

FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION (QUAKERS)

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FWCC Oral Statement to be delivered at the 48th session of the Human Rights Council

Environmental justice, the climate crisis and people of African descent

Friends World Committee for Consultation (**Quakers**), in collaboration with Quaker organizations worldwide, thank the Working Group of Experts for this **impressive** Report. The Report demands an honesty in us **all**, in our communities and countries. An honesty in the relationship between racism, colonialism, and climate justice. No one is exempt, including Quakers.

Systemic racism exists in our political, social, and economic systems – which - as the Report states, are ‘heavily reliant on **extraction, exploitation and accumulation through dispossession**’. These systems perpetuate environmental **IN**justice and drive human activities destroying nature and destabilizing the climate. The window to avoid catastrophic climate change is closing due to **insufficient and often unjust** climate action.

The COVID-19 experience highlights unsustainable and unjust systems that perpetrate human rights violations against communities facing vulnerable situations, including people of African descent. As we recover, we can place justice, equality, sustainability, and human rights at the core of our governance and economic systems. Environmental **justice**, grounded in **human rights-based approaches**, can result in more **coherent, legitimate and sustainable** climate policy.¹ Overcoming **systemic** racism and inequality is **fundamental** to healing the climate crisis.

We ask, “How can the High Commissioner’s **agenda for transformative change** strengthen future efforts as we **all** do the work needed for environmental justice that helps achieve racial justice?”

¹ Knox, J., (2016). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In: Report to the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council. p. 13. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2729611