## Call for Inputs

## Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

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

**Input on the topic Woman and Girls and the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment such as Water, Health and Climate Change**

My name is Ruth A. Richardson. Since May 2017 I have been a volunteer of the International Network of Liberal Women. My position is General Board Member and Policy Advisor. I work at the Dutch Water Authority in The Netherlands as Project leader and Policy advisor.

As General Board member, policy Advisor, NGO & member of the UNECE Water Convention, Advisor, Task Force working group and Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation, my job is to bring people (that include women, girls and humanity) together and to filter the right story from major topics, so that the media say: “we want to do something with that.”

Question 1), Climate change is a serious matter and has a big impact on our women and girls around the globe, which scientists and experts are debating in the environmental committee. Women's rights is a fun hobby that a group of parliamentarians are allowed to engage in on the women's rights committee. One has nothing to do with the other.

Question 2), My mayor concern is that we have to implement a sanitation framework, gender-sensitive, through development and humanitarian programmes.

That means we need to talk more about the impacts, the climate adaptation, the risks and new ways to deal with these problems such as water, fresh drinking water and to secure drinking water, water storage and flood and drought of the livelihood of all human being around the world. See document The Protocol on Water and Health Driving action on water, sanitation, hygiene and health  
<https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/ProtocolBrochure_E_ECE_MP.WH_21_WEB.pdf>

Question 3), It is not recognized as yet. But I hope that it can be recognized at the High level session: “The Protocol on Water and Health: strengthening the resilience of WASH and health services in times of climate change and pandemics” on November 16th 2022 UNECE at Geneva  
It will provide an opportunity to appraise progress and take stock of the concrete results of countries’ responses to ensure access to water, sanitation, hygiene and health for all in the context of the pandemic and possible future pandemics. It will also foster an open dialogue on how to tackle the persisting gaps and challenges posed by climate change in the pan-European region to create climate-resilient WASH and health services.

Question 4), I hope that I as general board member, NGO, policy advisor and member of the Task Force working group and Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation organization can recommend by employing (women and girls) 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.

Questions 5,6,7 & 8), I will make my recommendation and ask to implement women, girls and health because they are the key for sustainable development.

The Agreed Conclusions therefore must call upon the United Nations Human Rights Council to:

• Economic, environmental, social, political, and demographic transitions affect women’s health and their rights and roles in society, leading to a complex epidemiological transition and increased caregiving needs and demands.

• To ensure that women’s comprehensive health needs are met throughout life, health systems and societies should simultaneously and eff effectively address the unfinished reproductive health, nutrition, and infectious disease agendas and the emerging epidemic of chronic and non-communicable diseases

• Sustainable development needs women’s social, economic, and environmental contributions, which will increase when women are healthy, valued, enabled, and empowered to reach their full potential in all aspects of their lives, including in their roles as providers of water , sanitation and health care.

• Participation and equity in decision-making. women and girls with disabilities, LGBTI women and girls, migrant, displaced, and refuge women and girls, unmarried, informally married and widowed women are under-represented in the ‘water world’, with careers and training in water management dominated by men. If water management is to be democratic and transparent -- and represent the needs of the people -- both men and women must have an equal say.

Question 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 endeavours*   
A start has been made through the increase in the number of women serving as ministers of water and environment, but the empowerment of women as water managers must also be felt at the grassroots level.

In 2018 I got in involved with the UNECE en became a NGO delegate for INLW and member of the UNECE Water Convention, the working group on Water and Climate Change. I was looking for a way to convince my colleagues at the UNECE that women, water and climate change are indeed closely related

So I wrote three topics including Women, Gender issues, Poverty and Inequality and Consultation and participation and ensured that these were included in the document: Word into Action Guidelines: Implementation Guide for Addressing Water-Related Disasters and Transboundary Cooperation: “Integrating disaster risk management with water management and climate change adaptation”.   
<https://unece.org/info/publications/pub/21762>  
https://unece.org/DAM/env/water/publications/WAT\_56/ECE\_MP.WAT\_56\_E\_web.pdf

Therefore, we should not miss this opportunity to include women and girls with disabilities, LGBTI women and girls, migrant, displaced, and refuge women and girls, unmarried, informally married and   
widowed women in the protocol because we women and girls are regularly underappreciated when it comes to water sanitation and health.

Question 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.

The United Nations Human Rights Council should therefore:

• **Implement a national sanitation framework, gender-sensitive inclusive and sustainable development** by improving the education and health systems as well as creating employment, training and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and girls; access to sanitation facilities at home, which makes them vulnerable to water-related diseases; safeguarding the attainment of human rights and gender equality; providing high-quality health care in hospitals and other facilities and ensuring that schools and other learning environments are safe and inclusive for all children, women and girls.

• **Raising awareness and ensure menstrual health and hygiene activities through development** and humanitarian programmes across the world by improving access to menstrual products, materials facilities and education about menstruation – for adolescent girls, women, transgender and non-binary individuals to manage their menstruation safely and with dignity.it. Mobilise the funding required for action at scale and break the taboos and end the stigma surrounding menstruation.

• **Implement sanitation framework, gender-sensitive, through development and humanitarian** programmes Water and period poverty is a way to describe how lack of access to safe drinking water, to soap and safe water for hand washing, to adequate toilet, period-friendly sanitation facilities and adequate sanitation and hygiene are basic conditions for dignity, human health and well-being, as well as for a safe and clean environment, waste management and other necessities hinders women and girls against contaminations can go a long way to preventing the spread of infectious diseases from succeeding.