UN Environment’s Environmental Rights Initiative

Agenda item 4 - Stocktaking of recent and upcoming developments.

Angela Kariuki, Legal Officer | Law Division | UN Environment
BRINGING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NEARER TO THE PEOPLE

- Engage governments (and other legal stakeholders)
- Facilitate judicial cooperation
- Support environmental defenders
- Collaborate with media
- Work with businesses
Advanced through a Coalition of Environmental Rights Champions

- Member States
- UN entities (OHCHR, UNDP, Habitat, UNESCO, UN Women, FAO, others)
- UN Special Rapporteurs
- Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Inter-governmental organisations
- Civil society/Stakeholders
- Judiciaries
- Environmental activists
- National human rights institutions
- Media
- Academia
- Private sector
NEW PARTNERS IN 2018

- Welcome new partners
- “Join Us” note developed to engage partners; identifies key areas for entry – available on our website
- Contact us to work with us on a variety of environmental rights related interventions
• Already in 2018, around **50 defenders** have lost their lives while protecting their community’s environment and natural resources.
• Around 40% of those killed, harassed and intimidated are from indigenous and local communities from around the world.
• This includes **five rangers** killed in the worst attack on Virunga National Park (DR Congo) to date.
• This rising death toll is likely to continue if **governments and businesses fail to act**.
UN Environment’s Policy on Environmental Defenders

- Objective: To promote greater protection for people defending their environmental rights, and identify solutions to mitigate the abuse of environmental rights which affects a growing number of people in many parts of the world.

- Developed in response to growing severity of environmental rights problems and shrinking civil society space.

- Three-pronged approach: 1) Speaking Out (Rapid Response Mechanism – statements, letters, social media releases); 2) Legal Assistance; 3) Scaling up Partnerships.
Iran urged by UN to respect environment activists after wildlife campaigner death

Officials say Kavous Seyed Emami used endangered Asiatic cheetah surveys as pretext for spying, but no evidence has been cited

Statement in response to the murder of environmental campaigner Nazildo dos Santos Brito

UN Environment calls on governments and business to promote, protect and respect environmental rights

World Environment Day – 5 June 2018

Joint Statement by UN Environment and Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

"It’s time we all recognise the human right to a healthy environment"

GENEVA (1 June 2018) – Speaking ahead of World Environment Day on 5 June, the head of UN Environment* and the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment* issued a statement urging the United Nations to recognise the human right to a healthy environment.

“We believe that the historic moment has arrived for the United Nations to recognise the human right to a healthy environment at the global level.

The interdependence between human rights and the environment has become undeniable. A healthy environment is necessary for the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and development. At the same time, the exercise of human rights such as information, participation, remedy, and freedom of expression and association, is critical for the protection of a healthy environment.

Unfortunately, the links between human rights and the environment are often most evident when environmental harm causes injury, destruction, and death. Over one million children die every year as a result of air and water pollution alone, and climate change and the loss of global biodiversity threaten present as well as future generations.

Our knowledge of new threats is growing – for example, the rising tide of plastic pollution demands greater attention and an effective response.”
Towards a Global Pact for the Environment

Providing support to the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group UNGA Res 72/277

- Organisational session 2018
- First Substantive Session 2019
- Second Substantive Session
LEGAL AND POLICY GUIDANCE

- Key resources developed in 2018
- Legal Limits on Single Use Plastics and Microplastics
- First ever Global Assessment of the Environmental Rule of Law
- UN SG Gap Report (AHOEWG)
United Nations

General Assembly

Date: General
38 November 2018
Original English

Secretary-General’s Gap Report

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/337 entitled “Toward a Global Pact for the Environment” in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-third session in 2018, a technical and evidence-based report that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation.

The report reviews and analyses the corpus of international environmental law and environment-related instruments as well as the governance structure and implementation of international environmental law. It reveals gaps and deficiencies at multiple levels.

First, there is no single overarching normative framework that sets out what might be characterized as the norms and principles of general application in international environmental law even though such principles may help to guide and coordinate the application and implementation of the rules laid out in treaties. While some principles of international environmental law are now well-recognized through their incorporation into core-specific multilateral environmental agreements and have been affirmed by a number of international courts and tribunals, others enjoy neither clarity nor broad acceptance as to their applicability, nor recognition in binding legal instruments. This has an impact on the predictability and implementation of international environmental law.

Second, international environmental law is procedurally and conceptually characterized by fragmentation and a growing lack of coherence and consistency among a large body of accreted regulatory frameworks. This leads to an important deficit...
Ongoing efforts to support Principle 10 and Human Rights and Environment
GLOBAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
GLOBAL JUDICIAL PORTAL

For judges by judges in support for environmental issues
THE GLOBAL JUDICIAL PORTAL

1

FIRST PHASE

Jurisprudence

e-Learning

2

SECOND PHASE

Judicial Network
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