
CONCEPT NOTE

High-level event on Environmental Human Rights Defenders

Date and time: 1 March 2022, 14:00-15:30 (Geneva/Stockholm)

Co-organizer: OHCHR

Focus: Strengthening States' commitments to protect environmental human rights defenders.

Event description: The situation of environmental human rights defenders continues to be of great concern. Credible reports document the dangerous circumstances under which they work; intimidations, harassment, verbal and physical threats, violence, and killings are common. According to Global Witness, on average four environmental human rights defenders were killed every week during 2020 for their work protecting the environment – including from deforestation and industrial development.

This high-level event will invite ministers and other participants to reconfirm the international community's commitments to defend and support environmental human rights defenders and muster support to increase states' action to promote and protect their rights. The milestone Human Rights Council resolution "40/11 Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development" and other policy developments including Human Rights Council resolution "48/13 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment" will inform discussions on how to deliver on states' commitments to protect and support environmental human rights defenders – in line with the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights.

The high-level event will see the participation of environmental human rights defenders who will speak about their lived experiences to enhance a better understanding of the situation on the ground.

Desired outcomes:

- Increased understanding and awareness about the dangerous circumstances in which environmental human rights defenders undertake their work.
- Build momentum among high-level decisionmakers to increase efforts to protect and support environmental human rights defenders.
- Conclusions from the event will inspire a Joint Statement on environmental human rights defenders to be delivered at the Human Rights Council.

Expected Reach: This event is expected to appeal to a global audience, due to its focus on a current and urgent issue that needs renewed commitment from the international community. High-level panellists will further attract participation. The virtual meeting format is intended to enhance participation from around the world.

Panellists and moderator: **Ms Matilda Erkrans**, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden; **Ms Michelle Bachelet**, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; **Ms Joan Carling**, Global Director, Indigenous Peoples Rights International; **Mr Rodolfo Solano Quirós**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica; **Ms Isobel Coleman**, Deputy Administrator for Policy and Programming, USAID and **Ms Anabela Lemos**, Director, Justiça Ambiental.

Moderator of the event is **Mr Niklas Kebbon**, Head of Department for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Participation

Additional high-level representatives of governments and civil society will be invited to participate in the discussion that follows the panel.

Registration

To register for this event, please visit the following web page:

<https://e.eventos.fi/events/cwt/high-level-event-on-environmental-human-rights-defenders>

Draft agenda

14:00 Welcome and introduction to the event by moderator Mr Niklas Kebbon, Head of Dept for International Law, Human Rights and Treaty Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

14:05 High-Level Panel – opening remarks from panellists followed by moderated discussion

Ms Matilda Erkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden

Ms Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms Joan Carling, Global Director, Indigenous Peoples Rights International

Mr Rodolfo Solano Quirós, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica

Ms Isobel Coleman, Deputy Administrator for Policy and Programming, USAID

Ms Anabela Lemos, Director, Justiça Ambiental

14:50 Moderated question and answer session with the Panel – questions to be sent in advance as well as during the event

15:10 Interventions from high-level participants (ministers or permanent representatives) and civil society organisations

Interventions will be live or pre-recorded and will be encouraged and organised in advance by the organizers

15:25 Closing remarks

Ms Matilda Erkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden

15:30 Closing of the event by the moderator