



Mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights and the environment

May 2, 2013

Dear friends and colleagues,

This is to update you on my work as the UN Independent Expert on human rights and the environment since the last newsletter in February.

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.

Nairobi Expert Consultation. We held an expert consultation in Nairobi in February on rights to freedom of speech and association, and to access to information, participation, and remedy, in the context of environmental protection. I also addressed the first Ministerial Plenary session of the Global Ministerial Environmental Forum. I've attached a copy of our report of the Nairobi consultation and of my statement to the ministerial forum.

Human Rights Council. In March, I presented my first report to the Human Rights Council. I've attached a copy of my statement to the Council, and the full report is available at http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=199. I thought the response to the report from governments and civil society was generally very positive. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to meet with many of you around the Council session.

Future Consultations. In late June, I'll be at the annual meeting of the special procedures in Vienna, where I would like to have an informal consultation with interested members of civil society. In late July, I'll hold a consultation in Panama, in collaboration with UNEP, that focuses on the human rights obligations owed to vulnerable groups in the context of environmental harm. In August, I hope to go to Costa Rica for my first country visit, and in October, I'll participate in the Asia-Europe Meeting Seminar on human rights and the environment in Copenhagen and hold a consultation there. You can find more information about the ASEM Seminar at <http://www.aseminfoboard.org/upcoming-events/event/447-13th-informal-asem-seminar-on-human-rights.html>. We are also already planning several meetings and consultations for 2014.

Mapping Report. The meetings and consultations this year will help to inform the next report to the Human Rights Council, to be presented in March 2014, which will seek to map the current law on human rights obligations pertaining to the environment. 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. The report will also identify areas where further attention is warranted, which I will turn to in the third and final year of the mandate. I have been gratified by the offers of assistance from so many sources, but I'm happy to include more institutions interested in contributing to this work, especially outside North America. If you're interested in learning more about those opportunities, please let me know.

Ramin Pejan. Ramin, who has done a truly outstanding job as the OHCHR staffer supporting the mandate, is now leaving OHCHR to move to southern California. Happily, he will continue to work full time on the mandate from there. His permanent replacement at OHCHR hasn't been named yet, but in the interim the mandate will be supported by Rebaone Ferguson, who's also supporting the Toxics mandate.

As always, thanks to all of you for all of your help and support.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John H. Knox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "K".

John H. Knox
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