**Global Refugee YOUTH Network - GRYN Comments on the statement “Children’s rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change”**

**Rights of the Refugee children, children on the move and migrant children**

1. Children have the right to family unification so they can be with their families and siblings. Climate change is causing much displacement around the globe, this usually involves families being separated and children suffer the most. States should ensure children are reunited with the families where they are settled.
2. All children, including children on the move and young people in refugee settlements have the right to clean water and a safe environment free from toxic wastes and contamination.  Children on the move and refugee children have the right to legal documentation.
3. Refugee children on the move must be able to access education in host government schools; this may require scholarships and such scholarships must be made available to ensure that children can attend school. Make sure scholarships are available to refugee children in host government schools and within the countries where they are offered.
4. Children should be able to report children’s rights violations through safe, clear and accessible reporting structures. This includes structures where children and their support groups can report degradation of the environment.
5. Displaced Children should be empowered to be climate change advocates in areas where they are settled. Either in the settlements, camps or cities where they live.
6. Change of languages, climate, and abrupt changes of environment can cause mental health challenges for children.  It is important for children and young people to be able to access community services that support mental health and well-being.

1. **Child rights-based approach to the environment**

Paragraph 8. Please specify, in particular for specific groups of children including refugee children, children on the move and in transit

**Intergenerational equity and future generations**

Paragraph 18. States hosting displaced children should put in place measures that ensure children’s survival and physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development.

Paragraph 22. The environmental information and education should be provided in a language the children understand and with graphics included where necessary. In situations where a child is not in their country of origin, the most used language in their locality should be used.

**The right to the highest attainable standard of health (art. 24)**

**Paragraph 23.** Children on the move do not have access to mental health services and spaces to express themselves. Refugee children do not have specialized doctors in the refugee camps and settlements, for example access to a paediatrician among others is impossible.  The wards in the refugee hospitals are also shared and there is no privacy or space dedicated to the children in such settings.States hosting children on the move should ensure access to children-friendly health care systems in the camps or settlements.

**The right to education (arts. 28 and 29 (1) (e))**

Refugee children should be able to realize  their right to being educated regardless of their legal status or nationality. In some host countries, children are discriminated against in public schools for being from some parts of the world or countries. When refugee children and host community children study together, they can make friendships that can be instrumental in transferring knowledge and skills  between children from different backgrounds.

States should be creating awareness and running campaigns to end discrimination and promote conservation of the environment and fight climate change in all forms at schools. Host governments should fund some of the campaigns and support those doing campaigns against some of the discriminatory practices. Consider the views and ideas of refugee children in campaigns and national programmes. This is to make sure the people do not use discriminatory language in schools and homes where refugees are settled and to encourage practices that save the environment in areas where refugees are settled (for example refugee camps and settlements).

**The right to rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities (art. 31)**

There is a need to have more free spaces in some of the countries that are hosting refugees or that are resettling people. These spaces can help the refugee children and children on the move to play, relax and form a community of peers that they can interact with and relate to. Most migrants and refugees usually settle in slums where there are no proper sanitary measures, no drainage systems and with toxic waste from the cities around the world. These places are where children play coming into contact with these dangerous wastes. States should ensure there are programmes that support children from low-income families and migrant children from these slum areas to access safe and clean spaces.

**The right of the child to be heard (art. 12)**

Most children in the refugee camps and displacement settings do not have a say in any decision concerning their lives, especially on how to keep their environment clean and safe. States should ensure there are forums where children are free to speak in the displacement settings and ensure some of the policy works and decisions from these forums are implemented and not just on papers.