

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

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Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change; Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences and Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 50/17, 53/3, 57/31, 55/5, 55/2, 49/13, 52/9, 52/4, 50/7 and 51/19.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the **alleged reiterated and widespread suppression of local activists, human rights defenders, and journalists during the peaceful assemblies held from 23 April to 28 April 2023, that were protesting against the construction of a refinery and petrochemicals facility in the village of Barsu, in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, due to the human rights, environmental and climate impacts of the refinery. In this regard, we also received information about the alleged arrest of environmentalists Mr. Mangesh Chavan and Mr. Satyajit Chavan on 23 April 2023. Among the companies involved in the project of the refinery is Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), which is based in the United Arab Emirates.**

According to the information received:

The project of building a refinery and petrochemicals plant in the village of Barsu, in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, is being planned by a joint venture company named Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (RRPCL), formed by three Indian national oil firms: the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL). In addition, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Saudi Arabian Oil Company Saudi Aramco and the UAE's

state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company ADNOC, that also expressed their interest in the project.

Due to the location, as well as the scale of the project, serious concerns have been raised by the local farmers and villagers regarding the adverse effects that the RRPCL project might pose to the surrounding and other likely to be impacted ecosystems and, therefore, to the right to a healthy environment and social, economic and cultural rights of the local population that depends on farming and fishing to support their traditional livelihoods. Concerns have also been raised regarding the likelihood of pollutant leakage from the plant into the local groundwater supply, which is the villagers' primary source of freshwater for drinking and irrigation.

The placement of the refinery, the Western Ghats region, is recognized as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, due to the area hosting endemic species and unique habitats. Furthermore, the area constitutes a crucial ecosystem as it is playing a pivotal role in regulating the regional climate through its influence on the Indian monsoon system. Based on information received, the refinery in the village of Barsu would demand up to 15,000 acres.

In addition to the direct environmental impacts, the main source of employment in the region are mango and cashew orchards, which are sensitive to environmental disturbances, while the Konkan coastline in the area constitutes the main income for fisherfolk in the community. We have received information that local communities are concerned that potential oil spills, wastewater discharge, and toxic emissions will have adverse effects on farming and fishing in the area. This would furthermore affect the availability and quality of water. Many farmers expressed worry that if their land is taken for the project, they would lose their main source of income. Additionally, soil contamination and air pollution from industrial activities could reduce crop yields and degraded farmland, making it difficult for farmers to sustain their agricultural activities. The destruction of fertile land would further impact the region's food security and economic stability. This would furthermore affect the availability and quality of water, further impacting the right to food by limiting access to safe and sustainably produced food sources.

Furthermore, the coastline of the proposed placement of a related port at Sakri Nate, a Muslim-majority village, is falling under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 1A category as per the 2019 CRZ Notification, due to the presence of corals, dunes, and other coastal vegetation. According to the information received, the Pre-Feasibility Report of the project has not been prepared, and therefore details of the port infrastructure, and other parts of project are not available. This undermines likely affected communities' right to access to information, as well as the right of access to information of other interested holders of the human right to a healthy environment.

Given this information, the proposed establishment of RRPCL can potentially cause important environmental degradation in the area, affecting ecosystems and the rights of communities. Impacts might include groundwater contamination, habitat destruction, and disruption of traditional livelihoods and

living cultural practices linked with farming and fishing, along with other ecological and social harms. Soil contamination from refining operations is often a less visible but persistent issue. Leaks, accidents, or spills on or off-site during the shipping process might contaminate the soil with hazardous wastes, used catalysts, coke dust, tank bottoms, and sludges from the treatment operations which can degrade soil fertility, making it difficult for farmers to grow crops and leading to reduced agricultural yields, further impacting their livelihoods.

The complex is also expected to contribute dramatically to the ongoing climate crisis, due to the emissions that would result from its operations and chemical outputs. In fact, the International Energy Agency highlighted that oil and gas' production, transport and processing worldwide resulted in 5.1 billion tonnes (Gt) CO₂-eq in 2022, which corresponded to around 15% of total energy-related emissions at the global level for the same year. According to the information received, the RRPCL would be the world's largest integrated refinery and petrochemical facility, with an output capacity of 60 million metric tonnes of crude oil per year. In addition to the climate and environmental impacts of the output of the refinery, both at the national and international level, the production process and the construction of the refinery will also contribute to climate change and potentially worsen air, water and soil quality in the area, with related impacts on the human rights to health and to a healthy environment in particular.

Apart from health-related issues caused by the project, villagers are concerned that the polluting gases can harm mango cultivation in the region, which witnesses an annual turnover of Rs 2,200 crore (2,541,705.40 US Dollars) for the district. With a 167-km coastline, Ratnagiri district has 6,600 sq m of continental shelf area and a potential fishing region up to 40 fathoms, translating to 2,910 sq km. Chemicals and gases like nitrates and sulphates in turn would contaminate villages nearby. Pollution caused by the waste released into the sea will affect the fish, adversely impacting the traditional fisheries business.

The project's planned location and scale allegedly also threaten the cultural heritage site of Konkan, which is considered for inclusion in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This region holds a number of cultural artifacts known as geoglyphs, which evidence the region's long cultural legacy. Barsu village, part of the Konkan site, contains the largest cluster of geoglyphs in the region. Thus, the construction of the plant, together with the chemical reactions related to it, could have an irreparable and serious damage on the geoglyphs in the area.

Reprisals against those opposing the project

Due to the environmental and climate impacts described above, the proposed RRCPL project would potentially affect all of the key substantive elements of the right to healthy environment: clean air; a safe climate; healthy and sustainably produced food; access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation; non-toxic environments in which to live, work and play; and healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. The proposed RRCPL project will furthermore affect other rights such as the right to health, water, food and cultural rights. In

response to the detrimental effects on ecosystems, traditional livelihoods and natural, built and living heritage in the region, and to the lack of information, many members of the local community, especially women, have organized, over the years, peaceful gatherings and protests to challenge the implementation of the project.

Notwithstanding the peaceful nature of the protests, various measures were taken to impede the demonstrations. In April 2023, around 2,000 police officers were mobilized in Ratnagiri in relation to planned protests. Then, public gatherings were prohibited by the Maharashtra government in the region for over a month. Lastly, in Rajapur Taluka, as well as in a 1 km radius of Barsu and five adjacent villages, a strict curfew was imposed from 24 April to 31 May 2023, based on section 144 of the Criminal Code.

On 23 April 2023, the environmental human rights defenders Mr. Mangesh Chavan and Mr. Satyajit Chavan were arrested, reportedly as a consequence of their activism against the establishment of the plant. The arrests were reportedly a result of prior police monitoring. Mr. Mangesh Chavan and Mr. Satyajit Chavan were not released until 26 April 2023, after having been charged with several criminal offenses. Eight other residents from villages surrounding the plant site were also pre-emptively arrested.

Reportedly, local community members continued to organize peaceful assemblies after these arrests. On 24 April 2023, many villagers, especially women, assembled at the project's planned site to protest a soil inspection. The next day, around 50 to 60 women peacefully obstructed the roads leading to the site to hinder the entry of the vehicles related to the tests. Police officers, armed with batons, disrupted the protests. Numerous protesters were hit, stripped of their possessions, and arrested.

On 26 April 2023, a contingent of around 2,000 police officers was deployed to Barsu and the surrounding villages. They established a checkpoint for inspections in Rajapur. On 27 April 2023, more than 700 protesters were detained, many being booked under rioting, unlawful assembly and disobedience of public order. The police also allegedly blocked community members from the surrounding villages from reaching the protests. In addition to that, journalists from multiple media platforms interested in reporting on the protests, including the Marathi TV news channels, were prevented from reaching the site by the police. On 28 April 2023, the police reportedly dispersed the protests using tear gas.

According to the information received, in recent months, activists have continued to face threats and are reportedly blackmailed, in order to pressure them into supporting the project of the RRPCL.

Without prejudging the accuracy of these allegations, we would like to express our deep concern about the highly repressive environment and the suppression of protests and peaceful assemblies related to the RRPCL project. In addition, we note that these rights have been exercised in a context where the human right to access to information was not protected and therefore did not support the exercise of civil and

political rights in this context. These oppressive measures undermine the right to freedom of opinion and expression, of peaceful assembly and the right to take part in decision-making processes that have an impact on cultural life. We are deeply concerned about the potential negative impact this would have on the local community's rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and to legitimately express their discontent and concerns, as well as sharing their knowledge about the detrimental effects the project's completion might have on the environment, the climate, their cultural heritage, and their livelihoods. We are also concerned that this situation undermines the right to information of the general public in the context of climate change and their right to a healthy environment. We are furthermore concerned by the criminal prosecution, arbitrary detention and violent intimidation of journalists, environmental activists, members of civil society and human rights defenders, which have particularly affected women.

Lastly, we are also deeply concerned about the human rights, environmental and climate impacts of the RRPCL project, contributing to the current planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and toxic pollution. In particular, we are preoccupied by the potential serious human rights negative impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the refinery, including due to potential risks of air, water, soil contamination and negative consequences on ecosystems. In order to effectively prevent irreparable damages of the construction and production of the refinery, access to information along with meaningful participation must be ensured, in line with international human rights obligations. In addition, a participatory and comprehensive human rights and environmental impact assessment is needed, as well as the conduct of human rights due diligence by the companies involved in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Opportunities to participate in such evaluations should furthermore be made public to ensure timely access to accurate and meaningful information is fulfilled. Access to justice and effective remedies must be provided if there are concerns about the quality and inclusivity of these evaluations.

In connection with the above information and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter, which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek a clarification on all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate what steps your Excellency's Government has taken or is considering to take, including policies, legislation, and regulations, to uphold its obligations to protect against human rights abuses by Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), ensuring that business enterprises domiciled in its territory and/or jurisdiction conduct human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address their impacts on human rights and the natural environment throughout their operations (including abroad), as set forth by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

3. Please describe the guidance, if any, that your Excellency's Government has provided to ADNOC on how to respect human rights throughout its operations in line with the UN Guiding Principles. This guidance may include measures, inter alia, conducting human rights due diligence, consulting meaningfully potentially affected stakeholders, and remediating any negative impacts.
4. Please kindly provide information on how your Excellency's Government ensures that business enterprises under its jurisdiction do not impact negatively the work of human rights defenders, specifically in light of the recommendations provided to States in the report of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises on the adverse impact of business activities on human rights defenders (A/HRC/47/39/Add.2) recalling for States and business the normative and practical implications of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in relation to protecting and respecting the vital work of human rights defenders.
5. Please indicate what measures your Excellency's Government has taken to ensure that business enterprises domiciled in its territory and/or jurisdiction, in particular ADNOC, are not contributing to violations of international human rights law in their operations.
6. Please provide information regarding the measures that your Excellency's Government is taking or considering to ensure that those affected by the overseas activities ADNOC companies involved in the construction of a refinery and petrochemicals plant in the village of Barsu have access to effective remedies, as per the UN Guiding Principles.
7. Please indicate what measures your Excellency's Government has taken, or is considering taking, to ensure that human rights defenders and journalists whose human rights have been affected by the operations of business enterprises based in the United Arab Emirates have access to comprehensive and effective remedies.

We would appreciate receiving a response within 60 days. Past this delay, this communication and any response received will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#). They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all leverage will be exercised so that the business enterprise domiciled in your country halts the alleged human rights abuses and prevents their re-occurrence. In the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, we urge that all leverage is exercised so that the necessary measures will be taken to ensure the accountability for the alleged violations.

Please note that a letter expressing similar concerns was sent to the Governments of India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as to the following business enterprises: Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (RRPCL), the

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Reem Alsalem

Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with the above-alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw your attention to the relevant international norms and standards that apply to the issues raised by the situation above.

We would like to draw attention to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (A/HRC/17/31). The guiding principles affirm the international legal obligations applicable to the State: "States must protect against human rights violations committed within their territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including business" (guiding principle 1). This requires States to "clearly state that all companies domiciled in their territory and/or jurisdiction are expected to respect human rights in all their activities" (guiding principle 2). "In compliance with their obligation to protect, States must: (b) Ensure that other laws and regulations governing the creation and activities of companies, such as commercial law, do not restrict but rather encourage respect for human rights by companies; (d) Encourage and if necessary require companies to explain how they take into account the impact of their activities on human rights (guiding principle 3). States should also take appropriate measures to ensure, through appropriate judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate channels, that when such abuses occur in their territory and/or jurisdiction, those affected have access to effective redress mechanisms" (principle 25). The guiding principles also emphasize that "States must ensure [...] that no obstacles are placed in the way of legitimate and peaceful activities of human rights defenders" (commentary on guiding principle 26).

Businesses also have a responsibility to respect human rights, which requires them to have appropriate policies and procedures in place; such as a human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address their human rights impact; and processes to redress all negative human rights consequences they have caused or contributed to causing (principles 11-24).

The duty to respect and ensure entails negative and positive obligations. First, the State must "adopt legislative, judicial, administrative, educative and other appropriate measures in order to fulfil their legal obligations" (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13 para. 7). Furthermore, there "may be circumstances in which a failure to ensure Covenant rights as required by article 2 would give rise to violations by States Parties of those rights, as a result of States Parties' permitting or failing to take appropriate measures or to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harm caused by such acts by private persons or entities (see *id.* para. 8). As generally affirmed by the Human Rights Committee in its interpretation of article 2 in general comment No. 6, the State must take appropriate measures to protect individuals against abuse by foreign corporations operating within their territory or jurisdiction. Likewise, it must take appropriate measures to ensure that activities taken by corporate entities based in their territory but having effects outside their territory or jurisdiction are consistent with human rights law (CCPR/C/GC/36 para. 26).

We would like to refer your Excellency's Government to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals,

Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We would also like to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 13/13, which urges States to put an end to and take concrete steps to prevent threats, harassment, violence and attacks by States and non-State actors against all those engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We would like to refer to articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantee the right of every individual to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, respectively. We remind that these obligations, as interpreted by the Human Rights Committee in its general comment No. 34, imply not only the direct respect by all State authorities for these freedoms, but also protection against acts by private persons or entities that obstruct their enjoyment.

We would also like to refer to articles 11 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, which guarantee the rights of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to take part in cultural life, respectively. In its general comment 21, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stressed the right of everyone to contribute to the development of the community to which a person belongs, and in the definition, elaboration and implementation of policies and decisions that have an impact on the exercise of a person's cultural rights. Accordingly, every person, without discrimination, has a right to contribute in shaping culture and the society they live in, and "to be involved in creating the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional expressions of the community" (E/C.12/GC/21, para. 15c).

We also recall to your Excellency the explicit recognition of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation by the UN General Assembly (resolution 64/292) and the Human Rights Council (resolution 15/9), which derives from the right to an adequate standard of living, protected under, inter alia, article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and article 11 of ICESCR. Furthermore, in its General Comment No. 15, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) clarified that the human right to water means that everyone is entitled to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. The human rights to water and sanitation require that water is continuously available, insufficient quantity for drinking, personal hygiene and domestic uses. In addition, the CESCR highlights that "the right to water is also inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of health (article 12.1) and the rights to adequate housing and adequate food (article 11.1) and that "water is required for a range of different purposes, besides personal and domestic uses, to realize many of the Covenant rights. For instance, water is necessary to produce food (right to adequate food) and ensure environmental hygiene (right to health)."

We also wish to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 48/13 of 8 October 2021 and General Assembly resolution 76/300 of 29 July 2022, which recognize the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, noting that guaranteeing a “safe climate” constitutes one of the substantive elements of this right.

Furthermore, we would also like to bring to the attention of your Excellency’s Government the Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment as detailed in the 2018 report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment (A/HRC/37/59). The Principles state that States should ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in order to respect, protect and fulfil human rights (principle 1); States should respect, protect and fulfil human rights in order to ensure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (principle 2); and States should ensure the effective enforcement of their environmental standards against public and private actors (principle 12). Principle 4 provides, specifically, that “States should provide a safe and enabling environment in which individuals, groups, and organs of society that work on human rights or environmental issues can operate free from threats, harassment, intimidation, and violence.” Accordingly, “the requirements for such an environment include that States: adopt and implement laws that protect human rights defenders in accordance with international human rights standards; publicly recognize the contributions of human rights defenders to society and ensure that their work is not criminalized or stigmatized; develop, in consultation with human rights defenders, effective programmes for protection and early warning; provide appropriate training for security and law enforcement officials; ensure the prompt and impartial investigation of threats and violations and the prosecution of alleged perpetrators; and provide for effective remedies for violations, including appropriate compensation (see also A/71/281, A/66/203 and A/HRC/25/55, paras. 54–133).”

With regard to the protection of the human rights of climate activists as environmental human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association called on States to: adopt all necessary measures to ensure that climate defenders meaningfully participate in all just-transition policy development and implementation at all levels of decision-making; conduct thorough, prompt, effective and impartial investigations into killings and violence against civil society actors; ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice; and refrain from issuing official and unofficial statements stigmatizing climate defenders. The Special Rapporteur on climate change and human rights has called on States to: protect climate activists as environmental human rights defenders; urgently develop, in coordination with civil society, positive narratives on the contributions of environmental human rights defenders to the protection of human rights in the context of climate change; gather and share information on threats of violence or attacks against environmental human rights defenders and available protection measures and challenges faced in accessing justice, including for children. She also underscored that intimidation or harassment of environmental human rights defenders by public administration bodies, business and other actors can have a deterrent effect on requesting information, which undermines the contribution of climate and environmental human rights defenders to the protection of everyone’s human right to a healthy environment, including a safe climate.

With regard to access to information, the Special Rapporteur on climate change and human rights highlighted in A/ 79/176 (para. 74 (a)) that “States should regularly

collect, disseminate and increasingly improve quality, trustworthy and evidence-based information on the causes and consequences of climate change, including emission levels and high-emitting activities from both State and non-State actors, as well as future climate change projections based on different greenhouse gas emission trajectories and transparent models, and detailed weather, climate and disaster patterns.”

Furthermore, principle 8 of the Framework Principles on human rights and the environment of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment (A/HRC/37/59, annex), reaffirms that, to avoid undertaking or authorizing actions with environmental impacts that interfere with the full enjoyment of human rights, States should require the prior assessment of the possible environmental impacts of proposed projects and policies, including their potential effects on the enjoyment of human rights. The assessment requires meaningful participation of the public, done in a manner that does not discriminate anyone. Principle 14 requires States to ensure that they take additional measures to protect the rights of those who are most vulnerable to, or at particular risk from, environmental harm, taking into account their needs, risks, and capacities.

In addition, we recall that the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its general comment No. 26(2023), emphasized that to protect children’s right to a healthy environment, which is implicit in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States must take immediate action to equitably phase out the use of coal, oil and gas; and States that have substantial fossil fuel industries should assess the social and economic impact on children of their related decisions. The Committee also indicated that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child entail extraterritorial obligations. This is particularly significant as several Special Rapporteurs have pointed out the tremendous negative impacts on human rights of fossil fuels throughout their life cycle, from exploration and extraction to combustion and contamination, noting that fossil fuels exploitation affects the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, education, an adequate standard of living, cultural rights, and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In this connection, it also bears to remind that the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights indicated that “the extraterritorial obligation to respect requires States Parties to refrain from directly or indirectly interfering with the enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Covenant by individuals located outside their territory”.

We further recall that under the Convention on Biological Diversity, States have obligations to introduce appropriate procedures requiring environmental impact assessment of its proposed projects that are likely to have significant adverse effects on biodiversity with a view to avoiding or minimizing such effects and allow for public participation in such procedures (art.14). CBD Parties committed to: include approaches to conserve, enhance and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services in upstream decisions on investments in the energy sector, through strategic environmental assessments and integrated spatial planning, including the evaluation of alternatives to such investments; apply best practices on environmental impact assessments; review and, as appropriate, update legal frameworks, policies and practices to promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the energy sector, including through safeguard, monitoring and oversight measures; and promote the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local

communities, academia, women, and youth, through consultations with Indigenous peoples and local communities with a view to obtaining free, prior and informed consent, consistent with international agreements (decision XIV/3, 2018).

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.