

Protection of the Environment and Human Rights

Tēnā koutou katoa. Good morning.

My name is Eleanor and I am speaking today on behalf of Children and Youth with support from the Indigenous Peoples, Women and Science and Technology Major Groups.

To enjoy the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a person needs to live in a safe environment. A clean environment. A healthy environment. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family. Without a healthy sustainable environment, these rights are undermined. We welcome the changes to the text today reflecting this more strongly.

A clean and sustainable environment determines whether there is food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe, resources to provide us with shelter. For people whose livelihoods depend on the land or water the state of the environment also affects income and thus access to health care and education.

Some of the most vulnerable groups affected by environmental degradation are children and youth, indigenous peoples and women. Because of this, they must continue to be included alongside other vulnerable groups such as migrants, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the contributions of stakeholder groups in environmental protection such as that of the scientific community in exploring the potentials for citizen science, traditional knowledge and monitoring of environmental risks.

Please don't ever forget that the best path towards achieving the enjoyment of human rights and a sustainable environment is one that commits to peace. We all acknowledge the link between the environment and sustainable development, between the environment and human rights, so let this also be better reflected in the text.

A world without a clean, healthy environment is a world in which human rights do not exist.