



المؤتمر الدولي حول
تأثير النشاط البشري على الحق في بيئة صحية وملائمة:
الممارسات والتحديات والحلول

The International Conference on
The Impact of Human Activity
on The Right to a Healthy and Adequate Environment:
Practices, Challenges and Solutions

الأربعاء 6 سبتمبر 2023 | Wednesday 6th September 2023
المنامة، مملكة البحرين | Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

المؤسسة الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان
National Institution for Human Rights



Working Paper

Practices and challenges related to air quality and its impact on the right to the environment

International Conference: The Impact of Human Activity on the Right to a Healthy and Adequate Environment: Practices, Challenges and Solutions

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Republic of Serbia

6 September 2023

Manama – Kingdom of Bahrain

Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to first to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to address such an esteemed group of participants at the "International Conference on the Impact of Human Activities on the Right to a Healthy and Adequate Environment." This is a unique chance for us to collaborate and make progress, being well aware that environmental protection is a key challenge faced in every part of the world.

As we exchange experiences today in the Kingdom of Bahrain, we face issues that demand attention and action. Climate change, biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, deforestation - these are just some of the problems we are facing. Our capability to preserve and protect nature and ecosystems is crucial for both present and future generations.

Ombudsman institutions from all around the world, representatives of the business community, academia, international administrations and the non-governmental sector play a pivotal role in this process. Our dedication and work hold great importance for achieving a more sustainable and prosperous world that respects human rights. Every individual has the right to a healthy environment, access to clean water, air, and food, regardless of their nationality, race, gender, or socioeconomic status.



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The Ombudsman, as an independent and impartial state body, plays a crucial role in safeguarding citizens' rights to a healthy environment. Our role is to ensure that laws and regulations are respected and that citizens' complaints are appropriately addressed, while monitoring the implementation of Ombudsman's commendations by public authorities.

Majority of environmental complaints received by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia between July 2022 and July 2023 pertained to air quality, noise emission and nature protection. With regard to air quality and noise emissions, citizens primarily complained about unpleasant odours and noise from industrial and hospitality buildings. In some complaints submitted to the Ombudsman, citizens also raised concerns about possible non-ionizing radiation, water and soil pollution. Out of the total number of complaints received, 70% were in relation to the work of local self-governments, 26% were related to the work of ministries, mainly the Ministry of Environmental Protection, while 14% of the complaints pertained to other bodies. In terms of rights violations, the complaints in the field of environmental protection also reported violations of the right to good governance, primarily the right to efficient administrative proceedings, adherence to the rule of law, and created legal expectations.

As representatives of human rights protection institutions, we have the opportunity to participate in shaping policies and legislative frameworks that support environmental sustainability and protection. Investing in renewable energy sources, improving recycling systems, preserving natural habitats, and promoting sustainable practices in industry are just a few of the key areas where we can work. We have observed that the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and strategic documents should be elevated. The legislative framework in the Republic of Serbia is in line with the highest international standards, but the enforcement of regulations and effective actions of state bodies are areas where we still have a lot to do.

From the perspective of economy, we understand that the goal for business representatives is profit, but we must bear in mind that sustainability and profit are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are closely interconnected. A sustainable business model not only preserves our planet but also creates new opportunities for the development and growth of companies. Sustainable development practices also bring competitive advantages in the global market.

It's important to emphasize the role of education in raising awareness about the importance of environmental protection. Educating the younger generations about



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ecological challenges and ways they can contribute to nature and its resources' preservation is crucial for building environmentally responsible societies.

Non-governmental organizations play a special role in environmental preservation. The activities of experts and enthusiasts promote awareness about ecological issues, advocate for sustainable policies and encourage responsible behaviour towards the environment. Your voice is essential to involve a broader audience in this global challenge.

Collaboration across all these sectors is the path to success. By fostering cross-border cooperation and solidarity, we will manage to overcome the challenges that we are facing.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that our future and the future of our planet lie in our hands. This conference is an opportunity for us to establish collaboration that will bring us closer to a sustainable world. Let us seize the moment to inspire others by our example.

Thank you for your attention, and I believe that together, we will build a world where the environment and human rights go hand in hand towards a sustainable future.

Once again, I express my gratitude for the invitation to participate in your esteemed conference.

Released on 6 September, 2023

Manama - Kingdom of Bahrain

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