

PROMOTE | PROTECT | RESPECT ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

UN Environment has been undertaking work on human rights and the environment for almost two decades. In a series of resolutions, the former UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Council have drawn attention to the relationship between a safe and healthy environment and the enjoyment of human rights, and invited UN Environment and other agencies and organisations, to coordinate activities relating to human rights and the environment¹

NOW

UN ENVIRONMENT'S WORK ON ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING



STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

UN Environment works with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to enhance the capacity of states and citizens to understand and operationalise the linkages between human rights and the environment.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- A** Since 2012 UN Environment has supported the Special Rapporteur's consultations and expert seminars on human rights and the environment. This work has included the identification of good practices on human rights and the environment; clarification of the linkages between human rights and climate change, and biodiversity and the rights of the child.
- B** Since 2016 UN Environment has led a joint global effort with the Special Rapporteur and other partners to sensitize the judiciary on constitutional environmental rights and to evaluate the impact of these rights on environmental protection. Three colloquia have been convened in South Africa (April 2016), Brazil (May 2017), and Pakistan (Feb 2018).
- C** UN Environment supported regional negotiations on a Latin American and Caribbean Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental matters instrument until its adoption in San Jose, Costa Rica on 4 March 2018.



PROMOTING INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS





FOR EXAMPLE:

- A** In 2016 UN Environment convened a system-wide Frontier Dialogue on Human Rights and the Environment, jointly organized with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- B** In 2017 UN Environment and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights jointly organised a webinar on Environmental Human Rights Defenders, and a side event on Human Rights and Pollution during the third session of the UN Environment Assembly.



BUILDING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

UN Environment has partnered with other organisations to produce publications, e-courses, and other informational material with findings and recommendations for state and non-state actors including:

-  Legal instruments and judicial decisions related to human rights and the environment
-  A report on climate change and human rights for UNFCCC COP21
-  A compendium of good practices on human rights and the environment
-  A book and judicial companion on constitutional environmental rights around the world



THE ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS INITIATIVE

represents the next phase of UN Environment's work on human rights and the environment. Through the Initiative we will build on the outcomes of past projects and key UN Environment Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions.

THROUGH THE INITIATIVE, UN ENVIRONMENT:

- A** Strengthen awareness of environmental rights for people on the frontlines of environmental protection, and develop resources that they and others can use.
- B** Promote the realization of rights and the fulfillment of obligations relating to the environment, including through broader complementary partnerships.
- C** Enable UN Environment to make tangible contributions to the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars of the UN system.
- D** Enhance its legal support to all actors to understand implementing environmental rights obligations by producing legal and policy guidance on environmental rights.
- E** Produce informational and training materials and opportunities to contribute to increased awareness of all actors on emerging issues related to environmental rights.
- F** House and manage the collation of online resources on environmental rights. The resource portal will make available environmental legal information and tools on environmental rights.

THROUGH THE INITIATIVE, UN ENVIRONMENT WILL:

- A** **Engage** governments to strengthen institutional capacities to develop and implement policy and legal frameworks that protect environmental rights effectively and inclusively.
- B** **Assist** businesses to better understand what their environmental rights obligations are and provide guidance on how to move from a compliance culture to championing environmental rights.
- C** **Support** the dissemination of information on environmental rights to the public, and particularly to vulnerable populations and peoples.

MORE INFORMATION

www.environmentalrightsinitiative.org

Environmental Rights Initiative video: <https://bit.ly/2GLOimS>

UN Environment Assembly video: <https://bit.ly/2r3ANJI>

Mini-Course on Environmental Defenders
<https://bit.ly/2vTSRut>

UN Environment's Policy on Environmental Defenders
available in all six languages of the United Nations
(Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish)
<https://bit.ly/2HwO4nU>

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1 UN HRC Resolution 2005/60, Paragraph 8

2 Partnership of states, other UN bodies, relevant Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, inter-governmental organisations, civil society, judiciaries, environmental activists, national human rights institutions, media, academia, and the private sector.