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Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law

Fifth Session

PANEL 2: Participation, accountability, and fundamental freedoms – key enablers of a climate-just world

Speaker: Ms. Ilaria Vavalà

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And co-signed by
VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development

With the support of
VIDES Switzerland

Concerning
Democracy and climate change: *focusing on solutions*

IIMA is honored to take the floor on behalf of this **NGO coalition**. We thank the panelists for their **insightful contributions**.

As a young person myself, I consider it a **responsibility and a right** to speak in this space - where democracy, human rights, and climate justice must come together.

We are living through a defining moment. The climate crisis is not only an environmental emergency, but also a **test of our democracies**. When participation is limited, when accountability is weak, and when fundamental freedoms are restricted, our collective ability to respond to the climate emergency stumbles.

To move toward a **climate-just world**, States must ensure that **youth participation** is **effective, active, and meaningful**. Youth must be empowered to shape climate decisions, not merely comment on them.

Earlier this year, IIMA contributed to the **Call for Inputs** ahead of this Forum, gathering voices from hundreds of young people across 33 countries. Their priorities were clear and remarkably consistent:

They asked for **meaningful participation**, not symbolic consultation - to be part of designing, implementing, and monitoring climate policies.

They called for **greater accountability and transparency**, so that commitments translate into real change, not mere promises.

They demanded **access to quality education and information** on climate action and human rights, to be equipped to contribute effectively.

They urged the **protection and recognition of young environmental defenders**, whose courage

often meets repression instead of support.

And above all, they asked for **trust** - for institutions that listen and act with integrity.

A truly climate-just world demands courage - the courage to listen, to include, and to be held accountable.

The solutions to the climate crisis will not come from closed rooms, but from **open dialogue, shared power, and protected freedoms**.

I thank you.