Bratislava, 19 April 2022

**INPUT OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON CULTURAL RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT BY THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL RIGHTS**

*About the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights:*

*The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (hereinafter the “Centre”) is a national human rights institution established in the Slovak Republic, accredited with status B by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). As an NHRI, the Centre is a member of the European Network of NHRIs (ENNHRI). The Centre was established by the Act of Slovak National Council No. 308/1993 Coll. on the Establishment of Slovak National Centre for Human Rights. Pursuant to the Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and on Protection from Discrimination, as amended (the Anti-Discrimination Act), the Centre also acts as the only Slovak equality body. As an NHRI and equality body, the Centre performs a wide range of tasks in the field of protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms including the observance of the principle of equal treatment.*

*The Centre among other powers:*

*1) monitors and evaluates the observance of human rights and the observance of equal treatment principle;*

*2) gathers and, upon request, provides information on racism, xenophobia and antisemitism in the Slovak Republic;*

*3) conducts research and surveys to provide data in the field of human rights; gathers and distributes information in this area;*

*4) prepares educational activities and participates in information campaigns aimed at increasing tolerance of the society;*

*5) provides legal assistance to victims of discrimination and manifestations of intolerance;*

*6) issues expert opinions on matters concerning the observance of the equal treatment principle;*

*7) performs independent inquiries related to discrimination;*

*8) prepares and publishes reports and recommendations on issues related to discrimination; and provides library services and other services in the field of human rights.*

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**The Centre submits the following input to the selected questions of the Call for Submission on cultural rights and sustainable development for the purpose of the report by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights:**

1. **The cultures of development**
2. What is your understanding of what “development” should aspire to?

The Centre understands development in terms of improvement of well-being, enhancing of enjoyment of human rights, equality and social justice of every member of the society, including members of minorities and people that are excluded from access to power and decision-making.

1. How is development defined in your country? If it exists, please provide the definition of development used in your government’s / organizations’ strategies or policies towards (sustainable) development.

There is no unified definition of development in Slovakia. In various policy documents concerning development, regional development and sustainable development, the issue is addressed through priorities.

The Centre underlines to recognize and include human rights, including principles of equality and non-discrimination in the overall approach to sustainable development and any policies that implement Agenda 2030 in Slovakia. The Centre conducted several advocacy activities aimed at the respective public authorities responsible for its implementation at the national level. However, the inclusion of a human-rights based approach to sustainable development and perspective of rights holders are very limited in the national context (and tends to address mainly inclusive education of Roma children and several aspects of the rule of law).

1. Has your country developed and adopted a (sustainable) development strategy? If so, please indicate what the main development model is, the aims that are communicated and monitored.

The Slovak Government took the first steps towards the adaptation of the Agenda 2030 in 2017 and the majority of the first activities, including the participation process, took place from January 2018 until late July 2018. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its individual goals/targets is being implemented through the National Investment Plan of the Slovak Republic for the Years 2018 – 2030 (hereinafter the “NIP”). NIP is a supra-ministerial strategic document that defines priority themes and programmes. Priority investment programmes and projects are planned under the areas of transportation; energy; informatization and electronic communications; research and innovation; healthcare; environment; agriculture and forestry; social inclusion and employment; and regional development[[1]](#footnote-1).

Currently, the main updated implementation document for sustainable development is called a *Vision and Development Strategy of Slovakia until 2030 - Long-Term Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic - Slovakia 2030[[2]](#footnote-2)* (hereinafter “Slovakia 2030”) and was adopted in December 2020. The document explains its overall understanding of development as “improving the quality of life” and sustainability as a “use of resources in a way that does not limit future generations”[[3]](#footnote-3). The document sets the main goals to implement social development in its economic, environmental and social dimensions.

Slovakia 2030 defines goals and priorities of development in three integrated programmes - protection and development of resources; their sustainable use; and community development[[4]](#footnote-4). Under these programmes, the document defines a number of goals[[5]](#footnote-5):

1. Protection and development of resources:
* Stopping the decline of the population and supporting the growth of the share of economically active population
* Improving accessibility and quality of education and harmonizing it with expected demands of the labour market
* Improving health and length of active life of the population
* Ensuring full application of the rule of law and increasing security of state and society
* Ensuring efficient and sustainable management of natural resources
* Ensuring efficient and sustainable management of cultural resources
1. Sustainable use of resources:
* Supporting the development of strong innovation-based regional economies
* Completing the infrastructure of an innovative green economy
* Improving sustainability and resilience of national and regional economies
1. Community development:
* Improving the accessibility, transparency and efficiency of public administration
* Strengthening of economic sustainability of communities of municipalities, cities and regions
* Ensure the availability and sustainability of quality, modern and efficient infrastructure, services and housing for a healthy and fulfilling community life
1. Who are the main stakeholders defining, driving and monitoring the (sustainable) development process? Please provide information on the various levels or sectors of stakeholders involved.

In Slovakia, the main actors responsible for driving the sustainable development process – in terms as defined by the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development are as follows:

* Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Digitalisation (coordinates the process)
* Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Agenda 2030 (advisory body)
* Slovak Academy of Science (evaluation)
* Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (collection and evaluation of data)
* Relevant ministries, state administration authorities and local and regional governments (implementation)
1. Are there participatory processes influencing and informing the definition and evaluation of (sustainable) development policies? If so, how?

The Centre welcomed the efforts of the public authorities for the adaptation and implementation of the Agenda 2030 to engage key stakeholders, especially representatives of the non-profit sector, academia and social partners in the respective processes as well as the establishment of the Council. The participatory process involved regional meetings, meetings with youth and thematic meetings. Nevertheless, due to the lack of time and pressure to complete all implementation processes and adopt the NIP before the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, voices of many key stakeholders have not been fully heard.

The Centre however observed important challenges from the side of relevant public authorities relating to the overall lack of their understanding and inclusion of human rights perspective to the implementation of the individual national plans and relevant SDGs. The outcomes of the participatory process was also not fully transposed into the final version of the national action plan implementing the Agenda 2030 in Slovakia.

Based on its advocacy initiative, the Centre was granted a membership in a working group associated with one of the two chambers of the governmental advisory body on sustainable development – the Council of the Government for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the “Council”). The Centre has played an active role during the participatory process organised from February 2018 to April 2018 and its representatives attended multiple sessions addressing inclusive education, eradication of poverty, rule of law and democracy. During the whole process, the Centre highlighted the importance of application of human rights-based approach in the process of adaptation of the Agenda 2030 as well as mainstreamed integration of equality and inclusion in respect to all national priorities of implementation of the Agenda 2030.

1. **The cultural dimension of the sustainable development goals**
2. In designing the strategy to achieve SDGs, what consideration has been given to their cultural dimensions and to cultural rights? Which aspects have been considered?

Slovakia 2030 includes a specific goal with regards to sustainable management of cultural resources, which is understood quite narrowly, mainly in regard to cultural heritage and does not include perspective of rights holders, including of cultural rights. This includes seven sub-goals: restoration of national cultural monuments; strengthening the role of cultural heritage, education and awareness; sustainable cultural tourism; increasing the growth of cultural consumption; improving the management and presentation of cultural heritage; digitalization of cultural heritage; and strengthening of the relationship with cultural and historical values of the country[[6]](#footnote-6).

1. NIP, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf> , p.2 and supra 3 and 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf>, p.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf>, p.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf>, p.22. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)