**From:** The Saudi Arabian Childhood National Committee.

**To:** The U. N. Office assigned to the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clear, healthy and sustainable environment.

**Subject:** Replies to the Five Inquiries pertaining to the child’s rights to safe environment.

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**Reply to the First Inquiry**

The Saudi Arabia legislations, policies and programs concerning the child’s rights for protection from environmental harms have been given top priority. This can be seen by putting into effect all laws and regulations governing these issues. Specific examples can be provided as follows:

1. The Royal Decree No. A/90, dated 27/08/1412, where article 32 of the royal regime basic governance stipulates that “the Saudi Arabian government shall work to maintain a safe environment and protect it from pollution.”
2. Article 10 of the General System of the Environment endorsed by a royal decree No. M/34, dated 28/07/1422 stipulates that “the environment aspects shall be taken in consideration in the planning process concerning both the public and private sectors. Moreover, article No. 3 of the Executive Statute of the General System of the Environment stipulates that the concerned government body shall put these laws into effect to maintain a safe sustainable environment.
3. A royal decree No. A/133 was issued on 30-07-1437 H, stipulating re-naming the Ministry of Agriculture as (the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture) to assume duties for both the environment and water resources. The same royal decree stipulates renaming the General Presidency of Meteorology and Environmental Protection as (the General Commission of Meteorology and Environmental Protection).
4. Article No. 1 of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries endorsed by the royal decree No. M/3, dated 04-02-1421 H, stipulates that “every individual has the right for a safe environment that preserves his/her human dignity, but he/she has to take responsibility for preserving such environment for both that generation and upcoming generations within the framework of sustainable development concepts.”
5. Article No. 221 of the U.N. Law of Seas Convention endorsed by the royal decree No. M/17, dated 11-09-1416 H stipulates that “all countries have the right to take the emergency measures to protect their territorial water borders from any vulnerable environmental threat, including fishing or any other environmental threat.”
6. The Protection from Harm System issued by a royal decree No. M/52, dated 15-11-1434 H stipulates that the child has the right for protection from all sorts of harms, and in case of any needed help, he/she has the right for a suitable accommodation, treatment and social and psychological care.
7. The Child Protection System issued by a royal decree No. M/14, dated 03-02-1426 H is aimed at protecting the child from all forms of harm or negligence in his/her surrounding environment, including his/her house, school, neighborhood, public places, child care centers, adopting families, or any public or private institution, whether this act of misconduct is practiced by the child’s custodian or any other authority. This system also points out that the child shall not be left from the very beginning in an environment in which he/she can be susceptible to harm or negligence. In case a child is not secured with a suitable family environment, he/she shall be granted a substitute care. Article No. 17 in this system has affirmed the necessity of moving a child promptly to a safe environment if the child’s environment exposes his/her mental, psychological, physical and educational health to the delinquency risk, with top priority care to be given to street children as well as victims of natural disasters and wars. With regard to children’s toys in this system, article No. 21 has affirmed that toys whether manufactured locally or internationally shall comply with the safety, culture, health, and environmental standards. Article No. 21 has also affirmed that the regulations in this system shall not violate or come in conflict with any international treaty providing better child care that Saudi Arabia has signed.
8. Saudi Arabia has implemented its 10-year Child Comprehensive National Plan from 2005-2015. This plan dealt with the child’s right for health, social, recreational and security care. The plan also stressed the child has priority over other age groups in case of eruption of wars or natural disasters.
9. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the General Presidency of Meteorology and the Environment Protection and the Ministry of Education aimed at boosting the level of awareness among all individuals, including children as to the environmental and weather conditions’ risks to avoid such risks or reduce their effects to the minimum.
10. The training program entitled (The Educational Environment for KG Stage) implemented by the Ministry of Education in the school year 2016 following a circular No. 38470305, dated 16-03-1438 H. This has come within the framework of the KG Female Teachers Professional Development Project.

**Reply to the Second Inquiry**

Some examples can be presented to prove the Saudi Arabian compliance with the child’s rights for protection from harms of the environment:

1. Within the framework of the legislations and policies endorsed by the government of Saudi Arabia, children have the human rights, including the rights for life, food, accommodation, refuge, health, culture, freedom of expression, education, security as well as other psychological, social, physical, environmental, intellectual rights. In addition to the internally-designed legislations, Saudi Arabia has also complied with the international treaties that it signed including the International Child Rights Treaty and its annexed protocols dealing with the non-Saudi children and the communities residing in Saudi Arabia.
2. The Saudi Arabia Education Policy affirms that education is compulsory and free of charge for every child and that he/she has the right to complete his/her education, and it support his/her family to overcome any obstacle that stands in the way of his/her education. It should be noted here that children of the minorities residing in the kingdom are granted the same rights for education and keenness to achieve this purpose. It is worth mentioning here that courses in the KG stage incorporate topics on the environment as related to the child’s rights for a safe, friendly environment.
3. The child has the right for free healthcare and treatment including all pre-school and post-school vaccinations as part of preventive measures. The departments concerned with the child healthcare continue to exchange information regarding the fields of preventive healthcare and the occupational, psychological and medical therapies. The handicapped children and those with special needs have been provided with full healthcare services to preserve their dignity, strengthen their self-reliance, and make it easier for them to actively participate in society, which consequently leads to their individual, social, cultural and mental growth.
4. Augmenting the gifts and abilities of children as active elements in the society to identify the environmental challenges surrounding them. This can be achieved by opening doors for their participation in scientific and research competitions as well as health, giftedness and creativity programs to obtain the information that could help them solve their own problems. Such information can be later sent to scientific centers and universities for further development that could reflect positively on their right for environmental protection.
5. The Saudi Arabian National Transformation Program within the framework of the Kingdom’s vision 2030 aims at the achievement of sustainable development and focuses on good health, clean water, sanitation and the environment.
6. Implementation of the advisory programs to strengthen the child’s positive behavior and protect him/her from environmental harms. Examples of such programs include (“Rifq” or Lenience) program to reduce violence at schools, (“Ta’ziz” or Augmentation) program to promote the child’s positive behavior, (the Anti-Bulleying program to protect children from violence practiced by their mates, (the Child’s Personal Safety) program to promote their personal safety skills, and (Promoting the Education Quality Environment for the KG Stage) to upgrade the quality of the educational environment.
7. Education Advisory Units have been established in all departments at the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education to provide professional solutions for the psychological and social problems. This includes rules for the code of conduct and class attendance as well as the rights and duties for each child. Other rules in this regard include respect for children and the prevention of physical penalty, and the development of the child’s intellectual skills.
8. The existing partnership and cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the General Commission of Meteorology and Environmental Protection can help establish volunteer environmental groups among children. This could contribute to activate the behavioral and intellectual skills of children and make them aware of the harms of the environment.
9. Implementation of phone calls programs (supporting phone line 116111) (protection phone line 1919), are governmental phone lines working in collaboration among the Ministry of Education, the National Guard, the Ministry of Social Development and Labor in order to promote the child’s right for protection. Calls on these lines can be received and may include violence and family harms calls as well as inability to protect the child from risks.
10. The establishment of the General Commission of Recreation as a government institution under the slogan (Vital Society, Flourishing Environment) that comes in line with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030, in order to organize and develop the recreation sector to provide more options for recreation for all society segments including children

**Reply to the Third Inquiry**

 The Saudi Arabian government is constantly working to face challenges that hinder the child’s protection from the harms of the environment. The most prominent challenges are as follows:

1. Securing the financial allocations needed for the implementation of the programs and projects supporting the protection of the child from harms of the environment.
2. The time factor is crucial to promote the family awareness of the child’s right for protection from the environment and this is considered as an essential infra-structure to sustain such rights.
3. The development of a positive societal culture is very much needed to overcome challenges standing in the way of attaining the child’s rights for a safe environment. If the positive societal culture is not up to the level, it can lead to disinterest and negligence of the child’s rights.
4. The mass media and the social communication channels shall be directed to reach all individuals and inform them about the significance of relying on official sources as per the laws protecting the child from environmental risks.
5. Identifying solutions for wrong practices by families in particular and society in general, as well as by some mass media channels that express disrespect or disinterest in the child’s right for a safe clean environment.

**Reply to the Fourth Inquiry**

 As per the organizing statute governing the non-governmental institutions that are active to protect the child rights for a safe environment, the Saudi Arabian government supports such institutions. The Saudi Arabian General System of the environment endorsed by a royal decree No. M/34, dated 28/07/1422 stipulates that the environment awareness levels shall be upgraded, the collective and individual responsibility for the environment shall be promoted, and the volunteer effort s shall be encouraged. Examples of activities of volunteer work include the following:

1. The Saudi Arabian government issues licenses for private sector institutions that provide volunteers to support the child’s right for a safe environment. Examples of this include the Saudi Environmental Society, the Saudi – Gulf Company for Environmental Protection and the Childhood Care Society.
2. The National Transformation programs that come in line with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 supports all institutions that work to preserve the child’s right for environmental protection.
3. All civil society institutions that promote the culture of the child’s right for protection from the environment. Activities carried out by such institutions may include drama shows and other cultural activities.
4. Activating the Child International Day by the civil society institutions as an important annual occasion.

**Reply to the Fifth Inquiry**

There are numerous laws and policies pertaining to the environment in Saudi Arabia, these regulations reflect positively on the rights of the future generations of children due to the principles on which these policies are based on. Such principles include sustainable development, general interest, prevention, protection measures and penalties. Examples of such laws and policies are as follows:

(See paragraphs from 1-7 in this report)