



**PERMANENT MISSION OF MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

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The Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's note CM/BBA/BS dated 9 September 2016, has the honour to enclose the answers of Montenegro to the Questionnaire "Climate change and Human rights".

The Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 11 January 2017

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva**



Montenegro

Answers to the Questionnaire „Climate change and Human rights“

Questionnaire

1. *Please describe, in your view, the relationship between climate change and the enjoyment of the rights of the child, and any human rights obligations to mitigate and adapt to climate change that can be derived therefrom. Please also share any examples of how the realisation of the rights of the child can contribute to more effective climate action.*

Climate change acts as the threat multiplier and has negative impact on society's ability to cope with problems it faces. Climate change therefore significantly influences the state and quality of the provision and enjoyment of the human rights including the rights of the child. Obviously, it has significantly higher negative impact on vulnerable segments of the society compared to others. Thus, any society has to take into account vulnerabilities and risks posed by climate change and include them into sectoral development strategies, especially those concerned with rights of the child. Human rights considerations of climate change impacts, including impacts on the rights of the child, should be at the heart of future global and national agreements in this field.

2. *Please share a summary of any relevant data as well as any related mechanisms to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of the rights of the child, especially the rights of children in particularly vulnerable situations.*

Thus far Montenegro has not conducted specific assessment of the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of the rights of the child.

3. *The best interests of the child should be taken into consideration in all matters concerning the rights of the child, including environmental decision-making. Please describe existing commitments, legislation and other measures adopted by States and other duty-bearers, such as businesses, in climate change mitigation and adaptation which are designed to protect the best interests of the child. In particular, please share information related to implementation of commitments to address climate change while simultaneously contributing to the realization of human rights and the rights of the child, the promotion of gender equality, and the protection of future generations. Please also note any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments.*

Thus far Montenegro has not designed mechanisms within climate change mitigation or adaptation which have as the primary objective realization of human rights and the rights of the child. Human rights and the rights of the child are considered as comprehensive part of actions in this field.

Provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have been a background for the engagement of the Government in developing and adopting new laws on family relations, child protection, education, health protection, labour relations as well as the Criminal Code. A series of strategies and action plans have been approved

which are of key importance for the realisation and protection of the rights of the child.

The National Plan of Action for Children 2013-2017 (NPAC) is a strategic document of the Government of Montenegro, which defines the general policy of the children for a period of 2013 to 2017. This document identifies the main problems in achieving, protecting and promoting the rights of children in our country, as well as the main directions for their resolution. This NPAC is a continuation of a strategic approach to issues of importance to children in Montenegro, which had begun through the development and implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children in Montenegro 2004-2010.

The National Plan of Action for Children acts as an instrument for the mobilization of all social partners in addressing the problem of children: Government, Parliament, local government, citizens and non-governmental organizations, socially responsible businesses, the media, families, parents, children, professional institutions and individual experts who deal with children.

This document has been harmonized with all international documents relevant to the rights and social status of children as well as national strategic documents and programs directed toward children or supported the quality of life of children and national legislative framework of importance for children.

The structure of the National Plan of Action for Children is in accordance with Recommendation to Montenegro by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2010).

4. *Please provide guidance on what further actions need to be taken to adequately integrate children's rights within climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, practices and decisions. In particular, please describe actions needed to:*
- a. *Ensure the integration of children's rights, including the rights to family, health, nutrition, education, participation, gender equality, water and sanitation, among others, in climate action;*
 - b. *Prevent violence or conflict as it affects children and is connected with social, economic and political stressors aggravated by climate change; and*
 - c. *Promote intergenerational equity.*

The research on children behavior, awareness and attitudes on climate change was conducted by the company CEED Consulting in 2011 for the needs of UNICEF and UNDP in Montenegro.

Based on the obtained research results, it can be concluded that boy/girl pupils of primary and secondary schools have a certain degree of knowledge about global warming or climate change and their impacts. However, the actual level of knowledge is lower than self-estimated one. Since this is a phenomenon that has, and it is very likely to have a more pronounced impact on almost all aspects of human activity, it is necessary the following:

-To work on further education and awareness of boy/girl pupils, with special emphasis on children from rural settlements or the entire population. The problem can be solved effectively only if it is understood properly. Taking the various long-term educational campaigns and programs would result in the desired changes, from the socially acceptable attitudes to socially acceptable behaviour and real actions.

- The introduction of subjects within the existing subjects with more attention to this topic, by organizing lectures, workshops and seminars on global warming, climate changes, renewable energy and energy efficiency will inform boy/girl pupils and allow them to acquire additional knowledge. Special attention is paid to organizing mentioned actions areas through direct involvement of boy/girl students based on empirical techniques and practical examples which will enable them to develop awareness of the importance and effects that could be achieved by their application.

- At the individual level it is necessary to take appropriate measures that will result in a reduction of demand for products that pollute the environment. First of all, this is referred to raising awareness and informing boy/girl pupils on how their everyday choices/behaviour in consumption influence the occurrence of global warming/climate change. By purchasing products and services with environmental label, children, as consumers, can contribute to further promotion of ecological behaviour.

5. *Please share any commitments and best practices for effectively engaging children or youth in climate-related decision-making processes and climate action, particularly those most impacted by climate change, and with consideration for young people of different ages, gender and social backgrounds. Please share any examples of how empowering children and youth has contributed to more effective climate action.*

Montenegro continues to define policies and programs that ensure encouragement and development of children. Part of these efforts is also the integration of rights of the child and application of the principle of respecting the child's best interests in all strategic documents and policies of the Government.

6. *Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to understand efforts made and challenges confronting States and other duty-bearers in their efforts to protect the rights of the child from the impacts of climate change.*

Having signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Montenegro assumed obligation to submit periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Montenegro's capacity to implement the Convention, to a large extent, is the result of daily activities of our citizens who create a society in which children are protected from all forms of inequality, growing up in a healthy environment, and in which all girls and boys have equal access to quality education. Reports also indicate that special attention is paid to the protection of vulnerable categories of children, children deprived of parental care, children living in poor families, children with disabilities, children who are victims of violence, abuse and neglect and children in conflict with the law. The reports indicate that considerable attention is paid to the inclusion of Roma, as well as the children of internally displaced and refugee families. Programs that provide education, care and health services in these communities are increasingly secure in Montenegro. The activities to be implemented across the country are possible because of Montenegro's political and legal commitment to child rights.