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**Contribution of the Republic of Slovenia**

**to the Questionnaire on the issue of women, girls and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**

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

13 October 2022

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| **Questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment**    **Contribution of the Republic of Slovenia** |

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

Climate changes, pollution and biodiversity crisis are negatively impacting everyone on the planet, including women and girls. Gender-specific information for their impact on women and girls is not available. In accordance with the Slovenian Constitution, each individual is guaranteed human rights and fundamental freedoms, irrespective of sex or any other circumstance. Women and girls enjoy the same rights and protection. Their equal opportunites in all fields of social life are specifically addressed through the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act, adopted in 2022 (we do not refer to rights of women but we use a term equal opportunities for women and men).

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.**

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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?**

Slovenia recognizes the right to healthy environment in its Constitution – article 72 – stipulating that everyone has the right in accordance with the law to a healthy living environment.

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.**

We started to pay more attention in planning different policies from the gender perspective by nominating a coordinator for equal rights of women and men within every ministry. Their task is not only to advise and coordinate activities within a ministry regarding internal public – employees - but also to take an active part when a ministry in question is planning some new policies in certain area within its responsibility or preparing a new law. The role of this coordinator is to help the professional team for the concrete matter to include also a gender perspective and to plan policy or law from the equal opportunities point of view as well.

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?**

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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?**

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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?**

The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is in the initial process of preparing the law on climate change. The process started with the call to the general public and all organizations and individuals who want to be a part of this process to send their proposals on this matter to the ministry in the course of this public debate which will be concluded in the end of October 2022. We expect the NGOs dealing with equal opportunities to take an active role in this process, as this is common practice. At the same time, the team in the ministry, in charge for drafting this law, will start its work having in mind the gender perspective. To this end, the coordinator for equal opportunities of women and men at the Ministry has already been invited to join the team.

Concerning gender financing:

Slovenia started to incorporate gender budgeting in 2008. Since then, different activities have been carried out to raise awareness and improve knowledge and capacity on gender mainstreaming for policy- and decision-makers involved in the development planning process. These include the distribution of a gender budgeting handbook to all ministries and relevant institutions in 2009, and gender budgeting training in 2011-2012. The latter being part of a broader gender-mainstreaming project co-financed with the European Commission.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming in Slovenia is closely linked to the state budget and policies. It is therefore considered important that ministries are obliged not only to implement gender-mainstreaming strategy but also to integrate gender perspective into the state budget.

In the field of taxation, the principle of equality is pursued, which means that all provisions of tax legislation are gender neutral and linked only to the economic strength of the individual. Tax legislation thus explicitly neither promotes nor inhibits the right of women and girls to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

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 Page 3 of 3 a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as articulated in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.**

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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.**

In this section, we would like to mention active role of Slovenian Forestry Institute which coordinates international project FEM4Forest – Forests in women’s hands financed by the Danube programme. This project deals with status of women in the forestry sector and women as owners of the forests.

As regards the women environmental defenders, the Slovenian NGO Institute of 8 March, dealing mostly with issues related to women's rights - took the initiative for the legislative referendum on the Water Act (together with other NGOs) in 2021. At the same time, they have organized a big campaign on the water issue which consequently led to the law being rejected at the referendum in July 2021 by a large majority of voters.

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.**

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