**Questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council resolution 53/6 on human rights and climate change**

**Submission of Oman Human Rights Commission (NHRI Oman)**

 **January 2024**

**Oman Human Rights Commission:**

Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) was established in 2008 by the Royal Decree No. 124/2008 and was reorganized by the Royal Decree No. 57/2022 on 4/7/2022. The latter provides OHRC with full independence in practicing its mandates. It also provides a new mechanism for the appointment of the OHRC Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson, who are to be elected from the members not representing the government. The Royal Decree also stipulates the mandates and responsibilities of OHRC that include engagement with national and international bodies in all areas related to human rights.

This Royal Decree marks a new milestone in the operation of OHRC as it ensured compliance with the Paris Principles as well as the International Conventions and charters to which the Sultanate has acceded. It also ensures compliance with the Omani laws based on the Basic Statute of the State.

OHRC comprises of 14 members with background and experience in human rights. Six members represent government institutions related to human rights and eight members represent the civil society including independent experts in human rights in Oman.

OHRC is a member of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and is classified as a (B) status NHRI under the Paris Principles.

OHRC also monitors and receives complaints related to human rights from citizens and residents, and strives to address and settle all complaints in accordance with its mandates. OHRC receives complaints through various mechanisms such as the email, the 24/7 toll-free number (1970), and the complaint registration system on the website. OHRC also operates a WhatsApp number (+968 72221966) to receive inquiries and urgent complaints and social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram through which complaints and inquiries are received and addressed.

**OHRC Responses:**

Each question will be answered by referring to its number in the questionnaire as follows:

1. It is evident that climate change impacts have reached all continents of the world, including deserts, mountains, islands, lowlands, and coastal areas. Oman has experienced several severe tropical cases in the last twenty years due to the adverse impacts of climate change that affected the full enjoyment of human rights directly and indirectly in those affected areas. For example, in June 2007 Oman witnessed an extremely powerful tropical cyclone named Gonu, that became the strongest cyclone on record in the Arabian Sea. Major floods affected Muscat Governorate (the Capital) and large parts of neighboring areas and countries. As a result, deaths and causalities occurred, and there were mass infrastructure damages, such as roads, harbors, bridges, and loss of power and water services, in addition to damages of hundreds of houses, properties, cars and others. Overall, tens of people killed, thousands of families and individuals were affected, and over $4 billion estimated damage in the infrastructure and assets. Due to the dramatic climate change globally, the occurrence of these tropical cases (cyclones and tropical storms) has become regular every three to five years. At least six tropical cases occurred in the last 20 years and all affected Oman and impacted temporarily peoples’ enjoyment of human rights including the right to adequate housing and education.
2. Data are being collected via several means. Government authorities, such as ministry of social development usually report individual and families’ vulnerable cases and do evaluation and suggest the action or response required. The Oman Human Rights Commission has several means of communication and data collection. These means include; Email Complaints@ohrc.om, Submit the case through an electronic form available on OHRC website ([www.ohrc.om](http://www.ohrc.om)), Submit through a recorded message by calling the toll-free number (80002008), sending the case via WhatsApp number, or through visiting the OHRC office. In case of extreme weather and slow-onset events, special committees are established and conduct site visits to collect data on the impacts of loss and damage. Data may include but not limited to; number of family members, number and types of loss and damage taking into consideration all persons within the affected areas including all vulnerable groups of the society.
3. The Sultanate of Oman has paid great consideration to the protection of environment by issuing the Law on Conservation of the Environment and Prevention of Pollution 114/2001, which replaced the law 10/82 and guided the development activities on scientific and practical basis to ensure a responsible economic and social development while sustaining the environment protection on the base of sustainable development principles. In addition, and in compliance with applicable international human rights law, Oman has acceded to seven of nine conventions on human rights. Oman has also joined the convention on climate change, the 1997 Kyoto protocol and Paris agreement based on the convention. Accordingly, Oman has announced 2050 as a target to achieve net zero emissions.

Programs and projects have been scheduled and several government authorities and private companies and institutions share the responsibility of implementation. One of mechanisms for ensuring accountability, including means of implementation, Oman has established the implementation follow-up unit which follow up and monitor the implementation of projects related to Oman vision 2040 four pillars including; people and society, economy and development, governance and institutional performance, and sustainable environment. Oman confirmed its commitment to protecting the environment by dedicating an entire focus on sustainable environment in its vision for 2040, and by setting ambitious goals to achieve in this regard.
4. The National Multi Hazard Early Warning System (NMHEWS) of Oman was designed to respond to national water-related hazards. The National Center for Multi Hazard Early Warning issues the necessary warnings about the weather conditions especially tropical storms and cyclones. Accordingly, The National Committee for Emergency Management meets and decides the required actions. These actions range from local level to national and global level based on the strength of the case. Information and directions are disseminated via several means including print media, TV, Radio, SMS, and WhatsApp. In some cases, shelter centers are designated and furnished with all the essential supplies, tools, and necessities to be ready for receiving displaced individuals from their original locations when necessary. Sub-committees are established on the local level and include members from government, private sector, civil societies, local community, and individual experts. Some challenges face working groups on ground, such as cut of electricity, roads and communications. In addition, from a planning point of view, most of Oman’s urban areas are situated on coastline, and many of these are lowlands which make them vulnerable to the effects of Tsunami.
5. Some challenges facing working groups on ground, such as cut of electricity, damaged roads and communications, difficulties to reach hospitals and health centers. In such cases, it might be recommended that several permanent shelters to be established in each city and to be built of concrete cement. The shelter could include sections for old people, disabled people, health care center, power generators, emergency calling system, food storage, clean water containers, and other necessities. From a planning point of view, new residential areas should be built in a way to minimize or avoid the risks of Tsunami, and the coastline buffer zones should be maintained.
6. Floods are considered among the most significant consequences and negative impacts as a result of climate changes. They are major contributors to fatalities and the loss and damage of properties and infrastructure leading to major economic loss. The severity of floods increases in open deserts and areas devoid of vegetation. In order to avoid risks and negative impacts of climate changes, and minimize loss of lives and properties’ damages caused by floods, it is of great importance to increase vegetation cover around urban areas by planting belts of trees. Forests and vegetation cover surrounding cities and urban areas play a crucial role by acting as barriers and buffers to break the intensity of floods and reducing their catastrophic impacts on residents, properties, and public services and infrastructures. Similarly, mangrove trees operate almost in the same mechanism to protect low-lying coastal areas from the hazards of high waves.