



## Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

9 June 2017

Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope this finds you all well! This newsletter reports on my recent activities in connection with the mandate, as well as other developments that may be of interest to you.

**Statement on World Environment Day.** I issued a [statement for World Environment Day](#), June 5, emphasizing that human rights depend on healthy ecosystems, and urging States to do more to protect the world's biological diversity from extinction.

**Brazil.** On June 8, I joined with Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, the UN Special Rapporteur on indigenous rights, Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, and Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, the rapporteur on indigenous rights of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, to denounce recent proposals to weaken safeguards for indigenous rights and environmental protection in Brazil. Our statement is available [here](#).

**Judicial Cooperation.** On May 22 and 23, I participated in a regional judicial colloquium in Brasilia on constitutional rights and the environment. The colloquium was co-sponsored by a number of partners, including UN Environment, the Organization of American States, the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law, and Brazilian bar and judicial organizations, and it was hosted at the Brazilian Senate. Participants included judges from many states within the Latin American and Caribbean region, who exchanged detailed presentations on lessons and challenges within their jurisdictions. This is the second in a series of these regional colloquiums – I am working with UN Environment on a third next year in Asia.

In the days before the colloquium, I also participated in the second meeting of the Global Judicial Institute for the Environment, a new organization of judges from around the world who are coordinating efforts to share information and experiences on environmental issues. More information about the creation of the Institute is available [here](#). On May 19, I also had the pleasure of speaking at the University of São Paulo School of Law on a panel addressing issues of human rights and the environment internationally and in Brazil.

**Children's rights and the environment.** In the last year, many reports and events have highlighted ways that environmental harm interferes with the rights of children, including: [the report last fall by Baskut Tuncak](#), the Special Rapporteur on toxics, on the effect of toxics and pollution on children's rights; the Day of General Discussion of the Committee on the Rights of

the Child last September (the report is available [here](#)); the recent [report by UNICEF UK](#) examining how climate-related migration and displacement affects children's rights around the world; the [report by OHCHR](#) on the effect of climate change on children's rights; and the first-ever UNFCCC event on climate change and children's rights, held in Bonn on May 8.

On June 22, I will participate in a public side event at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on children's rights and the environment. Expected speakers include: Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan of the Republic of Fiji; Benyam Dawit Mezmur, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; Benjamin Schachter of OHCHR; Jonas Schubert of Terre des Hommes; and Marilena Viviani from UNICEF. I encourage you to attend if you're in Geneva!

**Environmental human rights defenders.** On June 20, I will speak at Linacre College at the University of Oxford on the threats facing environmental human rights defenders, and then participate in a conference there on that subject.

The IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands has recently published [a report](#) aimed at improving protections for environmental human rights defenders. The report on environmental defenders that I prepared with the Universal Rights Group, which I mentioned in my previous newsletter, is available [here](#). And recall that the website for environmental defenders, [www.environment-rights.org](http://www.environment-rights.org), which several partners jointly developed, is now up and running!

**Speaking in London.** On June 19, I will be speaking in London at the SOAS Law, Environment and Development Centre, on the UN mandate on human rights and the environment.

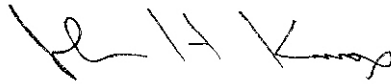
**Visit to Uruguay.** From April 24 to 28, I visited Uruguay, where I met with government officials and civil society to learn more about how Uruguay is addressing human rights and the environment. In [my statement](#) issued at the conclusion of the visit, I said that Uruguay has a number of good practices, but that it also faces challenges. I suggested that it consider the possibility of a new "environmental ombudsperson" to coordinate the government's responses to environmental concerns. The official report on the visit will be presented formally to the Council next March, but I hope to have it publicly available well before then.

**Report on Madagascar visit.** The report on my visit to Madagascar, which I presented to the Council in March, is available in English [here](#). The French version should be available soon.

**Center for Climate Crime Analysis.** A group of law enforcement professionals is establishing a new organization, the Center for Climate Crime Analysis, to support prosecutions of criminal activities that result in, or are associated with, the emission of significant amounts of greenhouse gases. Illegal logging and deforestation, for example, could be included. The CCA intends to work closely with other organizations to obtain information, and then analyze the information for transmission to national and local law enforcement authorities. For more information, visit its website, at [www.climatecrimeanalysis.org](http://www.climatecrimeanalysis.org).

As always, thank you for your interest in and support for the mandate!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Knox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

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