



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
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### **Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and the environment**

13 November 2012

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to update you on my work as the UN Independent Expert on human rights and the environment.

If you know of someone else who would like to be on this email distribution list, please let us know by reply email, and we'll add them. Of course, if you do NOT want to be on this list, let us know the same way, and we'll remove your name.

At the outset, let me thank so many of you for taking time to come to the meetings in Geneva and Washington. I found all of the meetings enormously helpful in understanding the scope of the issues, and I was heartened by your interest in and support for the mandate.

**Ramin Pejan.** I know many of you have already met Ramin, the OHCHR staffer assigned to this mandate, but for the rest of you, let me introduce you! He is an attorney from Iran by way of Canada, who received his law degree in the United States. Before joining OHCHR, he was a senior counsel for the New York City Law Department's environmental law division and the legal program manager for an NGO in South Africa on water issues. He brings a great deal of passion and knowledge to this area, and we are fortunate to have him working on it full-time.

**Upcoming meetings.** The next expert consultation is scheduled for Nairobi, on February 22-23, 2013, just after the UNEP Governing Council session. It will have a thematic focus on rights to access to information, participation, and remedy in the context of environmental protection. We will provide more information about the consultation as we get closer to it. In addition, I plan to have other activities during the Governing Council session.

The following month, I will be presenting the first report at the March Human Rights Council session in Geneva. Again, I hope to have a side event in connection with the report, to support further discussion.

**Scoping report.** The report to be presented in March will concentrate on scoping issues. It will provide an overview of the evolving relationship between human rights and the environment, identify issues that need to be addressed, describe the goals of the mandate, and set out a plan of action for the next two years.

**Research.** After the scoping report is completed, I will turn to a mapping exercise. The goal is to provide a strong evidentiary basis, grounded primarily in existing

international human rights law, for the clarification of the human rights norms relevant to the environment.

Some of you have offered to discuss ways of providing research assistance through your institution. Great! Needless to say, there is a lot of work to do! If you have already contacted me about this, then expect to hear from me soon – if you don't, please feel free to reach out to us. If you haven't contacted me about this already, but you're interested, please let us know.

**Website.** We do have one now, at [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/IEEnvironment/Pages/IEEnvironmentIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/IEEnvironment/Pages/IEEnvironmentIndex.aspx). It is still pretty bare-bones, but it will grow over time, as the mandate does.

There is more to say, but I am trying to keep this as brief as possible! You should always feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments. I will always try to reply as quickly as possible.

The official mandate email is [ieenvironment@ohchr.org](mailto:ieenvironment@ohchr.org). That's probably the best one to use normally, because we'll know that emails sent to that address concern the mandate, and Ramin and I both have access to it. There are any number of reasons why you might want to contact me through my personal email, of course, and it is [knoxjh@wfu.edu](mailto:knoxjh@wfu.edu).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Knox". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

John H. Knox  
UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and the Environment  
Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law  
Wake Forest University School of Law

