

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**52th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment on his visit to Slovenia, 29 September to 6 October 2022**

Geneva, 9 March 2023

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia wishes to thank Special Rapporteur Mr David Boyd for his visit to Slovenia which took place from 29 September to 6 October 2022.

For a country, devoted to environment and human rights as two of its most cherished priorities, it is only natural to pay special attention to the nexus between them. We appreciate our excellent cooperation. We thank Mr Boyd for acknowledging in his report Slovenia's good practices, the role it played in the declaration of May 20th as a World Bee Day and its leadership role, notably as a part of the core group of countries who initiated the historic recognition of the universal human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

As our Minister for Foreign and European Affairs stressed at the HRC52, we now have to focus on mainstreaming this right in the UN system and multilateral agreements, and on implementing it on the ground.

In addition to Slovenia's publicly available written contribution to Special Rapporteur's report let me provide further explanation on two points.

First, protection of human rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities is a priority for Slovenia. We noted the SR concerns over the status of Roma community. It should be noted that the issue in regards to Roma community is broader than quoted in the report. The housing problems of the Roma community should be comprehensively addressed, not just the provision of water connections. It should be noted that the ownership of the land where some of the Roma settlements are located are still not regulated. According to the national legislation, the supply of drinking water is a public utility and there are costs associated with the construction of the network and so is the treatment and distribution of water to users, meaning that users of the public service pay for the drinking water supplied.

Second, we consider the role of civil society as indispensable. It is strongly developed and vocal, especially on environmental issues, as we have witnessed at recent referendum on the "Water Act". Freedom of association is a constitutionally guaranteed right. Absence of a special national strategy for human rights defenders, in particular for environmental human rights defenders, does not limit the scope of their action or general framework of protection. Experience shows that environmental human rights defenders are well protected under the current regulatory framework.

Slovenian government encourages a regular dialogue with environmentally-engaged non-governmental organisations and youth representatives, and includes them in major environmental multilateral processes. Slovenia also has an active national children’s parliament for more than 30 years, encouraging children to participate in civic space.

Dear Special Rapporteur,

Thank you once again for your great dedication and thoughtful insights during your visit, helpful not only to the government but to a wide array of national stakeholders. The government will take appropriate actions in line with the national laws and policies. We will continue to support ambitious environmental agenda both in the multilateral fora and nationally.

Thank you.