

Reply of the Republic of Slovenia to some of the questions from the questionnaire by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders

Question number 1:

Slovenia's development cooperation system does not have an explicit strategy on including human rights based approach in the development cooperation implementation. Nevertheless human rights are in fore front of the development cooperation implementation planning.

International development cooperation of Slovenia focuses on three traditional thematic priorities:

- Gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Capacity-building for good governance and the transfer of transition experience;
- Sustainable development with an emphasis on sustainable water management.

While significant emphasis is put on women's rights through the priority of gender equality and empowerment of women, Slovenia's international development cooperation places high importance on respect for human rights and equality in general. This is enshrined in our development cooperation legislation, as well as in several strategic documents and policy papers.

Slovenia is aware of the importance of a human rights based approach (HRBA) to development. Especially with reference to the future development framework, Slovenia emphasises that the post-2015 agenda should incorporate HRBA and remains a strong proponent of this in relevant international debates and processes. It also continuously highlights the significance of particular development cooperation principles, related to HRBA, such as inclusion, accountability, partnership and equality.

Question number 2 and 3:

Slovenia's development cooperation system does not have an explicit strategy on including human rights based approach in the development cooperation implementation. Nevertheless human rights are in fore front of the development cooperation implementation planning. As stated in Article 3 of the International Development Cooperation Act adopted in 2006, which is the legal base for implementation of Development cooperation, one of the main objectives with regard to International Development Cooperation is to ensure peace and human security in the world, primarily by strengthening and promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and good governance in developing countries. This is additionally emphasized in the main strategic document, the Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia until 2015.

Article 6 of the International Development Cooperation Act defines a special advisory body, the Expert Council for International Development Cooperation, which is also advising the minister of foreign affairs on development cooperation. Currently a dozen experts in their personal capacity from civil society, academia and the private sector provide an independent view and advise the minister on policies, strategies and overall evaluations.

Special emphasis to the human rights is also given when preparing and implementing national calls for project proposals. All project proposals must be sustainable, innovative, and must in all stages (preparation and implementation) include an approach based on respect for human rights and gender equality. Proposals must be based on development needs of the community and the recipient countries. Also proposals must in an appropriate and

effective way involve local partners and other relevant local factors such as for example local government and other official bodies. This ensures that the local partners are involved in the preparation and implementation of the projects and gives Slovenian providers of development assistance additional insight into the need of the community and can provide assistance in case of security/safety issues. Slovenia is highly reserved when it comes to project proposals, especially from small Slovenian NGO, concerning their on-ground intervention in security-risk environments (for examples in war zones) where protection cannot be guaranteed.

Additionally in planning and implementing development cooperation and humanitarian assistance projects, Slovenia has been devoting special emphasis on the reduction of poverty and hunger, mine action, empowerment of women and assistance to children in post-conflict situations.

Great importance is given to the assistance to children, especially ensuring their healthcare, education and protection. Slovenia has supported many projects focusing on medical and psychosocial rehabilitation of children and minors from for example the Gaza strip, Egypt, Belarus, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro etc.

In recent years Slovenia is implementing the project called "Our Rights", which is focusing on human rights education for children. Project was launched in 2005 and involved Slovenian experts, which designed, initiated and led the implementation of the pilot project, NGOs and other stakeholders. The project is designed to raise awareness on human and children's rights and is targeting specific groups: teachers, parents and children. In 2012, the project was implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Moldova, and in three republics of the Russian Federation (North Ossetia-Alania, Chechnya and Ingushetia). In 2013 and 2014 the project is being implemented in Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Great importance is also given to the issue of gender equality and empowerment of women, especially in Africa. Being aware of the importance of advancing empowerment of women, Slovenia has supported a number of projects in this respect, implemented by the Slovenian NGOs. Slovenia also supported a number of smaller-scale projects in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women in Afghanistan.

Organisation, monitoring, evaluation: The International Development Cooperation Act defines the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as the national coordinator for development cooperation. The nature of this role has changed with the evolution of Slovenian development cooperation. With the partial consolidation of resources, the responsibilities of the MFA increased largely. Besides the role of policy-maker, the MFA is now in charge of ensuring effective implementation of a big part of bilateral development resources of Slovenia.

Slovenia's evaluations system is at an early stage of development. An evaluation policy and guidelines will be prepared in the near future.

Legal and strategic framework: International development cooperation is regulated by the **International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia Act**, adopted in June 2006. The Act defines the objectives and methods of long-term planning, financing and implementation of international development cooperation of Slovenia. The Act specifies the providers of development cooperation and the conditions of their functioning. In July 2008 the **Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia until 2015** was adopted by the National Assembly. The Resolution is the main

strategic document and sets out the geographical and sector-specific priorities for Slovenia's international development cooperation until 2015, along with mechanisms for its implementation, which is also in line with the principles of aid effectiveness.

More operational programs for implementation of bilateral international development cooperation exist since 2010. The first **Framework Programme** of Consolidated Action for development cooperation was designed for the year 2010. In 2010, Slovenia started to apply programmatic budgeting, which allowed for a partial consolidation of development resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first Programme thus plans for the consumption of approximately half of all bilateral development and humanitarian assistance for the year 2010. The second Framework programme was biannual, for the years of 2011 and 2012. The current Framework programme or so called Multi-annual Action Plan covers a three year period from 2013 to 2015.

Framework programs are confirmed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia which also ensures that the multi-annual programme is harmonized with other policies and priorities. Already during the preparation of the programme wide ranging consultations within the MFA and with other ministries and governmental bodies are carried out which ensures a broad consensus on priorities.

Question number 5 and 6:

Some of the main challenges of HRBA to development include:

- Lack of a coherent, universal interpretation of the HRBA concept, which can prove challenging when aiming to address the concept in multilateral fora and strategic/legislative documents
- The often seemingly provocative element of the 'HRBA discourse' from the perspective of developing countries
- The challenges of measuring the impact of implementing the HRBA to development

Question number 8:

Slovenia harmonises development cooperation policies mainly through the work of the Interministerial Body for International Development Cooperation, in which all ministries of Slovenia are included. It discusses all strategic elements of Slovenian development cooperation, paying heed to various aspects and possible impacts of development cooperation and other policies. The interministerial body considers, coordinates and adopts strategic documents, which are prepared by the national coordinator. In this respect, Slovenia places significant emphasis on principles of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and aims to implement them to the greatest extent possible.