**معالي الأخ د. رياض المالكي حفظه الله**

**وزير الشؤون الخارجية**

**الموضوع: استبيان بخصوص الدراسة التفصيلية التي يقوم بها مكتب المفوض السامي بعنوان: التغير المناخي وأثره على حقوق الطفل.**

**تحية طيبة وبعد**

تهديكم سلطة جودة البيئة أطيب التحيات وتتقدم لكم بالشكر والتقدير على جهودكم الموصولة والهادفة إلى رفع مستوى التمثيل الفلسطيني في كافة المحافل الدولية وعلى كافة الأصعدة.

وبالإشارة إلى الموضوع أعلاه وإلى المراسلة رقم 34351 بتاريخ 13 /12/ 2016 و الواردة من وزارة الشؤون الخارجية / قطاع العلاقات المتعددة الأطراف بخصوص الموضوع أعلاه، تجدون مرفقا رد سلطة جودة البيئة على الأسئلة المطروحة في الإستبيان.

**وتفضلوا بقبول فائق التقدير و الاحترام**

**م. عدالة الأتيرة**

**رئيس سلطة جودة البيئة**

**The Impact of Climate Change on Children Rights**

**Q1. Please describe in your view, the relationship between climate change and the enjoyment of the right 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 realization of the rights of the child can contribute to more effective climate action?**

Climate change including higher temperature, lower availability of water resources and long-term incremental changes in rainfall patterns in addition to extreme weather events such as drought and /or flooding leads to changes in ecosystems, and have important gender-differentiated impacts on all aspects of human livelihoods, activities and health. Particularly women and children which are the most vulnerable.

Due to a lack of safe drinking water and sanitation services, the health of women and children, in specific, is being adversely affected. Water shortages and sanitation problems cause particularly acute problems for children, increasing the incidence of water-borne diseases among family members. The impact of climate change on food security including availability and accessibility will also be affecting children development and growth. Development and implementation of policies and interventions that affect the underlying determinants of their health should receive special attention.

Children are especially sensitive to changes in the climate because they are physiologically less able than adults at adapting to heat and other climate-related exposure thus integrating children’s rights in development in the different sectors such as health, education, water, industrial, agricultural sectors contribute to more effective climate action.

Children's rights should be acknowledged and receive special focus when it comes to climate change adverse impacts.

**Q2. 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 is particularly vulnerable situations.**

Children are especially sensitive to changes in the climate because they are physiologically, psychologically and immunologically less able than adults at adapting to heat and other climate-related exposure. Children health is one of the particular vulnerable issues. For example inadequate water supplies, either in quantity or quality, may increase risk of waterborne illnesses, such as diarrhea, typhoid, hepatitis, dysentery, giardiasis, bilharzia, and cholera. Communicable diseases, such as hepatitis, are the most prevalent and most serious. Although epidemiological data in the West Bank is patchy, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a high-incidence of water-borne diseases leading to substantial costs and losses. In a Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) survey, more than 20% of all communities reported that at least 1% of the population had water-related health problems. Diarrheal diseases are significant causes of morbidity in infants and children in the State of Palestine. 44% of children from herder and Bedouin communities in Area C suffer from diarrhea. Lack of water and highly saline water can also result in kidney dysfunction or failure; a situation exacerbated by hot weather. Reduced dilution of contaminants in water ingested can have long-term consequences for health, e.g. nitrate concentrations can increase anemia and induce spontaneous abortion.

Q**3. The best interests of the child should be taken into considerations 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 business, 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 quality, and the protection of future generations. Please also note any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments.**

The state of Palestine after being a party of UNFCCC has submitted the initial national communication report (INCR) and national adaptation plan (NAP) which addressed the country’s most vulnerable sectors to climate change and the adaptation options the country has to develop to tackle climate change. One of the most vulnerable are women and children.

One of the commitments taken by the Palestinian Government’s Ministry of Social Affairs aims to provide social protection to poor and marginalized groups and disabled children through providing:

- Cash transfers to severely impoverished families.

- Food packages to families among the poorest 60% of Palestinian families

- Health insurance for people living below the extreme poverty line

- Social care, rehabilitation and protection to physically disabled citizens and children and the elderly living below the extreme poverty line.

In terms of research outputs, including publication citations and impact factors, the State of Palestine has proved big advancement in children education. The Education Sector Strategy is built on four core pillars: enrolment, quality of education, management, and linkage with the needs of the market and society. Health and Environment is one of the subjects that are part of the curriculum for many grades. Especial attention and update of such curriculum is neede to take into consideration climate change topics.

**Q4. 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**

1. **Ensure the integration of children’s rights, including the rights to family, health, nutrition, education, participation, gender quality, water and sanitation, among others in climate action**

The best interests of the child rights should be at the center of all decisions affecting their health and development. For example, the best interests of the child should:

- Guide treatment options, taking into consideration the economic feasibility of each child;

- Aid the resolution of conflict of interest between families and health workers; and

- Influence the development of policies to regulate actions that impede the physical and social environments in which children live, grow and develop.

The Palestinian Government, with help from international donors and the involvement of UN agencies such as (UNRWA), has launched many important projects to increase the rate of women’s employment that support the rights of the family and achieve gender equity.

1. **Prevent violence or conflict as it affects children and is connected with social, economic and political stressors aggravated by climate change.**

In addition to climate change challenges, Palestine suffers from the occupation actions against Palestinians including children, where actions required by the international community to protect the basic right of occupies people have not been materialized. Israel continues to impose constraints on the movement of people and goods. The ongoing occupation also prevents any restoration of business confidence and investment. Israel maintains its blockade of Gaza for the last ten years with ever increasing restrictions on crossing points in addition to the destroying of many facilities and infrastructures including hospitals and schools by Israeli air strikes during last three wars (2008, 2012, 2014), and constrains the movement of goods and people both within the State of Palestine and to other countries. Israel also continues to destroy Palestinian homes and businesses, as well as seize and deny access to their natural resources. These practices undermine efforts to build a strong economy and achieve fiscal independence which is consequently has detrimental impact on the governments' ability to secure basic services to the community especially children, women and elderly people. Annexation and Expansion Wall have severe impacts on children rights including access to health, education and many other vital services.

In Palestine, climate variability has important gender-differentiated impacts on all aspects of human livelihoods. In this context, for example employment is a significant issue in the Gaza Strip, where only 14.9% of women are employed, as compared with 65.9% of men. Women’s access to the labor market is difficult and salary inequality is a major issue. Refugee women are more affected by unemployment than non-refugee women, as the latter work in agriculture and, so, have greater employment opportunities.

Taking into consideration the role of women in securing family incomes is crucial and very important in the Palestinian community. The main sectors of women’s employment are agriculture which severely impacted by climate change, services, and the informal (non-governmental) sector. Women`s roles in agriculture and environmental projects are unique in the Gaza Strip, as the occupation forces women to perform a variety of male tasks. Women’s work (e.g. in the agricultural sector) is often invisible and unrecognized, so their innovative practices are not given due attention. Women are major contributors to water management, while at the same time suffering disproportionately from the impacts of water shortages or changes in agriculture. Men benefit from a majority of agricultural projects, especially training and extension services, although women perform most of the work. Unfortunately, there is a lack of disaggregated and verifiable data on gender in relation to water and agriculture.

**c. Promote intergenerational equity.**

The following major issues limit adaptive capacity of Palestinians especially children,: the continuing presence of patriarchal social roles; long-standing legislative uncertainty; Palestinian institutions’ lack of formal gender policies; discrimination against women and workers with family responsibilities; continuing perceptions that employing women threatens men’s work opportunities, and is more expensive for the employer because of the potential need to provide maternity leave; and insufficient women in management and, particularly, senior management positions. As a result donor-led gender units may not be sustainable. More specifically, there is lack of conceptual understanding of relations between gender issues and integrated water resources management

**Q5. 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 background. Please share any example of how empowering children and youth has contributed to more effective climate action.**

Education is considered one of the major important rights to children, thus Palestine is considering education as one of its priorities and play important role in tackling climate change. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) has responsibility for the whole education sector from pre-primary to higher education, as well as for recruiting and training teachers. The MOEHE is also in charge of managing governmental educational institutions, and supervising private educational institutions and institutions run by UNRWA. UNRWA provides basic education to all registered refugee children free of charge up to around the age of 15 (9th grade).

Scientific research is advocated by the MOEHE. All universities include research as one of their objectives and most have a scientific research Deanship. On the other hand little funding is provided for scientific research by the MOEHE and local universities and most funding is through regional, bilateral and international projects.

Training and funding to small-medium enterprises (SME) run by economically deprived households, the disabled, female-headed families, and impoverished new graduates from universities and other tertiary education establishments empowers students to be more effective in climate change.

Palestine recently has communication with The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) requesting supports through UN CC: Learn. The ail is to develop a long-term and strategic approach to climate change education which includes designing national strategies, developing learning materials for both formal and non-formal learning contexts, and raising international awareness of the need to integrate of climate change fundamentals into national curriculums. the first

**Q6. 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?**

The State of Palestine has launched many projects from a gender perspective, with help from international donors, to decrease major diseases related to water and sanitation. However, major issues limiting adaptive capacity are: increasing poverty and unemployment rates; lack of alternative plans for emergency situations, including financial shortages; and insufficient resources to develop the water and sanitation infrastructure, and to expand community-based behavior-centered programs that promote improved hygiene practices at the community and household level. Restrictions on movement imposed by Israel continue to impede access to health care, more particularly for women and children in so called Area C.

The Palestinian Government, with help from international donors, has launched many important projects to increase the rate of women’s employment. However, the following major issues limit adaptive capacity in this regard: the continuing presence of patriarchal social roles; long-standing legislative uncertainty; Palestinian institutions’ lack of formal gender policies; discrimination against women and workers with family responsibilities; continuing perceptions that employing women threatens men’s work opportunities, and is more expensive for the employer because of the potential need to provide maternity leave; and insufficient women in management and, particularly, senior management positions. As a result donor-led gender units may not be sustainable. More specifically, there is lack of conceptual understanding of relations between gender issues and integrated water resources management