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**OHCHR Statement to the
Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly**



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Thank you chair. UNEA-6 takes place against the backdrop of multiple planetary crises reaping unprecedented, rapidly escalating and catastrophic harm on people and nature.

Human rights, including the right to a healthy environment offer critical guidance for preventing and remedying this harm.

This is the first Environment Assembly to take place since the UN General Assembly recognized that all people everywhere have the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

OHCHR is pleased to see the right to a healthy environment being referenced in some of the resolutions that will be adopted at UNEA.

Similarly, the right to a healthy environment has been integrated in key outcomes like the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at CBD COP15, decisions adopted at UNFCCC COPS 27 and 28, and the Global Framework on Chemicals.

There is a growing realization that human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, are critical to effective action to address the multiple planetary crises.

For example, in its Sixth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that rights-based approaches contribute to more effective and sustainable outcomes from climate action.

But it is not enough to simply reference human rights.

We must work together, better and with great determination to make all human rights a reality for all people.

For UN Environment Assembly, operationalizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment should be a primary objective, a contribution to the coherence of the multilateral system and the effective enjoyment of all human rights.

The General Assembly was very clear that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is essential for “human well-being and the full enjoyment of all human rights, for present and future generations.”

Looking ahead, humanity has an unprecedented opportunity to rise to the challenge of multiple planetary crises.

We can come together.

We can end plastic pollution.

We can make peace with nature.

We can protect our ocean, our atmosphere, and our food systems.

We can transform our economies and put a stop to unsustainable consumption and production.

We can seek environmental justice, acknowledging and remediating environmental harm, including the long and tragic history of environmental racism.

We can hold the perpetrators of environmental harm, including businesses, accountable.

We can empower people in all their diversity as agents of the transformative change we need.

But we must act now with far greater urgency and conviction to guarantee the right to a healthy environment for current and future generations.

We urge you to join us in realizing the High Commissioner's vision of [Human rights: a path for solutions](#) which clearly states a simple truth. To succeed, environmental action, including on climate change, must be grounded in human rights.