

**Global Pact for the Environment**  
**March 18-20, Nairobi, Kenya**  
**Day 1: Agenda 4: Morning Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Chair

My name is Mrinalini Rai, speaking on behalf of the CSOs present here today.

We, welcome very much the initiative to develop a Global Pact for the Environment **which would act as an “umbrella text” to strengthen international environmental law; codifying updated and improved environmental principles in one comprehensive instrument.**

- Current environmental crisis **needs bold and transformative action by all Members States.**
- We **welcome that the Members States** are taking the lead but underscore that the civil society and relevant stakeholders are keen to be part of this process, it is **important to involve us**, including our full, meaningful and effective participation.
- GPE will only fly if there is **ownership that includes Civil Society groups** all around the world, including indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth among others. We are here with a **delegation - small but strong** of many experts on environmental law, as well as NGOs with grass root organisations as their members, who are in the frontlines and suffering daily of the lack of environmental law, and impunity on the ground.
- Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are **in charge of at least 80% of biodiversity and occupy about ¼ of the planet** and have therefore a huge stake in protection of the environment and can in fact, as rightsholders, contribute to reversing the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and enhanced environmental protection and flourishing biodiversity that will benefit all humankind.
- The fragmented nature of existing environmental law only **provides more loopholes and lacunas that detractors of our only planet exploit with reckless abandonment.** We consider that the only option we have in light of the emergency state of our Planet is to achieve a comprehensive **instrument which allows a strong societal and governance response to this enormous challenge.**

**Referring to GEO-6 Key message,**

**Para 14, states** “ Current environmental policy alone is not enough to address these challenges. Urgent cross-sectoral policy actions, through a whole-of-society approach, are needed to address the challenges of sustainable development. “

We call upon the many member states in this meeting who express reservations about the need for a new international action to reconsider and act on the scientifically-proven need for urgency and action.

**Young people cannot wait any longer.** Our children are hopeful that we will take bold action for them and come up with a harmonized global pact. **As an Indian proverb reminds us “ We do not inherit the lands from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”**

Hence, We need a solid framework of **environmental law principles and environmental rights** for succeeding in achieving the **“Transformative Change” and leaving no one behind.**

**Thank you Chair for giving us this opportunity to share and engage in this discussion.**