**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations**

**Ref.** *Questionairre in relation to Human Rights resolution 53/6 on human rights and climate change*

1. **Please describe through concrete examples and stories the impacts of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights in your country. Please indicate whether the impact was exceptional or whether an example if many similarly situated cases. Please estimate the number of cases that may be similar in your country.**

As one of the adverse effects of climate change in Azerbaijan, it has occurred as a result of atrocities that occurred after the First and Second Karabakh Wars (1988-1994 and 2020), including not only occupation, but also unnecessary damage inflicted on the wild nature, biological diversity, flora and fauna, water sources, and overall ecology in the entire occupied territories with the use of internationally prohibited weapons. As a result, the transborder river Okhchuchay, which flows through the territories of Armenia and Azerbaijan and finally flows into the river Araks in Azerbaijan. For many years, this transborder river has been constantly polluted by Armenia with chemical waste from the mining industry, which has turned the river into a collector of industrial waste. So, as a consequence of the pollution of Okhchuchay, the quality of water reserves in the Araks River, the second-largest river in the South Caucasus, has been negatively affected. Furthermore, various rare plant and animal species have been destroyed, and the interruption of the self-purification process in rivers and lakes in our country, including the Okhchuchay River, has turned water basins into harmful, dead zones for all living organisms.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Overall, it is not an exceptional case but only one example of many similar cases. For instance, in 2020, during the Second Karabakh War, Armenia used the prohibited white phosphorous weapons to burn the forests in Shusha City, Azerbaijan.[[2]](#footnote-2) The Ombudsman of Azerbaijan has always brought to the attention of international human rights organizations the facts related ecocide, urbicide and other atrocities of the Karabakh War that inflicted mass damage to the country and submitted them the relevant statements, and reports.

1. **Please describe any specific measures, including public policies, legislation, practices, strategies, or institutional arrangements that your Government has undertaken or plans to undertake at a national, sectoral or sub-national level, in compliance with applicable international human rights law, to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, including equity-based approaches and solutions. Please also identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability, including means of implementation.**

The main essence of the national environmental policy in Azerbaijan is to protect ecosystems in order to ensure that people live in an ecologically clean environment, to sustainable development with the efficient use of natural resources, minimal harmful impact on the environment, and restoration and protection of its initial state. Therefore, in recent years, the Government of Azerbaijan has carried out tree planting movements across the country to reduce the risk of green gas and enrich the forest areas, in particular in the liberation areas in the Karabakh economic region.

Azerbaijan actively participates in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. According to Article 4 of the Paris Agreement, Azerbaijan has introduced its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) by 2050 to the UNFCCC Secretariat. In addition, Azerbaijan has a State Commission on Climate Change to ensure the implementation and monitoring of nationally determined contributions.

***Institutional developments***

In order to organize and improve the solid household waste management system across the country, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers’ Decision of 27 November, 2021, a "Commission on solid household waste management across the country, including de-occupied territories," was established.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan will host the 24 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29), and the State has already started the preparatory phase in this regard.[[3]](#footnote-3) The State has already started the preparatory process for organization of this international event and a relevant Organizing Committee was established according to the approved Presidential Decree. The Ombudsman of Azerbaijan, Sabina Aliyeva was also included to the Committee.

***Strategies***

In the direction of environmental protection and efficient use of natural resources, "Socio-economic development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2022-2026", "Transformation of our world: Agenda in the field of sustainable development until 2030", "Social strategy of the regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2023" (economic development State Program)", "Measure Plan for 2020-2022 on ensuring efficient use of water resources", "State Program for 2020-2024 on geological study of the subsoil and efficient use of mineral-raw material base" and actions are carried out within the framework of other programs.

The effective use of water resources in the direction of creating a clean ecological environment, protection of the ecological environment of the Caspian Sea, waste management, reduction of the negative effects of climate change, modernization of observation and monitoring systems, protection of atmospheric air, protection of biodiversity, development of ecotourism and aquaculture, protection of forest cover, greenery, increasing, and rehabilitating polluted areas, increasing the fertility of soil resources, expanding the mineral-raw material base, efficient use of natural resources, and increasing ecological thinking are the main priority directions.

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant UK authority regarding cooperation in the field of environment and climate change with the aim of minimizing the effects of climate change, proper management of waste, including plastic waste, combating desertification, and other issues.[[4]](#footnote-4)

***Legislative developments***

Currently, actions are being taken to improve and strengthen the legislative base.

The Cabinet of Ministers adopted a Decision on 17 August, 2022, to amend its previous Decision of 1992 on "On the application of payments for natural resources, payments for the discharge of polluting substances into the natural environment, and the use of funds generated from those payments". With the approval of this document, the payment norms have been improved according to modern standards.

The Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan has developed a draft law “on Efficient Use of Energy Resources and Energy Effectiveness”, which defines the foundations of state policy in the field of energy efficiency and rational consumption of energy resources, which entered into force on 1 July 2022. Also on 12 July 2021, the Law “on use renewable energy sources in the generation of electricity” entered into force.[[5]](#footnote-5)

***Future policy endeavors***

In addition, the projects of the "State Program for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Forests in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2030" and the "National Strategy for the Efficient Use of Water Resources" are being prepared.

The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan has prepared a “Roadmap for the development of offshore wind energy in Azerbaijan” in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation.[[6]](#footnote-6) In 2021, a “Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the effective use of offshore wind energy” was signed between the Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan and the International Finance Corporation.

1. **Please identify and share examples of promising practices and critical challenges n the promotion, protection, and fulfillment of the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage, including examples that highlight multilateral cooperation and approaches, at global and regional levels, including equity-based approaches and solutions.**

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan collaborates with all major institutions operating within the UN system in the field of environmental protection in both bilateral and multilateral formats. Currently, Azerbaijan has acceded to more than 20 international conventions and protocols. The relevant activities are being continued to join other international multilateral agreements in the respective area.

A bilateral legal framework has been established with foreign countries and organizations in the field of environmental protection. In this regard, Azerbaijan has signed more than 30 bilateral agreements with various countries and organizations.

The military occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia poses a serious threat to the rare ecosystems of Azerbaijan's ancient Karabakh region. Armenia's illegal actions directly contradict the comprehensive development goals and climate change measures of our country.

1. **Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action and justice that promotes the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage.**

The following additional information is added in the context of the restoration of the damaged and polluted environment in Azerbaijan.

For instance, the State of Azerbaijan pursued an initiative to preserve biodiversity, enrich water reservoirs, and increase fish population in the economic zones of Karabakh and Eastern Zangazur, 200 thousand fish fingerlings have been released into the Khachinchay reservoir.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In recent years, the State has undertaken the necessary action to restore the destroyed greenery, and forest strips, and therefore, various tree planting campaigns have been held.[[8]](#footnote-8) The Ombudsman Institution has also actively participated in these campaigns. In addition, with the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and "SOCAR PETROLEUM" CJSC, eco-volunteers presented tree seedlings to citizens in order to promote tree planting. The citizens were also informed about how to plant and care for tree seedlings.[[9]](#footnote-9)

As well, within the framework of the "My Clean Country" campaign, the next community cleanup days were held around Hajigabul Lake and in the part of the Kura River that passes through the city of Mingachevir. In total, about 1 ton of waste was cleaned. Similar actions have also been organized by local public unions in close cooperation with the UN Country Office.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In Azerbaijan, the 19 certified Young Climate Ambassadors have been appointed to participate in climate change mitigation activities at both local and global levels.[[11]](#footnote-11) The purpose of this program, implemented in cooperation with the Ministries of Ecology and Natural Resources, Youth and Sports and UNICEF, is to increase the awareness of Azerbaijani youth about climate change and involve them in the fight process. In the framework of the project, educational materials were prepared for the purpose of conducting educational events with the support of these ambassadors on national platforms. After a series of training sessions and workshops, climate ambassadors will visit different urban and rural areas of the country to educate other teenagers and young adults about climate action.

1. https://www.azernews.az/nation/212102.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://coe.mfa.gov.az/en/news/3371/white-phosphorus-was-widely-used-by-armenian-armed-forces-for-burning-forests-around-shusha [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://sdg.iisd.org/events/2024-un-climate-change-conference-unfccc-cop-29/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://eco.gov.az/az/nazirlik/xeber?newsID=11944> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://minenergy.gov.az/en/alternativ-ve-berpa-olunan-enerji/azerbaycanda-berpa-olunan-enerji-menbelerinden-istifade#:~:text=In%20recent%20years%2C%20the%20work,renewable%20energy%20has%20been%20approved>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.azernews.az/oil_and_gas/164624.html>; and <https://turkic.world/en/articles/energy/106700> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://qafqazinfo.az/news/detail/xacincay-su-anbarina-baliq-korpeleri-buraxilib-fotolar-419985> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://eco.gov.az/az/nazirlik/xeber?newsID=46> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://eco.gov.az/az/nazirlik/xeber?newsID=13483> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. https://eco.gov.az/az/nazirlik/xeber?newsID=19225 ; <https://azerbaijan.az/news/674> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.unicef.org/azerbaijan/az/press-relizl%C9%99r/az%C9%99rbaycanda-yerli-v%C9%99-qlobal-s%C9%99viyy%C9%99l%C9%99rd%C9%99-iqlim-d%C9%99yi%C5%9Fikiyi-il%C9%99-m%C3%BCbariz%C9%99> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)