**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**

**Questionnaire on cultural rights and climate change**

In her next report to be presented to the General Assembly in October 2020, the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, will consider the theme of climate change, culture and cultural rights.

The Special Rapporteur believes it is critical to think more broadly about the relationship between culture and cultural rights on the one hand, and addressing climate change on the other. The report will address both the threats posed by climate change to culture, heritage and the cultural rights guaranteed by international law, including the right to take part in cultural life without discrimination, the rights to artistic and scientific freedom, the right to enjoy and access cultural heritage, as well as the positive potential of culture, heritage, and traditional knowledge, and the enjoyment of cultural rights, to help avoid catastrophic climate change and to adapt to the changes already in motion.

As climate change is, and will continue, changing our habits, ways of life, modes of production and of interaction, addressing climate change requires marshaling cultural resources and necessitates cultural change, including improving the culture of our relationship with nature. A vital aspect of the human rights approach is the emphasis on participation and consultation of affected people especially those most affected with regard to policies and responses.

Those submitting information should feel free to answer only specific questions that they find most relevant.

**Negative impacts of climate change on culture and cultural rights**

1. What negative impacts of climate change on culture, heritage and the enjoyment of cultural rights by all have been documented in your context? Are particular groups, such as women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, rural persons or peasants, and youth or future generations, as well as cultural practitioners being impacted in specific and disproportionate ways? What efforts are being undertaken to inventory and monitor such impacts?
2. Are cultural sites or resources which are critical to participation in cultural life identified as being threatened due to climate change and if so, how? What processes are used to analyse the risk of harm or inaccessibility to these areas and resources? Are records being kept about these risks and impacts?
3. Please provide examples of specific natural resources, local sites used for cultural practices or seasonal patterns that influence the ability to participate in diverse aspects of cultural life that may be subject to volatility due to climate change. Consider also diffuse geographical features or resources that may be at risk and are definitive or influential in the practice and development of culture on either a collective or individual basis.

**Positive potential of culture and cultural rights to enhance responses to climate change**

1. What are ways in which culture and cultural resources, such as traditional knowledge, are being used to mitigate and/or adapt in the face of climate change? Where available, please share examples of best practices for applying traditional knowledge and cultural practices, such as those of indigenous peoples, peasants and fisher people, including traditional fire management and agricultural techniques that should be considered in developing mitigation and adaptation responses. What is being done to inventory and preserve such cultural resources that could be useful to addressing climate change?
2. What are the diverse legal frameworks, trends and practices at the national and international levels that promote intervention from across the cultural ecosystem, including by cultural rights defenders and cultural practitioners, as well as women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, rural people and peasants, and youth, in addressing disparate impacts and influencing decisions around climate change mitigation and adaptation? What are the challenges to such inclusivity and how are they being addressed?
3. What opportunities are available for people to publicly engage in cultural life in ways that demonstrate contemporary cultural shifts in response to climate change? Are there currently visible signs of cultural change underway? What factors might impede such practice of cultural life?
4. In what capacities do experts from across the field of culture and climate interact and exchange knowledge at the national or international levels? For example, are experts from various cultural fields involved in relevant climate change policy? Are climate change experts engaging with the cultural sectors, and if so how?

**Measures taken and recommendations**

1. Are affected persons and groups being consulted and enabled to participate in discussions related to climate policy and climate action?
2. Are cultural rights defenders[[1]](#footnote-1) who are working on climate-related harms to culture and cultural rights facing specific challenges in their work, and are they at particular risk of threats, harassment and human rights violations? If so, how should these human rights defenders be better protected and supported?
3. Has your country adopted specific regulations or measure to address the negative impacts of climate change on culture and cultural rights? If so, please specify the content of such regulation and measures. Is a human rights approach taken to these questions?
4. Are the impacts of climate policy and climate action on culture, cultural rights and human rights more broadly being assessed? What should be undertaken in future in this regard?
5. What opportunities or mechanisms, if any, for remedies and redress are being made available to respond effectively to the harm to culture and cultural rights caused by the climate crisis?
6. What national, regional and international initiatives are being undertaken to address the intersections of climate change, culture and cultural rights? How effective have such initiatives been, what primary challenges have they faced, and what additional efforts should be suggested in this regard?
7. What recommendations should be made to States and other stakeholders concerning these topics?

1. Defenders of cultural rights in accordance with international standards; see A/HRC/43/50. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)