**Call for Inputs**

**Healthy Ecosystems and Human Rights: Sustaining the Foundations of Life**

**SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**Questionnaire**

1. Please provide examples of ways in which declining biodiversity and degraded ecosystems are already having adverse impacts on human rights. Adversely affected rights could include, among others, the rights to life, health, water, food, culture, non-discrimination, a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and Indigenous rights.

Several examples can be found on the webpage of the Convention on Biological Diversity (they closely cooperate on this topic together also with the IPLCs platforms and networks).

<https://www.cbd.int/traditional/>

2. To protect a wide range of human rights, what are the specific obligations of States and responsibilities of businesses in terms of addressing the main direct drivers of harm to biodiversity and ecosystems (e.g. land conversion, loss and degradation of habitat, climate change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive species) and the indirect drivers (unsustainable production and consumption, rapid human population growth, trade, conflict and inequality)?

Most of this kind of examples can be seen in the Global assessment of the IPBES, where all direct as well as indirect drivers of harm to biodiversity and ecosystems are described in details (this assessment has around 1800 pages dedicated especially to protection of biodiversity and ecosystems).

[www.ipbes.org](http://www.ipbes.org)

3. Please provide specific examples of constitutional provisions, legislation, regulations, policies, programs or other measures that employ a rights-based approach to prevent, reduce, or eliminate harm to biodiversity and ecosystems or to restore and rehabilitate biodiversity and ecosystems.

On CBD webpage, esp. under article 8(j) implementation, which is dedicated to indigenous peoples and local communities work in biodiversity protection, as well as under the page here dedicated to Nagoya protocol - he Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way.

<https://www.cbd.int/abs/>

Under the CBD belongs also the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is an international agreement which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

<http://bch.cbd.int/protocol>

Similar convention, which helps to prevent, reduce or eliminate nature and biodiversity harms is CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention) – it is a [multilateral treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilateral_treaty) to protect endangered plants and animals. It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Union_for_Conservation_of_Nature) (IUCN). Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild, and it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 35,000 s[pecies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Species) of animals and plants.

[www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

4. If your State is one of the 156 UN Member States that recognizes the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, has this right contributed to protecting, conserving and restoring biodiversity and healthy ecosystems? If so, how? If not, why not?

**Slovak** constitution is linked also to the rights to have clean environment, but unfortunately, we do not live in the idealistic world, and although our legislation is rather strict and good, very often it is not properly implemented and enforcement of law and legislation is also often weaker then it should be – but this is more or less everywhere the same or similar.

5. Please provide specific examples of good practices in preventing, reducing, or eliminating harm to biodiversity and ecosystems, or restoring and rehabilitating biodiversity and ecosystems. These examples may occur at the international, national, sub-national, or local level. Where possible, please provide evidence related to the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the good practices (e.g. measurable outcomes such as increases in terrestrial and marine protected areas, increases in Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, declining rates of deforestation and poaching, or progress in the recovery of species that were previously threatened or endangered).

**Slovakia**, as part of the EU is obliged to implement several legislations and directives of the EU, where all best practices and examples could be seen at the webpage of Directorate General for Environment.

<https://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/>

6. Please identify specific gaps, challenges and barriers that your government, business, or organization has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to preventing, reducing, or eliminating harm to biodiversity and ecosystems.

In **Slovakia**, many people understand the protection of biodiversity as the role of the government. The protection of nature and biodiversity often ends where their own rights begin. Therefore, the biggest challenge will be probably to change this approach. Everyone can contribute to improving the environment.

7. Please specify ways in which additional protection is provided (or should be provided) for populations who may be particularly vulnerable to declining biodiversity and degraded ecosystems (e.g. women, children, persons living in poverty, members of Indigenous peoples and local communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic, racial or other minorities and displaced persons). How can these populations be empowered to protect and restore declining biodiversity and degraded ecosystems?

In **Slovakia**, the most vulnerable are persons living in poverty (our Roma population), older persons, persons with disabilities and people living in cities/bigger municipalities, where green spaces and biodiversity are less available then in rural areas. However, in comparison to other (more populated) countries, our situation is still rather fine – only few people mentioned above might have these problems, most of the population is still in favourable situation.

8. How do you safeguard the rights of individuals and communities working on biodiversity issues (potentially identified as environmental human rights defenders or land defenders)? What efforts has your Government made to create a safe environment for them to freely exercise their rights without fear of violence, intimidation, or reprisal?

Most of the population (including public, NGOs, journalists, etc.) are able to participate within discussions for all relevant policies, legislations, strategies, etc. According to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as well as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation as well as according to Aarhus convention.

9. There is substantial evidence that consumption in high-income States is adversely affecting biodiversity and ecosystems in low and middle-income States. What are ways in which high-income States should assist low-income States in responding to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, while simultaneously contributing to sustainable development in those low-income States?

Financial supports from the high-income States to low-income States should be stronger and more effectively focused and targeted to proper and correct sustainable development, including biodiversity and ecosystems approaches. Very often there is an enormous financial budget allocated towards these States, but they are „lost“ within the governmental and state systems and do not reach areas and people, who needs them. High-income States should more properly monitor and assess/evaluate and correct, where necessary, where are these financial flows end.

10. For businesses, what policies or practices are in place to ensure that your activities, products, and services across the entire supply chain (extraction/sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, sale, and end-of life management) minimize biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and meet human rights standards, especially those articulated in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?

Business and Biodiversity platforms are one kind of the form, which might work in different States (unfortunately, **Slovakia** does not have any yet); there are more and more businesses and companies, which are aware of the fact, how biodiversity and ecosystems and their services create baselines for their developments. Through these platforms, good practices, mechanisms, systems, financial allocations and help could convince them to do more within this field. Unfortunately, States and also nature protection experts, as well as NGOs are doing mistakes in inappropriate cooperation and „too scientific language“ communication in the work with business, this does not help businesses to understand the exact value of biodiversity and ecosystems for their work and for better involvement in this topic.