

UN Human Rights Council - 43rd regular session

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment



LONG OVERDUE: THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SHOULD FINALLY RECOGNISE THE RIGHT TO A SAFE, CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

2 March 2020

Earthjustice delivers this statement on behalf of 9 non-governmental organizations¹. We welcome the Special Rapporteur's report which usefully identifies a wealth of governmental good practices in recognizing and implementing a right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The report highlights that 80% of UN member states have recognized this human right. It also shows that at least 90% UN member states have reported at least some good practices that reflect procedural and/or the substantive elements of this right. The report therefore shows that "environmental progress and the protection of human rights from environmental harm are possible". While the report is clear that all states must urgently step up their action at all levels to adequately address the present "daunting and unprecedented global environmental crisis", it also shows that global recognition of the right to a healthy environment is an essential ingredient of such efforts.

Our organizations therefore call on the Human Rights Council to promptly adopt a resolution recognizing the right to a healthy environment. At a time when people from around the world, and particularly children, are increasingly concerned and mobilized by the environmental crisis, and environmental human rights defenders continue to face violence, states need to make this important move signaling their unequivocal intention to work towards the fulfillment of this right for all.

¹ This statement was delivered by Earthjustice on behalf of Amnesty International, Centre for International Environmental Law, CIVICUS, Child Rights International Network, the Interamerican Association of Environmental Defense, Global Initiative for Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Greenpeace International and Human Rights Watch on the occasion of the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, at the 43rd regular session of the Human Rights Council.