



EXPERT CONSULTATION ON BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

20-21 September 2016
Palais Wilson, Room 1-016
Geneva, Switzerland

Programme

Day 1 – Tuesday 20 September

13:30-14:00

Registration

14:00-14:30

Introduction and Overview

- Introduction of participants
- Objectives and overview of the programme

14:30-16:00

SESSION 1: Human Rights and the Conservation of Biodiversity
Moderator: John Knox

The full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights depends upon a healthy environment. Conversely, the effective exercise of human rights, such as rights to information, participation, and remedy, helps to facilitate and support environmental protection. This opening session will apply these general principles to the specific challenge of the protection of biological diversity.

Questions to be addressed include:

- How does the loss of biodiversity undermine the enjoyment of human rights?
- How are indigenous peoples and others particularly vulnerable to harm from the loss of environmental resources?
- What human rights obligations do States have to protect biodiversity?
- What human rights responsibilities do private actors, including business enterprises and conservation organizations, have with respect to conservation of biodiversity?
- What particular challenges do human rights defenders face when they try to protect land and environmental rights, especially in relation to ecosystems and biodiversity?

16:00-16:15

Coffee break

16:15-18:00

SESSION 2: Conservation Measures and the Protection of Human Rights
Moderator: Barbara Ruis

Human rights obligations apply not only to decisions about how much conservation to pursue, but also to the specific measures through which conservation policies are implemented. The creation of protected areas, for example, must respect and

protect the rights of those who live in and near the areas. In principle, conservation measures that take into account the rights of the people most directly affected should be more effective at reaching their conservation goals, as well as more respectful of the rights of local residents. In practice, however, conservation measures have sometimes led to the infringement of human rights.

Questions to be addressed in this session include:

- What rights of local residents are most relevant to the adoption and implementation of conservation measures?
- What specific obligations do States and other relevant actors have to respect and protect those rights?
- How are those obligations heightened with respect to indigenous peoples and others in vulnerable situations?
- What are good practices in the protection of those rights?
- Conversely, what are examples of failures to protect those rights? How can those failures be remedied and avoided in the future?

18:00-19:30

Reception

Day 2 – Wednesday 21 September

9:30-11:00

SESSION 3: Strengthening implementation by States **Moderator: Yves Lador**

States are the primary duty-holders under international human rights law, including with respect to human rights relating to environmental protection. This session will discuss the extent to which States' conservation policies do, or do not, reflect a human rights perspective, and how those policies can be brought more in line with States' obligations under human rights law.

Questions that will be addressed include:

- What are good practices in the incorporation of human rights norms into States' conservation policies and programmes?
- Conversely, what are examples of failures to comply with human rights obligations in the adoption and implementation of conservation measures?
- How can States' implementation of their human rights obligations in this area be strengthened?
- What role should domestic courts and national human rights institutions play in this regard?
- Are new human rights norms necessary in this area? If so, how should they be developed?

11:00-11:15

Coffee break

11:15-13:00

SESSION 4: Strengthening implementation by private actors, including businesses and conservation organizations.

Moderator: Maria Jose Veramendi

This session will discuss how business enterprises and conservation civil society organizations are, or are not, implementing a rights-based approach to conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. The discussion will include sharing experiences with good practices as well as challenges and failures in conservation measures, with an aim to developing recommendations on how to promote human rights more effectively.

Questions that will be addressed include:

- What are good practices in the incorporation of human rights norms into the policies and programmes of business enterprises and conservation organizations?
- Conversely, what are examples of failures to respect and protect human rights in relation to conservation?
- What mechanisms or other measures would be effective at improving implementation of human rights norms by businesses and conservation organizations?

13:00-14:00

Lunch

14:00-15:45

SESSION 5: Strengthening implementation by international institutions

Moderator: Nynke Wyjmenka

This session will discuss how international institutions, including multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and international financial institutions (IFIs) are addressing, or failure to address, human rights norms in their work related to the conservation of biodiversity.

Questions that will be discussed include:

- What are good practices in the incorporation of human rights norms into the policies and programmes of MEAs and IFIs?
- Conversely, what are examples of failures to respect and protect human rights in relation to conservation?
- How should MEAs and IFIs improve their implementation and promotion of human rights related to conservation?

15:45-16:00

Coffee Break

16:00-17:30

SESSION 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Moderator: John Knox

The final session will pull together the previous sessions. The discussion will try to develop specific recommendations that could be made to the Human Rights Council, as well as other interested stakeholders.

17:30-18:00

Closing remarks