Contribution from **Germany** to the call for inputs on “the environment and the rights of the child” by the *UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment*

Regarding 2. Please provide specific examples of good practices in environmental-related matters in the fulfilment of obligations to protect and promote children’s rights. Such examples may include practices related to: promoting the enjoyment of children’s human rights in general (e.g., rights to life, food, housing, health, water and sanitation, cultural rights, etc.); guaranteeing procedural rights of children (e.g., rights to information, participation and access to remedy); protecting children’s freedom of association and expression in this context; monitoring children’s rights affected by environmental related legislation, programmes and projects (e.g., rights to life, food, housing, health, water and sanitation, cultural rights, etc.); protecting children from adverse impacts related to environmental degradation and, in particular, children of indigenous and other minority communities; promoting children’s rights to environmental education and to play.

Germany is convinced that it is one of the best returning investments in sustainable development to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children. Therefore, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is highly committed to protecting and promoting child rights as a cross-cutting issue within German development cooperation. Measures specifically targeting young people are firmly established in the fields of education, health care, nutrition, WASH, good governance, climate change and many more. The BMZ’s new Action Plan “Agents of Change: Children’s and Youth Rights in German Development Cooperation” (2017) sets out the position of German development policy with regard to the rights of children and youth and aims to further expand its efforts worldwide.

A number of projects initiated by BMZ have provided good practices on the nexus of environmental-related matters and the fulfilment of children’s rights. German development cooperation has been involving young people in matters related to environmental protection, climate change adaptation, resilience, disaster risk reduction and across climate-sensitive sectors such as health, education and water. Some examples include:

* In Algeria, a project on resource management, climate change and energy specifically ensures that the sensitization campaigns on environmental protection target and involve young people, e.g. through theater performances or interactive radio sessions.
* In Laos, a program on climate-related environmental education carried out informal and formal education activities to raise awareness among schoolchildren and provided youth with hands-on knowledge on environmental filmmaking and production.
* In Peru, a project on “green education” has empowered children and youth so that now they are active partners in the environmental management of their schools, thereby directly contributing to the adaptation efforts of their communities.
* In the Southeast Asian region, the “Fit For School” initiative educates children on water, sanitation and hygiene, increasing their health as much as their resilience as inhabitants of this disaster-prone region.
* In cooperation with UNICEF, Germany has reached Zambian children in rural communities with a project on environmental sustainability and WASH. The “Unite4Climate” project applied a multi-level approach, through which Zambian youth were both involved in climate action on the global level, as part of the climate conference in Copenhagen, and on the community level, as 600 youth were educated to be “climate change ambassadors” for implementing campaigns and climate actions in their own communities.

Additionally, it is an explicit goal of German development cooperation to strengthen the participation of youth and foster international youth exchange. In preparation for the COP on the Convention on Biodiversity, Germany supported international youth summits so that young people could develop common ideas and have their voices heard in global decision-making processes. Moreover, during COP22 in Paris, German Development Minister Müller met with a youth delegation to discuss the aims and role of Germany in international climate policy and encourage their continued engagement.

Regarding 3: Please specify, where relevant, challenges your Government has experienced in the integration of children’s rights protection in environmental-related matters (and vice versa).

In German development cooperation, the integration of children’s rights protection in environmental-related matters has faced a challenge in the lack of awareness on the many valuable contributions children can make in such efforts. Our best practices have shown that involving children in environmental and climate initiatives has increased effectiveness and enhanced impact, proving that children and young people’s active engagement is fundamental to achieving long-term positive change. As we move forward, it will be crucial to expand such efforts and ensure that the voices of young people will continue to be heard.