



# Global Campus of Human Rights

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## Environmental Policy

### Preamble

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The Global Campus of Human Rights promotes, above all, the idea of **human dignity, freedom and equality** – an ideal that cannot be reached without also protecting the various environments people inhabit. Human rights thus embody a fair and equal society, which necessitates a responsible use of natural resources. Only when respecting ecosystems and responsibly using the planet's resources can we enable a **sustainable livelihood for all present and future generations**. We, however, live in a time where wars are fought over scarce resources, where people lose their livelihoods because of environmental degradation and disasters, where thousands are forced to leave their homes due to the devastating effects of climate change, and where despite all scientific proof this reality is still denied by many. For these reasons, we understand our common and individual responsibility to ensure a peaceful and just world as intrinsically linked to the protection of our environment. In addition to the right to a clean environment, climate justice includes the right to life, health, work, shelter, water and food, to name but a few, thus situating the climate crisis as a primary threat to human rights. The environmental policy set out below is a step in our continued efforts to address this existential challenge.

Given the strong focus of our global activities on the **promotion and protection of children's rights worldwide**, we are acutely aware of the impact the climate crisis has on the ability of children to live life to the fullest. Today, there are 1.9 billion children around the world, which constitutes roughly 27% of the entire population. As such, we recognise the specific vulnerability of children within the global populace – especially in areas disproportionately affected by the environmental crises due to geographical location and/or economic status. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly links the health of the environment to the health of children stressing our responsibility to ensure that children have access to nutritious food, safe drinking water and unpolluted air (Article 24). As a human rights organisation, we thus envisage this policy to guide our institutional activities towards decision-making processes committed to climate justice in service of children.

As a human rights network of over 100 universities across the world, we believe that **environmental education** should also be a major part of human rights education. By developing and implementing this environmental policy, we see an opportunity to lead by example by promoting environmental responsibility on the national, regional and international levels.

We recognise that **all world regions** are affected by the climate crisis, yet we are alarmed that countries and communities are impacted in a shockingly unequal way. Those who bear the largest responsibility for contributing to climate change are not those bearing the brunt of it, while vulnerable persons and communities, such as those living in poverty or conflict zones or lowlands exposed to rising sea levels, are disproportionately affected. The inherently global nature of our organisation places us in a specific position of responsibility, as we inevitably contribute to accelerating global warming by operating many of our activities through international travel. It also places us in a unique position to

recognise these inequalities, learn from each other and change our behaviour in solidarity. When working in solidarity, we take into consideration the principle of differentiated responsibilities as established by international environmental law; we also seek to work in the spirit of the international human rights law's commitments to international assistance and cooperation, progressive realisation and non-retrogression.

Our headquarters are based in **Venice**, a city which is exposed to increasingly severe environmental threats including unusually destructive flooding and rising sea levels that accelerate irreversible processes causing the island to slowly sink. We also bear witness to environmental destruction brought on by unsustainable business practices such as mass tourism - alerting us to the need to make sustainable changes urgently and swiftly. This situation is not only a reality we respond to every year, but also a symbol of the fragile world we inhabit.

## Operative

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Building on the above, this environmental policy initiates a process aimed at increasing both our sustainable performance and our awareness of the Global Campus network's impact on the environment. Below we set out some of the key operatives, which will guide our actions and activities over the coming years within our regional Master's programmes and all other Global Campus activities and projects. We will update this policy regularly to reflect the needs, challenges and opportunities we encounter on our journey to contribute to a just and sustainable future for all.

### General

- We are guided by the protection of human rights as our primary consideration in implementing this environmental policy.
- We commit to regularly reviewing and evaluating this policy based on an ever-evolving situation and changing technological developments.
- We encourage members of our network, including staff and students, to make efficient and environmentally responsible use of energy, water and other natural resources.

### Education

- We embrace environmental education and awareness of the human rights impact of the climate crisis as a central dimension of a comprehensive human rights education.
- We commit to developing and promoting non-traditional modes of education that address the major crises, including growing concerns that traditional forms of education may not be sufficient to raise awareness and provide adequate tools to proactively address climate justice.

## Travel

- We ensure a responsible balance between virtual and in-person meetings and events, taking into account environmental considerations, technological communication possibilities and the inherently global identity of our organisation, especially with regard to regular meetings of our governing bodies.
- When international or long-distance travel is deemed necessary, we prioritise travel options that minimise environmental impact.
- We commit to monitoring the environmental impact of our travel with a view to improving our carbon budget and reducing our travel-related CO2 emissions.
- We commit to raising awareness and promote a sustainable travel culture across our network bearing in mind regional differences and safety.

## Waste

- We will minimise our production of waste (including food waste) and reusing or recycling materials.
- We try to reduce to a minimum single-use plastic (such as plastic cups), and utilise recyclable, reusable or biodegradable material where possible.
- We strive to raise awareness with our students and partners on the benefits and necessity of conscious recycling.

## Procurement

- We include strict human rights and environmental sustainability standards as a primary consideration in our procurement processes and decision-making.
- We select our suppliers on the basis of full compliance with all applicable environmental legislation, regulations and local laws - including those related to the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and the elimination and safe disposal of dangerous materials.

## Water

- We promote the right to water and the fight against its privatisation; therefore, we discourage the use of bottled water wherever possible and safe.
- We support the use of freely accessible water resources by installing water dispensers at our headquarters and distributing reusable drinking bottles to staff members.

## Electricity Consumption

- We commit to finding new avenues for improving the environmental impact of our electricity consumption. This includes researching possibilities of using renewable energy sources, such as geothermal, wind or solar energy.
- We require our staff members to comply with a culture of saving energy in the workplace, including switching off energy-consuming devices such as air-conditioning, heating or computers when not needed.