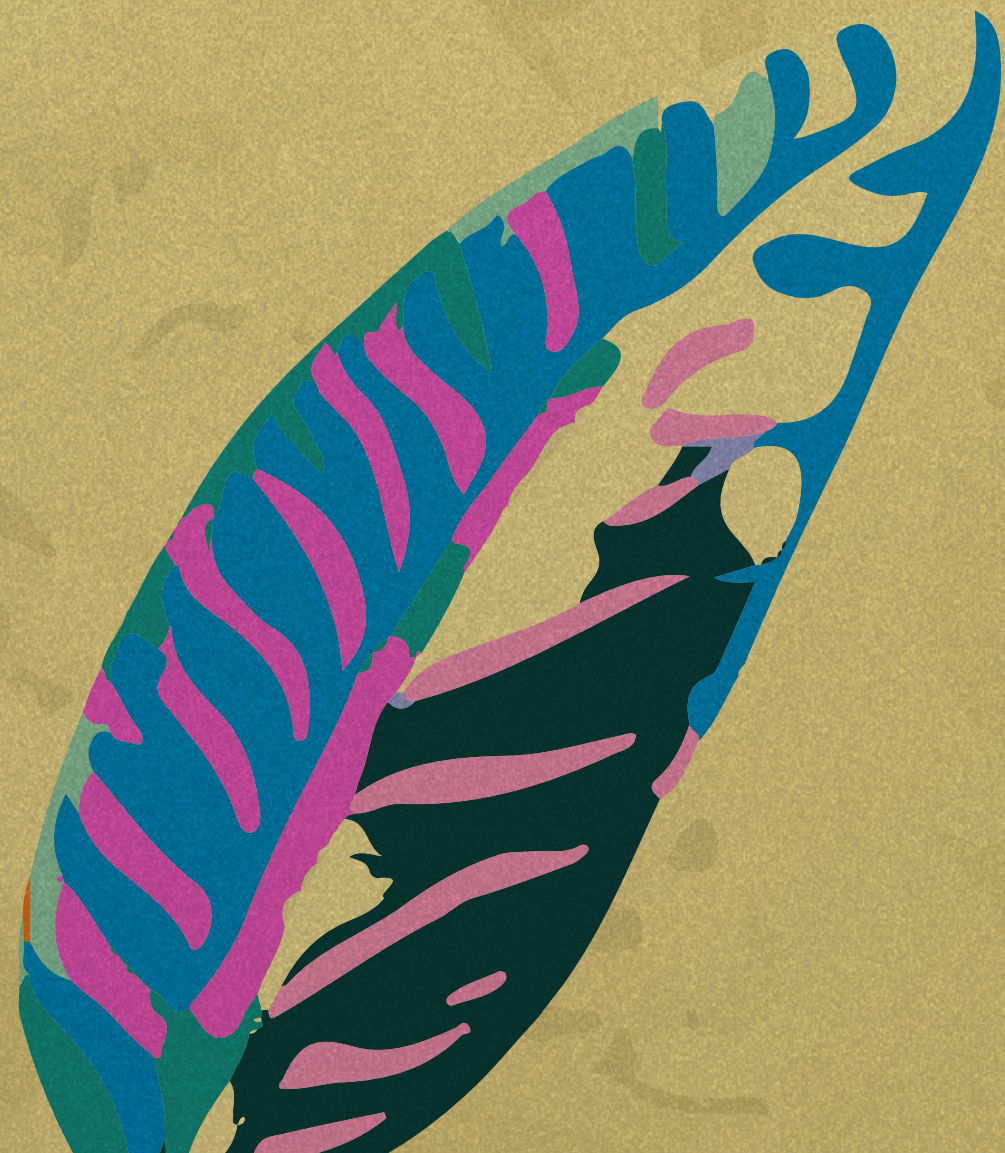
RICARDO LEÓN V.R.

COLOMBIA



Desde que soy muy chica siento un gran miedo al futuro solo por pensar en qué nos pueda llegar a deparar la crisis climática. Y desde ese entonces no vi nunca a ningún gobierno hacer algo al respecto y si lo hacen, es algo ínfimo porque lo que los mueve es el dinero y no les importan las personas ni el planeta que habitamos. Siempre tengo un poco de esperanza de que esto pueda mejorar, pero las situaciones que vivimos día a día muchas veces me la quitan. Ojalá las cosas empiecen a cambiar antes de que sea demasiado tarde.

CAMILA F.
ARGENTINA



No sabía que este sentimiento tenía un nombre. A veces estoy muy triste cuando pienso en nuestro futuro, en lo que está pasando y en que a casi la mayoría no le importa. Somos muchos, lo sé, aún no suficientes, sumada a la falta de acción de los gobiernos. Tengo 2 hijos, vivo triste por el futuro que les espera. Tengo un nudo en la garganta, solo de escribir lo que siento. No alcanza lo que hago, lo que como, lo que he visto, me deprime saber que no es suficiente.

VICTORIA
ARGENTINA

I feel incredibly overwhelmed by the hopelessness at times. I'm a young adult (23) and worry about what my future will look like, how harmful this will be to our collective society, and whether we will come close to addressing it. Then I feel frustrated and angry at all of the leaders who have failed us. The only thing that keeps me going is the knowledge that I have to be in this fight, even if we lose. I can't sit on the sidelines.

ALEXA F.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Tenho 23 anos, moro no Brasil e desde de muito criança lido com a ansiedade climática. É até um alívio saber que isso tem nome e que não estou sozinha nessa. Sabemos que nosso futuro vai ser triste, cinza e, com certeza, catastrófico, mas escrevo isso com a esperança de que meu relato possa fazer parte de um movimento de mudança. Os jovens ao redor do mundo clamam aos políticos e pessoas que detém o poder: FAÇAM ALGO!

ANNA CAROLINA D.L.C.

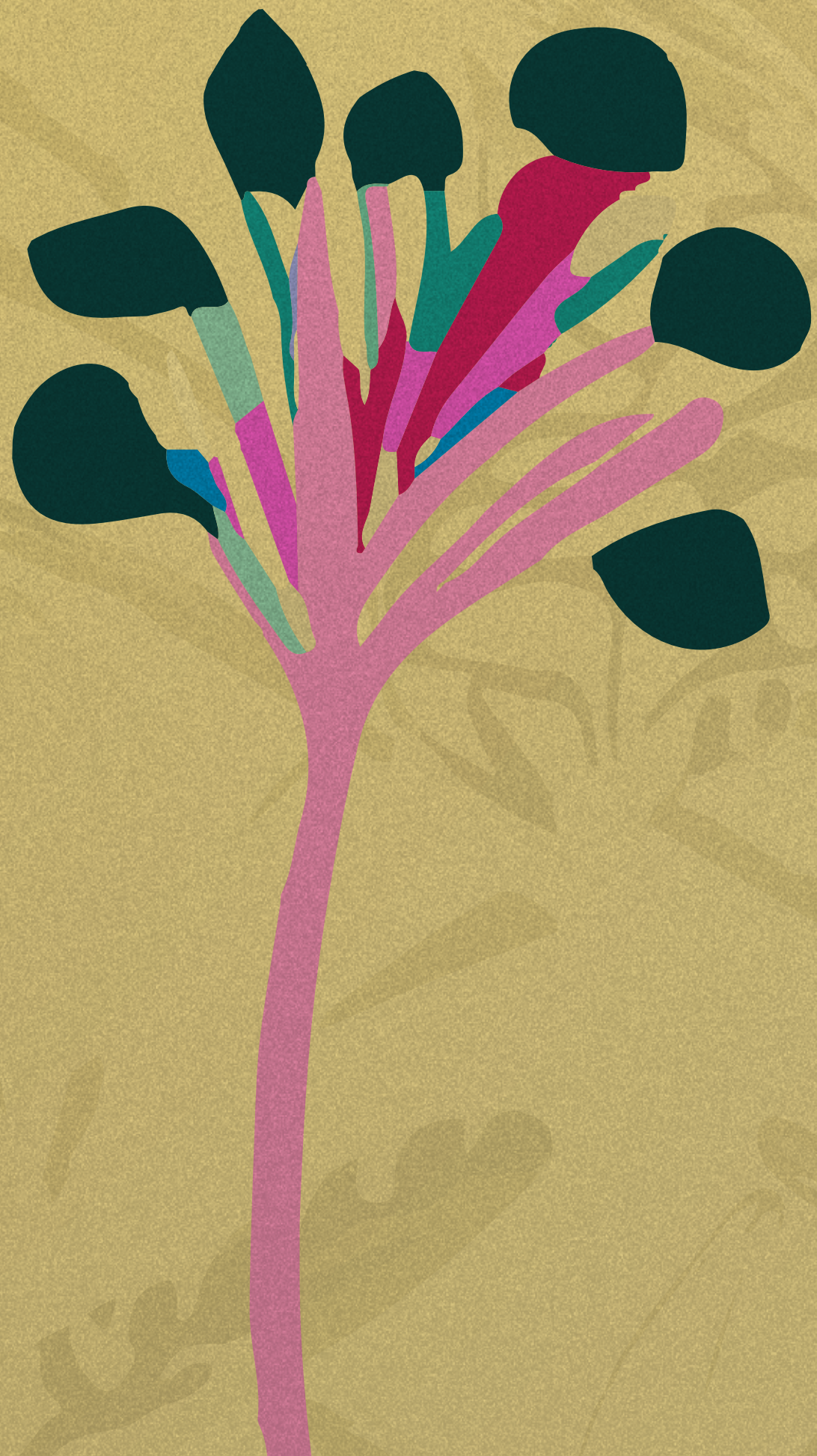
BRASIL



Tengo 20 años y mi ansiedad climática es tan grande que desde que tengo 18 ya decidí que me iba a suicidar cuando todo llegue a su punto culminante. Me quitaron mi vida, mi esperanza a un futuro, mis ganas de vivir, pero no me van a quitar mi muerte. Yo quiero ser quien decida cómo morirme, y lo voy a hacer yo misma porque quiero sentir que tengo control sobre, al menos, en una mínima cosa en mi vida.

SOL A.
ARGENTINA





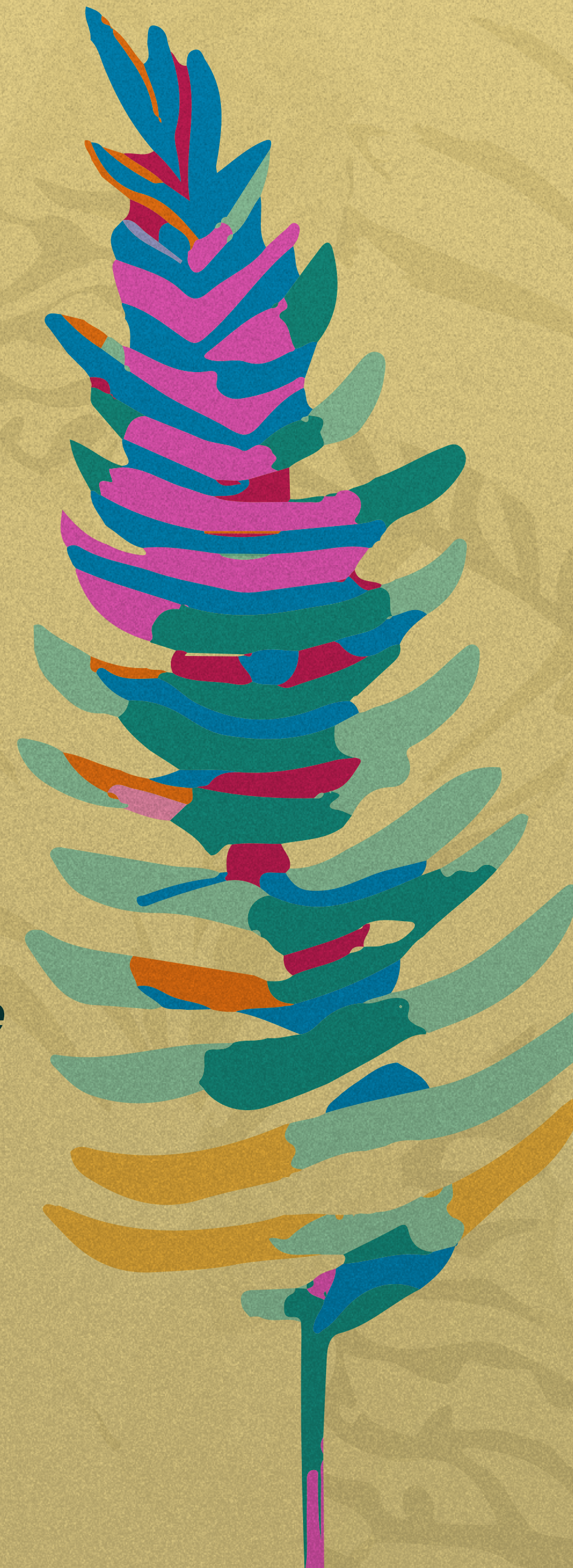
Los cambios drásticos en el clima, las heridas del bosque, el sufrimiento de la naturaleza y el impacto en la salud de jóvenes crean un panorama a mediano y largo plazo poco alentador. Sin embargo, cuido mi esperanza para que unidos empujemos a gobiernos liderados y asesorados por jóvenes visionarios, amantes de la naturaleza, para que la transición energética y las ciudades sostenibles sean una realidad en el siglo XXI.

RAITI J.
NICARAGUA

Siento y vivo con ansiedad climática desde que soy un niño.

Se siente una gran impotencia al saber que estamos en manos de políticos que solo buscan la productividad de los recursos naturales y no les importa el daño que le causan a la naturaleza, mucho menos la destrucción que dejan para el futuro. Peor ¿hay futuro? Noches enteras lloré en mi cama imaginando cómo sería ese mundo sin agua potable. Hace unos días en un examen final de geografía ambiental, del profesorado de geografía que estoy cursando, lloré frente a mis profesores de la impotencia y la bronca que me daba exponer mi trabajo ambiental y que a los poderosos políticos que tienen herramientas para poder lograr un cambio, no les importe nada acerca del futuro del planeta y el de las personas que van a habitarlo.

**JONATAN G.
ARGENTINA**



La crise climatique m'affecte beaucoup émotionnellement.

Elle est toujours présente et a un impact sur toutes mes décisions. J'ai eu des pensées suicidaires depuis mon enfance en me disant que la meilleure façon de diminuer mon impact individuel serait de ne pas exister. Depuis, je me renseigne sur les mythes de l'écofascisme: par exemple, le mythe que la surpopulation est à la base de la crise climatique. On ne peut pas laisser croire aux jeunes que leur présence est un impact négatif à la crise. C'est tout le contraire. Les grandes corporations sont à la base de la crise climatique et c'est elles qui ont l'impact le plus désastreux. Il faut arrêter de véhiculer le message que l'action individuelle est la meilleure façon d'agir, car cela met une responsabilité colossale sur le dos des jeunes écoanxieux et cette responsabilité n'est pas la leur. Il faut responsabiliser nos gouvernements et les corporations qui sont à la source du problème. Restez résilient·e·s et ne laissez pas l'écofascisme vous dire que la crise est de votre faute.

**ANNIE S.
CANADA**

There was a time when going grocery shopping would spike my anxiety, I was surrounded by wasteful packaging and single use plastics. Now, I can see that it is not my individual choices that are driving our global crisis, but the inaction of our governments and industry leaders. I am doing my part, because I believe in helping the environment, and I appreciate that a lot of my friends and family have begun shifting their lifestyles, but it took me nearly 5 years to convince them. If the industries and governments did even a little of what me and my close ones are trying to do there could be a noticeable change. My climate anxiety makes my actions towards reducing my waste and living sustainably feel small and insignificant in our climate crisis.

JOSEPHINE T.
CANADA
—»

Hace 5 años me mudé de la ciudad a la montaña, con el fin de tener una vejez más interesante, conectada con el medio ambiente natural. Ha sido una experiencia muy intensa observar las maravillas de la vida y a la vez los estragos de la sequía, la contaminación y los incendios. La ansiedad por la preservación de la vida ha ido en aumento de manera muy dolorosa. Vivo pensando en las lluvias, hablando del tema, se ha vuelto parte fundamental de mi trabajo. Tratando de hacer comprender a las personas que la agroindustria, la minería, la deforestación son tremendamente irresponsables, hay un beneficio económico, pero el desastre ambiental es a un precio muy alto, irreparable, algo que el dinero no puede compensar. Se siente una angustia permanente, un dolor que atraviesa el diario vivir, depresión, inquietud constante.

ISABELA.
CHILE
—»

Hola, mi nombre es Luz Elena Arias, vivo en la ciudad de Medellín-Colombia y soy docente de cátedra en una prestigiosa institución universitaria de mi ciudad. La materia que imparto es Gestión Ambiental y como maestra de esta rama del conocimiento quiero manifestarles mi preocupación sobre el futuro del mundo y más específicamente de los seres vivos, entre ellos la especie humana. Cada día me siento más frustrada al ver el camino que llevamos con este sistema de desarrollo que va en total contravía del medio ambiente. Lo que empeora la situación es el egoísmo de los hombres con esa ansiedad de dinero y de poder. Y allí es cuando pienso como decía el famoso personaje de la serie Chespírito: el chapulín colorado: "¿quién podrá defendernos?". Muchas gracias por darnos este espacio de desahogo.

LUZ ELENA A.R.
COLOMBIA
—»

¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí, me da miedo que este mundo no aguante mucho más y que no queramos ver cómo nuestras acciones van deteriorando la calidad de vida que tendremos en el futuro. ¿Cómo vives con ella? Creo que muchas veces intento ignorar lo que siento, evadir en vez de intentar hacer un cambio. ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Me da miedo, a veces creo que el mundo no va a aguantar lo suficiente y que los que ahora son niños ya no podrán sentir el placer de tener una familia propia porque cada vez el agua, la comida y una tierra sana se van a convertir en lujos que la mayoría no podrán pagar.

LAURA
GUATEMALA
—»

De entrada, estoy dentro del grupo que no busca tener hijos, aunque quisiera, porque no sé qué planeta tendrán, y no quiero que sufran eso. Luego, al ver cómo lentamente van disminuyendo la cantidad de abejas, ciertas especies, la manera como el clima es más extremo, me doy cuenta y vuelvo a la realidad, trato de no estresarme de más y actuar, pero muchas veces siento que es demasiado peso para ti solo. Trato de vivir sosteniblemente, de motivar a que la gente no contamine, les enseño cómo hacerlo, estoy estudiando cómo hacer las cosas, pero muchas veces veo personas odiosas que tiran basura, que contaminan el agua, que talan los árboles y me pongo a llorar, en silencio, para no armar alboroto. Lo intento, a veces me canso y me relajo haciendo ejercicio o yoga, pero luego vuelvo a la realidad... actualmente vivo amargado y deprimido de forma constante, pero seguiré intentándolo.

LEONARDO A.
MÉXICO
—»



Por las noticias que tengo, por los datos científicos y por las reacciones de la naturaleza, siento ansiedad, preocupación e ira también por lo que está sucediendo. Intento hacer algo de forma personal, pero también grupal con un pequeño grupo de personas. A veces me gana decir que aquí no hay solución. Que estamos perdidos. Pero inmediatamente aparece mi otro yo que me dice tienes que hacer algo, trabaja con otros, haz una manifestación pública. Esta ansiedad también me impulsa a no quedarme quieto.

RONEL ANGEL C.P.
PERÚ
—»

Por mais que eu mude hábitos, ainda assim me sinto impotente. O incentivo ao consumo desenfreado é assustador. Não adianta adquirir um apartamento de milhões se, com um simples tremor, ele pode vir abaixo. Precisamos respeitar a Terra, perceber sua magnitude, sua beleza, sua presença, sua sabedoria. Esse chão é sagrado, nossa água é sagrada, os animais são sagrados. Tem dias que somente chorando consigo aliviar um pouco essa dor de ver tanta crueldade, em nome da ganância.

SUSI B.G.
BRASIL
—»

Fico tentando imaginar o quão próximo está o fim da raça humana. Muito egoísmo. Este egoísmo está nos levando para uma grave involução humana, sem precedentes.

PEDRO Z.
BRASIL
—»

Mi ansiedad climática tiene mucho de desencanto y frustración, por lo que ha hecho la "civilización" contra la naturaleza. Pero sobre todo, rabia por la codicia y cinismo de los poderosos del mundo, que son los mayores responsables de la agudización y rapidez del cambio climático. Mi autoterapia ansiolítica se apoya en la conciencia de que muchos individuos y organizaciones locales, regionales, nacionales e internacionales, están haciendo notables esfuerzos para enfrentar razonablemente el fenómeno. Avaaz es -dentro de lo que conozco- mi mayor esperanza para que el mundo esté mejor.

BERNARDO E.
COLOMBIA
—»

Por los años 1990, el río el Pacche era tan cristalino, lleno de peces multicolores, éramos muy jóvenes, íbamos a bañarnos. Hoy es un río tan contaminado por las plantas procesadoras de oro, plata, cobre y más minerales. Yo y más de 50 mil habitantes de Zaruma y Portovelo en la provincia de El Oro, república del Ecuador, vivimos con la ansiedad, tristeza y sobre todo preocupados por las consecuencias en nuestra salud, que esta contaminación provoca en nuestros organismos.

ANGEL J.O.
ECUADOR
—»

Me di cuenta de la realidad del desastre climático cuando visité después de un tiempo largo las playas que están al Este en mi país, Uruguay, y comprobé cómo se habían angostado. El mar se las está comiendo. Eran anchísimas y ahora hay que proteger las casas poniendo barreras de piedras enormes. Evidentemente el calentamiento global está haciendo crecer al mar. Eso me produjo un choque y me alertó. Pero de parte de los gobiernos no podemos esperar mucho, porque siempre están peleándose unos con los otros sin atender las señales.

ANA MARIA V.
ARGENTINA
—»





**MI HIJO DE 8 AÑOS VE UN FUTURO DEVASTADOR,
ALGUNAS VECES ME HA MENCIONADO QUE NO VALE LA PENA ESTUDIAR Y PREPARARSE,
PUES DENTRO DE 30 AÑOS EL PLANETA
YA NO EXISTIRÁ.**

**ES MUY TRISTE Y ANGUSTIANTE VER QUE NUESTROS NIÑOS
CRECEN SIN ESPERANZA.**

**Y EFECTIVAMENTE NO VEMOS QUE LAS AUTORIDADES TOMEN ACCIONES
PARA DARLE UN GIRO A ESTA CRISIS.**

**MONICA Q.W.
VENEZUELA**



Tengo 65 años y una nieta de 4

y veo con temor y preocupación, como hemos depredado el mundo y todo el ecosistema, sólo por la desidia de unos pocos que se han lucrado deforestando bosques, contaminando ríos, lagos, lagunas y mares, para enriquecerse a costa del entorno. Entiendo a los jóvenes cuando dicen que para qué traerán hijos a este mundo que se desmorona. Igual, profeso una fe y tengo esperanza en la humanidad: que recapacite y exija a los gobiernos para que se tomen las medidas y se respeten los acuerdos para frenar esta tendencia destructiva.

PABLO R.

CHILE



Vivo en un valle de la Patagonia, llamado Coyhaique en Chile, rodeado por humo de leña constantemente. Ya no siento la diferencia del olor en el aire, está en todas partes, en mi ropa, en mi pelo, dentro y fuera de la casa, con niveles de polución (PM2,5) por sobre la norma durante días, alarmantemente mayor en invierno, pero así casi todo el año. ¿Cómo cambiar el medio de calefacción en un ambiente de temperaturas tan bajas, sin que el gasto económico me deje en la calle? Nosotros ya usábamos mascarillas antes del Covid por esta contaminación, tenemos mayor incidencia de síndromes respiratorios cada año.

IS REAL O.

CHILE





I am 24 years old.

I like to think there is still hope for the future, but the more I learn about the world and how messed up everything is, the more depressing it gets. Money and power are just too much of a priority! Most people can't think in the long term, they only see what is now but cannot think ahead and see the path we're going on right now. It's maddening and saddening. I just wish there was something more I could do.

ELENA A.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I was 11 years old when my older brother told me his teacher talked about the polar ice caps melting, and what that would mean. After that, I had my first 'end of the world' nightmare, that a huge wave rushed down our street and we were all drowned in our beds. After that first nightmare, I had several more. Governments are taking too long to respond to climate change. I no longer worry for myself but for my children and grandchildren who are inheriting this world. I try not to have any ongoing anxiety, but I feel we've gone beyond a point of no return, and there is destruction ahead...


VALERIE S.

CANADA

Mi ansiedad climática es real. El planeta en conjunto, y en especial los gobiernos, están fracasando en esta obligación de asegurar el futuro de la población mundial. Tengo dos hijos y lo que me causa más ansiedad es pensar en lo que les puede esperar a ellos y sus hijos si no cambiamos nuestra forma de pensar y de actuar. Me aferro a una fe esperanzadora donde encontraremos la manera de solucionarlo, sin embargo la avaricia y la corrupción desmedida hace tambalear esa esperanza. Siento cómo se desvanecen oportunidades y el tiempo se agota.


JULIO F.
COLOMBIA





My great-grandmother and my grandmother lived to be 90. When I am 90, it'll be 2058. All reports say by 2050 it'll be really bad. But it is already really bad now. My daughter will be 48. She is anxious about the future. I joke that I will be there for her, as soylent green. Except she doesn't know that I'm not joking. I am terrified for her future. Capitalism has no concern for the future. My head explodes daily with the mind-boggling mess.

LINDA C.
CANADA



Hola, soy menor de edad, sin embargo sé lo grave del asunto con detalles, y estoy muy preocupada por el futuro, me da miedo pensar en cómo vamos a terminar muriendo todos por nuestra propia culpa. A veces me ha costado concentrarme en mi día a día pensando en el calentamiento global, sí me da ansiedad saber que estamos haciendo tanto daño, realmente me asusta pensar en que hay gente que ni siquiera le importa, o que siquiera tratan de hacer algo. Cuando los humanos descubrieron el océano pensaron que como era tan inmenso y grande nunca podríamos hacerle daño, y véannos ahora, nos propusimos hacer algo pero, ¿ustedes ven algún cambio?

JULIANA S.
COLOMBIA

"Siento ansiedad climática, sobre todo porque esto es un problema que si todos los gobiernos se ponen de acuerdo se soluciona en pocos años. El problema grande no es tanto el clima sino TODOS LOS POLÍTICOS QUE GOBIERNAN EL MUNDO ninguno sirve porque están manejados por los grandes grupos económicos... Hasta que los grupos económicos no dejen de tener injerencia en la política nada cambiará. Hay que cambiar todas las leyes de todos los países y poner grandes trabas para que políticos y grandes capitales no interactúen. SI NO PODEMOS HACER ESTA SEPARACIÓN DE GOBERNANTES Y GRANDES CAPITALES EL MUNDO TERMINA... VA AL FRACASO.

Considero que esta forma de gobierno mundial que tenemos ahora ya no sirve para las necesidades del presente. Hay que pensar entre todos los que no somos gobierno y no somos políticos una nueva forma de manejar a los países. No nos olvidemos que los políticos son empleados de la gente, no son los dueños de los países. Esto que pasa ahora es porque nos fuimos olvidando que la gente pone a los políticos para que administren nada más.

¡¡¡HAY QUE APURARSE NO QUEDA MUCHO TIEMPO!!!

ADRIANA R.
URUGUAY

Anoche mi hijo de 7 años se puso a llorar nuevamente porque ve o lee información acerca de cómo hay gente que corta árboles en el Amazonas, tiene rabia, miedo y siente pena. Le dije que justamente una forma de actuar es manifestándose y que mañana habrá una marcha por la Tierra y el Agua en nuestro territorio. Dijo que quería y sentía que debía ir pero también le daba pena porque eso haría que no podría participar de su nueva clase de dibujo. Ni un niño, ni nadie, debería tener que elegir entre ir a manifestarse para intentar salvar el planeta o disfrutar de las cosas que lo hacen feliz. Deberíamos ser capaces de vivir felices en nuestro planeta que cuidamos. No es tarea fácil hoy en día educar a un niño diciéndole que la vida es bella y que la Tierra es un bello lugar donde vivir ya que eso ya no es verdad en muchos sentidos por causa del mal y nefasto comportamiento de quienes les importan más sus ganancias que la propia vida.

MISTYSA-TATIANA G.
CHILE
—»

As a new grandmother, I worry about what the future will look like for my children and grandchildren. We can't continue to ignore the reality of climate change which is happening all around us. I take actions personally, but individuals can only have so much impact. World leaders need to act together to invest in clean energy, phase out fossil fuels, stop bottling water, making endless useless products packaged in plastic we don't need. Wake up!! Where are the courageous leaders today? For the love of our children and our precious Earth, please work together. This is the biggest problem facing the world right now!

JEANNINE E.
CANADA
—»

Desde muy joven sentía miedo por el futuro climático, por mis seres queridos, después por mis hijos y ahora por mis nietos. Siempre he hecho cosas en lo individual (acciones de cuidado del agua, aire y energías) y en lo social (educativo). Ahora me angustia la sobrevivencia de islas, costas y zonas de riesgo de incendio. LOS GOBIERNOS DEBEN SER MÁS ENFÁTICOS Y ACTUAR EN TODOS NIVELES, LAS ACCIONES INDIVIDUALES SON IMPORTANTES Y SIGNIFICATIVAS PERO NO SON SUFICIENTES. Tengo 65 años, desearía que me alcance la vida para ver CAMBIOS REALES.

BERENICE R.
MÉXICO
—»

Soy Pamela de 39 años, vivo en Costa Rica. Las noticias, los cambios tan evidentes de esta crisis climática me generan tristeza y enojo al mismo tiempo. Es una sensación de desesperanza y al ver mis hijos pequeños se intensifica aún más. ¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí en muchas ocasiones. Me falta aire y vivo con sensación de desesperanza absoluta. Trato de enfocarme en los pequeños cambios que observo en el entorno. ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Se siente como un vacío, nada es suficiente.

PAMELA G.
COSTA RICA
—»

I am feeling climate anxiety deeply as I witness the destruction of our ecosystems right before my eyes and global leaders are denying or paying lip service to the crisis and not really addressing it. I cope by forming deep relationships with friends and through prayer and contemplation and a deep connection to nature. The climate emergency feels like

a huge weight on my consciousness along with a deep-seated fear for my children and, as an educator, for all my students who may live in a world in which drought, war, violent weather, poverty, and social unrest will be the norm. Western militarism and empire also are key drivers of this crisis that are rarely mentioned or addressed.

GREGORY G.
CANADA
—»

Claro que siento, en grado considerable, la ansiedad climática. Vivo un poco tenso, con algo de rabia, por el trato irracional y codicioso de recursos naturales y las especies de nuestros ecosistemas. Basta ya de anteponer intereses económicos, políticos y de codicia, en nuestra relación con el planeta. Detengamos fenómenos como: la deforestación, la explotación suicida de recursos naturales, el tráfico de especies, la violencia contra comunidades ancestrales, etc.

LEÓN JAIME C.
COLOMBIA
—»



¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí, mucha ¿Cómo vives con ella? Soy psicóloga clínica trabajando en primeros auxilios psicológicos y he decidido iniciar terapia también para manejar la eco-ansiedad. ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Bastante difícil de aminorar considerando que la realidad constantemente nos confirma que todo va mal. También decidí esterilizarme para proteger a la infancia y no ser parte del problema.

CAROLINA
CHILE
—»

I want my daughter and her children to enjoy a beautiful planet and plenty of natural resources. Sometimes our efforts seem like "just not enough". Nevertheless, although we must apologize to our descendants and nature, this can be a powerful beginning of a more evolved collective awareness and towards the understanding that "we are one with nature". But if we don't save each other, there will be no opportunities for anybody.

MELISA S.
MÉXICO
—»

Acredito que todas as pessoas que pensam no futuro se sentem ansiosas com a falta de sensibilidade dos governantes com a destruição do planeta. Estamos vendo todos os dias, das mais variadas formas, a destruição da natureza.

ROSANE V.
BRASIL
—»

I am so afraid for my grandchildren. I am afraid that they will never feel the joy of wandering through a lush green forest, hearing songbirds in the morning, catching tadpoles in the ponds, or feeling a gentle spring, warm summer, soft fall, and frosty winter. The world has become a climate of extremes. However will they cope?

SALOME W.
CANADA
—»

Sinto uma tristeza profunda em ver como a humanidade caminha na contramão da preservação dos recursos naturais, da ecologia, da sustentabilidade ambiental. Como causamos impactos negativos por apenas existirmos e termos o dinheiro como nosso fim maior. Vejo já as consequências das ações humanas no planeta desequilibrando tudo, ameaçando até a própria espécie.

MARIA S.
BRASIL
—»

Mi ansiedad está relacionada con el hecho de que el futuro para mis hijos es cada vez más turbio... Más incierto... Como madre, como activista ambiental, temo mucho por las generaciones actuales que tendrán que enfrentar condiciones cada vez más duras para su supervivencia y me frustra la falta de compromiso y voluntad política.

ADRIANA MILENA Q.A.
COLOMBIA
—»

¿Sientes ansiedad climática? ¿Cómo vives con ella? ¿Cómo se siente tu ansiedad? Es una constante preocupación y desesperanza frente al futuro, al ver el desalentador panorama que puedes percibir y más ahora que en mi país gobierna un demagogo incapaz de darle la suficiente importancia a este tema. Su incompetencia será la causante de que la vaquita marina termine por extinguirse. Tiene proyectos de alta envergadura sumamente depredadores y piensa llevarlos a cabo cueste lo que cueste. Aún cree que el petróleo es lo de hoy... No sé qué mundo vamos a dejar a los que vienen, pero hay días en los que el pensarlo me entristece muchísimo.

ADRIANA G.M.
MÉXICO
—»





**SIENTO MUCHA PREOCUPACIÓN
POR MI PAÍS COLOMBIA,
CON CADA VEZ MÁS DEFORESTACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA GANADERÍA.
MUCHOS RESIDUOS SÓLIDOS EN LAS FUENTES HÍDRICAS.
SOY AMBIENTALISTA Y ACTIVISTA, HAGO LO QUE PUEDO.
ME SIENTO DESILUSIONADA,
VEO QUE POCA GENTE SE MUEVE.**

**MARÍA Á.
COLOMBIA**



I'm a 14- year-old girl who lives in Brazil and I've always been worried about climate change and other issues related to our environment. I feel so scared to think that our planet is literally ending slowly. I'm scared of the future, I'm scared to think what comes next? What forest will be on fire in a few months? I just can't accept that what I most fear is happening, I feel very anxious about it.

ANA C.
BRASIL

Sou mãe de uma criança de 7 anos e ela tem sentido muito. Ela tem um verdadeiro amor pela natureza, vivemos em uma área do bioma cerrado que vem sendo devastada. Ela tem pesadelos quando dorme, tem muito medo das consequências das mudanças climáticas, do que isso pode gerar em sua vida. Ela não pode ouvir nada na televisão sobre mudanças climáticas. Ela adora a Greta, mas não consegue ouvi-la porque as menções às prováveis catástrofes a assustam muito.

SILVIA G.
BRASIL





My province was on fire this year. Many people lost their homes and were displaced. I lived in fear, with my emergency gear packed, ready to evacuate. The smoke was unbearable. I spent all this time looking into other places to move to that would be impacted less by climate change. I came to the conclusion that there are no other places that would not be affected. Hurricanes are increasing, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, rising sea levels etc. I fear for all children and animals.

JANET W.
CANADA

It's unfair for youth to be carrying this weight and to be robbed of hope. I'm questioning my family plans — I feel I have to choose between our planet and living the life I want. I educate myself, make lifestyle changes, mobilize when I can. But it never feels like enough without government action. The movement is headed in the right direction but will the timing work out? But I get strength from our unity, together we can topple the systems of inequity that don't serve our planet!

TALIA N.
CANADA

Tengo ansiedad climática. Veo que lo estamos destruyendo todo. Siento un gran temor y tristeza enorme de que mi hija ya no podrá disfrutar de la naturaleza ya que el gobierno no hace nada para detener la tala indiscriminada de árboles, ni para frenar a las empresas contaminantes. Soy de Paraguay. Acá cada vez se siente más el calor y la contaminación ambiental. Nosotros los enfermos asmáticos y alérgicos nos llevamos la peor parte. La corrupción gigante que hay en el gobierno es desesperante. No les importa nada, son tan egoístas que no están dejando nada para las nuevas generaciones.

CARINA
PARAGUAY



Hay momentos en que siento que no tiene caso poner mi granito de arena, si los grandes emporios y los gobiernos no hacen nada. Me siento triste y sin esperanza.

PATRICIA O.
MÉXICO



Vivo con preocupación y frustración de ver la falta de educación y reciprocidad para nuestro país y nuestro planeta. La gente no logra visualizar la magnitud de las catástrofes que se vienen en el futuro cercano. Debemos mover a los seres humanos para que iniciemos el cambio hacia una vida ecológica y exigir a los gobiernos darnos el derecho de opinar e impulsar las leyes que en realidad harán la diferencia para dar la salud que el planeta necesita. Dejen de mirar solamente en aras del dinero y empiecen a mirar que después no habrá planeta para nadie. Ni para ricos ni para pobres. Ni para plantas ni para animales indefensos por culpa del ser humano.

LUIS MIGUEL P.
MÉXICO



Sí, siento ansiedad climática y no sabía ponerle nombre.

Cada vez que me entero de un incendio forestal, de la tala indiscriminada de árboles, de inundaciones sin control o de tornados destructores, me asalta una angustia que me impide razonar. Duermo menos y vivo cada día pensando en qué será de aquellos animales, de aquella vegetación, de aquellos niños que pasaron por un fenómeno determinado. No hacer consciencia de que somos capaces de aportar nuestro esfuerzo para un cambio en esta situación climática, y además, mostrarnos indiferentes ante la actitud de nuestros gobiernos y los gobiernos del resto del mundo, no harán que el mal desaparezca. Nuestro planeta está en peligro; no reconocerlo es criminal.

**TERESA U.
URUGUAY**

I feel grief and dread at what climate change is doing to vulnerable people all over the world.

We are all vulnerable but I am especially aware of island nations and people in sub-Saharan Africa as well as Indigenous Peoples here in Canada. I am afraid the richer parts of the world, responsible for most of the greenhouse gasses, will selfishly try to look out only for their own wealthier citizens. I am afraid this will become an ugly, ugly time. My own deepest sorrow is that we are destroying a beautiful, miraculous natural world for a burger in a styrofoam box. I have made a commitment to do what I can. I am camped out right now in a recovering clearcut, trying to stop a helicopter from spraying it with glyphosate-based herbicide to kill all the hardwoods in order to create an industrial tree farm. I have been arrested for blocking logging roads to protect endangered moose habitat. I deal with my anxiety by acknowledging it, feeling it, accepting that it is based in reality, then taking action. If all who care take some kind of action, we can turn the ship. If not, well, it is going to get uglier.

**NINA N.
CANADA**



Sí siento ansiedad y preocupación por nuestro planeta porque siento que los gobiernos apoyan a empresas privadas y temen más a una crisis económica que a una crisis climática. Vivir con esta ansiedad no es bueno porque es tener cambios de ánimo todo el tiempo y vivir con miedo a salir de tu casa ya sea por la misma Pandemia o por temor a vivir un desastre natural como lo han vivido los de Grecia. Además causa frustración que sí haya solución pero los medios, los políticos y sobre todo las empresas prefieren distribuir el mensaje de "no hay solución", a decir trabajemos juntos para evitar que las nuevas generaciones vivan en un futuro caótico.

GUSTAVO M.O.
MÉXICO
—»

A atual situação do planeta Terra tem gerado sentimentos de medo e isso precisa ser discutido. A ansiedade climática me faz sentir impotência, já que, constantemente, o sentimento de estar sozinha em uma luta pelo bem coletivo me consome. As minhas memórias de infância me mostram um céu azul e o prazer em respirar ar puro, mas hoje, aos 20 anos, me desespero em ver as queimadas tomando conta do meu país e o ar tornando-se cada dia mais pesado, além do nevoeiro e da luz do Sol laranja, que contribuem para toda essa carga da ansiedade climática. A causa do meio ambiente é colocada de lado frente a outros aspectos considerados mais importantes, mas as pessoas esquecem que, sem condições para sobreviver no planeta, não há dinheiro e nem partido político capazes de tornar a vida possível novamente.

KAMILLA J.
BRASIL

I feel so much crushing dread about the state of the planet. People are told to do their part in various ways: purchase "green" products, eat less meat, travel by plane less, avoid fast fashion - the list goes on. While these are all great things that we can definitely do to help with climate change, I am disheartened to see that politicians are not doing enough to crack down on the major corporations that contribute to most of the greenhouse gas emissions that are accelerating climate change. While I am glad to see the younger generations stepping up, I am tired of empty promises from politicians and corporations. We can do so much more, and we must do more. Greed will destroy the planet, we must act NOW.

CAROLINE W.
CANADA
—»

Cuando era una adolescente, las clásicas imágenes de los osos polares que estaban perdiendo su hábitat por el deshielo era todo lo que conocíamos sobre el cambio climático. Pero hoy, a mis 30 años, la crisis climática es aquí y ahora. Cuando ando con mayor ansiedad, reviso a diario el registro de déficit hídrico de mi ciudad. Cuando escucho un helicóptero, lo único que se me viene a la mente son los inevitables incendios forestales que ocurrirán en el verano. Siento mucha ansiedad al pensar que debería estar haciendo algo más en vez de llevar una vida normal. Pero también siento frustración al ver que mis acciones no tendrán ninguna importancia mientras los gobiernos y las industrias no tomen medidas radicales, y desesperanza al ver que ya no hay vuelta atrás.

NATALIA A.
CHILE
—»

Sí la siento. Soy una persona grande y me preocupa el futuro del planeta y cómo afectará a nuestros hijos y nietos. Veo espantada cómo las catástrofes son cada vez más frecuentes y en más lugares. No puedo entender cómo gobiernos y empresarios y la población en general no toman conciencia que ellos y sus familias viven en el mismo planeta que NO ESTÁN CUIDANDO. Y SUS HIJOS Y NIETOS TAMBIÉN VIVEN ACÁ. Lo vivo con gran preocupación porque LA REALIDAD SIEMPRE SUPERA A LA FICCIÓN.

ADRIANA B.
ARGENTINA
—»

He estado trabajando con comunidades religiosas en Santiago de Chile concientizando sobre la crisis climática por más de 10 años. Siempre preguntan si hay esperanza. Me cuesta cada vez más responderles. El árbol en frente de mi ventana sufre por la sequía, lo veo deteriorando... El calor empeora la contaminación atmosférica en la ciudad, lo que da dolor de cabeza. Mi hija vino el otro día llorando por los osos polares. ¿Van a morir todos, mamá? ¿Qué le digo? Es un profundo dolor todos los días y una lucha constante de tratar de disfrutar el presente y seguir reclamando.

ARIANNE V.A.
CHILE
—»



¿Sientes ansiedad climática? Sí. Me preocupa la explotación minera indiscriminada que contamina las fuentes de agua y que es causa de muchos de los problemas sociales que surgen por los desplazamientos humanos que generan los explotadores mineros para dar espacio a la minería ya sea legal o ilegal; de estos desplazamientos también son víctimas las especies animales y vegetales. Vivo con una profunda preocupación y sensación de impotencia.

MYRIAM Q.V.
COLOMBIA
—»

Tenho medo das ondas de calor, do aumento da desertificação, das secas prolongadas, que encarecem a energia e afetam a produção de alimentos, tornando-os mais caros ou mesmo indisponíveis. Tenho medo porque, no fim, isso sempre afeta os mais pobres.

ANDRÉ L.
BRASIL

Climate anxiety is with me every day. It is affecting my decision on where to live that might be safe in the future, even though nowhere will really be safe once ecosystems are destroyed. I cannot comprehend leaders who expect that the pursuit of money will somehow save them and allow their grandchildren to thrive.

DIANE S.
CANADA
—»

Fico impressionada com a atitude dos governantes, políticos, lideranças, que não se interessam e não se mobilizam na tentativa de proteger o meio ambiente, patrimônio a ser deixado para as futuras gerações. Vital, indispensável para a sobrevivência da humanidade.

CREUSA OLIVEIRA S.O.
BRASIL
—»

I am terrified of the future for my two kids and two granddaughters. It deeply saddens and worries me, what their experience will be and how they will have to live. It's an added sense of distress on top of the other huge difficulties inherent in modern society. It feels like we have to harden ourselves up and brace for the worst, which is not a healthy way to live.

THERESA M.
CANADA
—»

Frecuentemente me siento frustrada porque no solo veo a los gobiernos hacer nada, o decir que sí existe el problema pero no hacen nada para cambiar las cosas. Incluso veo a la gente actuando como si no importara, y a pesar de que yo trato de hacer mi parte, no entiendo cómo podemos resolver la crisis climática a la brevedad posible.

PERLA C.
MÉXICO
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FROM CLIMATE ANXIETY TO
**CLIMATE
ACTION**

Messages from Avaaz Members in the Americas

