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## **Where Climate Change intersects with Modern Human Rights**

Climate change and sustainability are deeply intertwined with modern human rights. The issue extends beyond environmental concerns, affecting every aspect of human life. Climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups within our communities, regions, and countries, making sustainable practices crucial for safeguarding their rights. This highlights the need for a just and equitable approach to climate action, where the effects on human rights and people are carefully considered and addressed.

A clear example of this intersection is the threat posed by rising sea levels, which endangers not only New Zealand, but entire Pacific nations such as Kiribati and Tuvalu. These countries will increasingly look to New Zealand and others in the region for resettlement opportunities as their lands become uninhabitable. Currently, residents of these countries have no special immigration options beyond being allowed extended stays in New Zealand as seasonal workers due to their longer travel distances. However, apart from these concessions related to travel, these individuals are treated no differently from other immigrants and seasonal workers. As climate change intensifies, immigration policies must evolve to protect the rights of climate refugees, ensuring they have access to safe, dignified resettlement and seasonal work options.

The impacts of climate change will also disproportionately affect other vulnerable groups within each country. Climate change mitigation and relocation efforts are expensive, and governments must create policies that ensure everyone has the right to live in a clean, safe, and sustainable environment, with access to clean air, water, and food—all of which are increasingly at risk due to climate change.

Innovation and new technologies will be essential to meet these challenges. Both government and business research and development efforts will require additional funding. At the governance level, this will necessitate the development of comprehensive climate change strategies and the allocation of funding not only for research but also for infrastructure and activity changes. Environmental stewardship must be integrated into all government and business operations to ensure positive contributions to mitigating climate change while securing long-term viability.

A comprehensive climate change response must include modern human rights and employment policies that adapt to the impact of climate change on workers and communities. This extends beyond employees to include the public, customers, and anyone interacting with government or business entities. Ultimately, climate change's greatest impact is on people. Therefore, any response to climate change must address its human impact, ensuring that everyone—not just vulnerable groups—receives the protection they need.

By integrating human rights into climate sustainability efforts, governments and businesses can ensure that climate action is both effective and just, protecting everyone, particularly the most vulnerable.

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