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Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

16 August 2017

Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope this finds you all well! This newsletter reports on recent activities in connection with the mandate.

Children's rights and the environment. On 22-23 June, I held an expert meeting and a public side event at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The topic of both events was children's rights, future generations, and the environment. I am currently preparing a report on the topic, for presentation to the Council next March. In this connection, I have circulated a [questionnaire](#), seeking for inputs from different stakeholders, which is now available online in English, French and Spanish. The deadline to submit a reply is 15 September 2017.

Mongolia. I am undertaking a country visit to Mongolia on 19-27 September, and I have posted a request for information [here](#). If you have experience in Mongolia relating to human rights or the environment, or you have suggestions for contacts, I encourage you to look at the request for information and give us your thoughts by email.

ECLAC negotiation. On 31 July-1 August, in Buenos Aires, I spoke at the [seventh round of negotiations](#) by 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries, under the auspices of ECLAC/CEPAL, the UN regional organization, towards a new agreement on environmental access rights – that is, the rights to information, participation, and justice in the environmental sphere recognized in Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration. I was impressed with the dedication and openness of the participants, and I encouraged them to complete a strong agreement as soon as they can. In my view, this is one of the most important international negotiations in the last two decades, in human rights as well as the environment.

Environmental human rights defenders. On June 20, I participated in a conference at the University of Oxford on forest defenders, organized by N1M (“not 1 more”). It was inspiring to hear from so many courageous environmental human rights defenders around the world, including Ouch Leng, the 2016 Goldman Prize winner from Cambodia; Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, the daughter of indigenous leader Berta Cáceres, murdered in Honduras in March 2016; and Claudelice Silva dos Santos, the sister of slain Brazilian activists José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva and Maria do Espírito Santo.

On 13 July, Global Witness issued its invaluable [annual report](#) on the number of environmental and land defenders killed in the previous year. They reported 200 deaths across 24 countries, an average of four a week, a significant increase over the previous year, and the highest number yet recorded. Global Witness has joined with the Guardian, a newspaper based in England, in a [new project](#) designed to report on these killings more rapidly. This [defenders' tracker](#) reports that in 2017, more than 100 defenders have already lost their lives.

Together with the Universal Rights Group, I plan to launch the Spanish-language website for environmental defenders, www.environment-rights.org, in Colombia this fall.

Report on Madagascar visit. The report on my October 2016 visit to Madagascar, which I presented to the Council in March 2017, is now available in French as well as English [here](#).

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', written in a cursive style.

John H. Knox
UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment
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