23/12/2016

**Reply of Lithuania to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the relationship between climate change and the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of the child, pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution “Human Rights and Climate Change” 32/33**

**3. Please describe existing commitments, legislation and other measures adopted by the State in climate change mitigation and adaptation which are designed to protect the best interest of the child.**

The rights of children in Lithuania are protected by *the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania* (hereinafter – the Law. The Law establishes the fundamental rights, freedoms and obligations of the child, and the most important guarantees of protection and defence of these rights and freedoms, based upon the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other norms and principles of international law, while taking into account the specific situation of the child within family and society and national law traditions. The Law also regulates the fundamental conditions in child behaviour control and liability thereof, establishes parental liability and that of other natural and legal persons for violations of the provisions of the general rights of the child, the system of institutions for the protection of the rights of the child and the legal principles of activity thereof. *Article 4 of the Law* establishes that a child is entitled to enjoy all the rights and freedoms established by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, this Law and other laws and legal acts. *Article 8 of the Law* foresees that aiming to ensure the right of the child to good health, measures allowing creation of a healthy and safe environment for the child have to be guaranteed.

*Article 22 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania* (hereinafter – the Law) establishes the purpose of healthcare in schools.The purpose of healthcare in schools shall be to protect and improve health of learners, by actively cooperating with their parents (guardians, curators). The State shall encourage and support the initiatives of legal and natural persons as well as legal persons or other organisations, or their branches established in a member state, which help to protect and improve health of learners in Lithuania. *Article 40* of the Law establishes material provisions of education and foresees that the school's learning environment must meet hygiene norms and requirements for learners’ safety and health established by legal acts. *Article 46**of the Law* foresees thatthe learner shall be entitled to study in a psychologically-, emotionally- and physically-safe environment.

The EU and its Member States under *the* *Paris agreement of the UNFCCC*, committed to a binding target of at least a 40% domestic reduction in economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. This target will be reached while implementing the *EU 2030 policy framework for climate and energy*.

On 6 November 2012 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania approved the *National Strategy of Climate Change Management Policy* (hereinafter – the Strategy), which covers adaptation and mitigation policies and foresees short-term (by 2020), indicative medium-term (by 2030 and 2040) and long-term (by 2050) goals for climate change mitigation and adaptation in the following Lithuania’s economy sectors: energy, industry, transport, agriculture, households, environmental protection and rational use of national resources (forestry, ecosystems, biodiversity, landscape), spatial planning and regional policy, health care, research and development, education and provision of information to the public, international co-operation. Lithuania’s efforts are directed to minimize the adverse effects of climate change and to reach a safe, clean and healthy environment and climate resilient, sustainable economy growth for all public, without dividing into social groups or age of people. The targets and objectives of the Strategy are interinstitutional, coordinated and sector wide, but not focused specifically on the relation between climate change and the enjoyment of the rights of the child.

Measures related to human rights and health protection are integrated in to the Lithuanian economy sectorial development programs as well as in the *Inter-Institutional Action Plan for the Implementation of Goals and Tasks of the National Strategy for Climate Change Management Policy 2013-2020* (hereinafter – the Plan), approved by the Government of Lithuania on 23April 2013. The *new edition of the Plan* was approved by the Resolution No. 1156 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 4 November 2015. According to the new edition of the Plan, the coordination of the Plan was assigned to the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. The State and municipal authorities, Lithuanian Research Council, JSC “ESO” (electricity supply and distribution and natural gas distribution company), state science and educational institutions were assigned to participate in the implementation of the Plan within the scope of their competence and to assign funds for the implementation of the foreseen measures.

The Plan foresees measures for achieving specific and general short-term goals and objectives for mitigating climate change and adapting to climate change by 2020, set in the Strategy. The Plan establishes measures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, development of competitive low-carbon economy, installation of eco-innovation technologies, increase of energy production and consumption efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in all economic sectors of the country (energy, industry, transport, agriculture and others), reduction of vulnerability of natural ecosystems and economic sectors of the country, the increase of their resilience to climate change and improvement of favourable public life and economic activity conditions. While implementing these measures, public and private interinstitutional cooperation shall be promoted.

The specific inter-institutional measures for combatting climate change and improving social responsibility include also the following measures:

* Organization of public awareness and education initiatives, aiming to change energy consumption habits and encourage members of society to save and rationally use energy;
* Reducing adverse effects of energy objects on people and the environment;
* Promoting the installation of environmentally friendly equipment and reducing pollution;
* Strengthening coordination and dissemination of information about climate change adaptation by keeping, managing and providing GIS-based information about climate change to different interest groups, such as scientists, public institutions and the public;
* Climate change mitigation and adaptation issues are being integrated into curricula of all education levels as well as into the study programs of universities.

In the Plan there are foreseen several measures related to disaster risk reduction to ensure public safety and crisis management, such as:

* to improve forecasting of natural disasters by carrying out modelling of high resolution meteorological conditions;
* to implement flood risk mitigation measures;
* to warn residents about occurred emergency situations or potential threats using the public warning and information system;
* to strengthen readiness of the State Fire and Rescue Service to respond to the consequences of extreme natural phenomena caused by climate change.

With regard to the impact of climate change on public health, the Plan establishes also an objective to reduce the negative impact of climate change on human health. In order to implement this objective and to ensure the protection of resident’s health by reducing the hazards caused by climate change, the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania passed the Order No. V-1429 on 9 December 2015 to approve the *National Action Plan for Public Health and Heat Prevention 2016-2020* (hereinafter – the Plan). The purpose of the Plan is to protect health of residents from negative impacts caused by heat through increased public information and inter-institutional cooperation. The target group of residents sensitive to heat is distinguished in the Plan and includes babies and children under the age of 18. In the Plan it is foreseen to prepare by 2018 *Recommendations for pre-school institutions on how to protect children from the impact of heat*.

On May 4 2015 the Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-565 was passed to approve the *Programme for the Prevention of Diseases Related to Climate Change for 2015-2020* (hereinafter – the Programme). The diseases addressed in the Programme include allergic and infectious diseases.

**5. Please share any commitments and best practices for effectively engaging children or youth in climate related decision making processes and climate action.**

In order to include children and young people into making of political decisions related to climate change, the *National Platform of Environment and Health of Youth* (hereinafter – the National Platform) was established in 2016 in Lithuania. Its main objective is to consolidate, maintain and publicize the participation of young people in activities, which aim to create and ensure a safe and stable environment. The National Platform participates in the process of environment and health of the European region of the World Health Organization together with the partners from Austria, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Portugal, Ukraine and Slovenia (countries that have similar platforms).