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Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment



Call for Inputs

Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

“Women, Girls and the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment”

The exclusion of half of society from effectively helping to shape policies, including those which respond to climate and environmental harms, means that those policies are likely to be less responsive to the specific damage being caused; less effective in protecting communities; and may even deepen the harm being done.

Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, David Boyd, is preparing a report on women, girls and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, a right recognized in 2021 by UN Human Rights Council Resolution 48/13. For that purpose, he is seeking inputs on the topic from States, rightsholders, and other stakeholders through responses to the brief questionnaire below.

Your replies will inform the Special Rapporteur’s analysis and contribute to his report, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2023.

Questionnaire

The Special Rapporteur invites and welcomes your answers to the following questions:

1. How are the climate, pollution, and biodiversity crises adversely impacting women and girls? What are the principal barriers facing these rightsholders’ realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, a right that includes: clean air; a safe climate; access to safe water and adequate sanitation; healthy and sustainably produced food; non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play; healthy biodiversity and ecosystems; access to environmental and climate information;

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participation in environmental and climate decision-making processes; access to justice and an affective remedy when the aforementioned rights are violated.

2. What are the specific obligations of States and responsibilities of businesses in terms of adopting a gender-responsive approach to protecting (for States) and respecting (for businesses) women's and girls' rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment? Please provide specific examples of constitutional provisions, legislation, institutions, regulations, standards, jurisprudence, policies and programs that apply a gender-responsive approach to ensuring the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

3. If your State is one of the 156 UN Member States that recognizes the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in law, has this right been recognized and/or interpreted in a way that clarifies the state's obligations or businesses' responsibilities with respect to the realization of rights with no discrimination based on sex and gender and other grounds?

4. What steps has your State, business, and/or organization taken to employ a gender-responsive, rights-based approach to addressing the impacts of the climate, biodiversity and pollution crises and to accelerate gender equality related to environmental decision-making processes, benefit-sharing processes, and outcomes? Please identify specific challenges that your Government, business, or organization has faced in these endeavors.

5. Please identify specific ways in which the rights of particularly marginalized or vulnerable women and/or LGBTI persons are (or should be) recognized and protected to enable the realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment without discrimination based on sex or gender. "Marginalized women" include girls; women and girls in Indigenous local community, Afro-descendant and peasant communities, older women; women and girls with disabilities, LGBTI women and girls, migrant, displaced, and refuge women and girls, unmarried, informally married and widowed women and women and girls living in protracted armed conflict. How can these populations be empowered to increase their impact as agents of positive environmental transformation?

6. What kinds of socioeconomic, cultural, legal, and/or institutional transformations would be required within your States' national context to achieve gender parity that most directly impact environmental decision-making processes, benefit-sharing processes, and outcomes?

7. To what extent do the environmental ministries, nationally determined contributions, and national biodiversity strategies and action plans of your State include gender action plans, gender-responsive budgets or budgets specifically devoted to gender equality? At the global level, what changes to climate and biodiversity finance mechanisms are needed to ensure that these are gender-responsive and equitably inclusive of female beneficiaries?

8. How can businesses best contribute to the realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, based on sex and gender? What policies or practices are already in place to ensure that business activities identify, assess, prevent, cease, mitigate, and effectively remedy adverse impacts to women's and girls' rights to

a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as articulated in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

9. Please share any good practices for: i) protecting women's and girl's rights to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; ii) empowering women and girls to act as positive agents of environmental justice; and iii) encouraging men and boys to act as allies in these endeavors. In addition, please highlight the work of any women or girl environmental defenders? Good practices may occur at the international, regional, national, sub-national or local levels, and may include: the implementation of measures to ensure women's participation in environmental decision-making processes; efforts to support women environmental defenders; measures to facilitate women's access to climate or biodiversity finance; gender-responsive legislation, regulations, standards, jurisprudence, plans and policies; and initiatives to increase women's access to and control over productive resources including land, forest resources, freshwater, credit, loans, and extension services. Examples that treat girls distinctly from adult women would be particularly appreciated.

10. What are the potential benefits of respecting, protecting and fulfilling women's and girl's rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment? Examples that treat girls distinctly from adult women would be particularly appreciated.

Submission of responses

Please send your responses to the questionnaire **in Word format** by email to hrc-sr-environment@un.org.

However, submissions will also be accepted via regular mail at the following address:

UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment
Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division
UNOG-OHCHR
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

We kindly request that your submission be concise and limited to a maximum of 5 pages (or 2,000 words) and welcome the inclusion of links to online documents.

Due to a limited capacity for translation, we also request that your inputs be submitted in English, French, or Spanish.

To avoid unnecessary duplication: if you have recently replied to other questionnaires from UN human rights mechanisms (or other international bodies, such as the High-Level Political Forum) with information that would be relevant to this request as well, we welcome your directing us to those replies.

The deadline for submission is 14 October 2022.

All submissions will be made publicly available and posted on the Special Rapporteur's homepage at the OHCHR website.
