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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Merja Zarka, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 February 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Right to Food in Africa

In Africa, the right to food stands as a fundamental human entitlement, rooted in the intrinsic dignity of every person. It is a call to action for nations, communities, and individuals alike, demanding a collective commitment to ensure that no person goes hungry or faces nutritional insecurity. Yet, this right is under unprecedented threat due to a myriad of challenges, most notably climate change, which poses a significant risk to food security, environmental sustainability, and community resilience across the continent.

The adverse effects of climate change, including erratic rainfall patterns, droughts, floods, and the degradation of land and water resources, directly impact agricultural productivity and food availability. These climatic changes are not distant forecasts but current realities that jeopardize the livelihoods of millions, particularly those in rural areas dependent on subsistence farming. The vulnerability of Africa's food systems to climate variability not only threatens food security but also amplifies the challenges of malnutrition and poverty, undermining decades of developmental progress.

Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the right to food in Africa as not merely a policy issue but a moral imperative that calls for urgent and coordinated action. Creating food security on the continent requires innovative and sustainable agricultural practices that are resilient to climate change. This entails investing in climate-smart agriculture, improving water management, and adopting technologies that enhance crop resilience. Furthermore, it is crucial to strengthen local food systems, support smallholder farmers, and ensure equitable access to markets and resources.

Preserving the environment is equally essential in this endeavor. Sustainable land management, reforestation, and conservation practices must be integral components of our food security strategies. Protecting ecosystems and biodiversity not only supports agricultural productivity but also safeguards the natural resources that future generations will depend upon.

Moreover, empowering communities to adapt to climate change is fundamental. This means investing in education and capacity-building initiatives that enable communities to implement adaptive strategies and practices. Strengthening community resilience requires a participatory approach, ensuring that vulnerable groups, including women and indigenous populations, are included in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, the right to food in Africa is intrinsically linked to the necessity of creating food security, preserving the environment, and protecting communities from the impacts of climate change. This calls for a concerted effort from governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector. In this collective journey, our NGO, Merja Zarka, is at the forefront, working tirelessly on the ground with communities and local farmers. Through our dedicated efforts, we strive to turn the tide against the challenges posed by climate change, aiming to achieve these monumental goals. By fostering innovative agricultural practices, empowering local communities, and advocating for sustainable environmental stewardship, Merja Zarka is committed to ensuring that the right to food becomes a reality for all Africans. It is through actions like ours, coupled with global support and collaboration, that we can hope to address the complex challenges at the intersection of food security, environmental sustainability, and climate change, thereby making a significant impact on the lives of millions across the continent.
