



The Right to a Healthy Environment – What Next?

Official COP28 side event

1 December 2023 from 16:45 to 18:15 (Side Events Room 6)

A clean, healthy and sustainable environment, climate included, is a human right.

Its recognition by the UN General Assembly in July 2022 was a turning point in environmental multilateralism. It reaffirmed the interconnectedness of human and planetary well-being. It reiterated the key importance of healthy ecosystems for the enjoyment of human rights, including children's rights. Most importantly, it laid the ground for a rights-based approach to global environmental and sustainable development action.

COP28 is a critical moment to advance this approach. The conclusion of the first Global Stocktake, the recent finalisation of the IPCC 6th Assessment Report and the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights all coincide in 2023, offering unparalleled clarity and an opportunity to integrate the right to a healthy environment into climate action.

The COP27 cover decision acknowledged the right to a healthy environment for the first time in UNFCCC history. At COP28, the international climate community now faces the challenge of ensuring its further mainstreaming, implementation and codification.

To this purpose, this side event encourages governments, international organisations, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and other relevant stakeholders to get together and explore possible next steps to integrate the right to a healthy environment into UNFCCC discussions and beyond, with a special focus on the children's rights perspective.

General Comment 26 on children's rights and the environment with a particular focus on climate change (GC26) is a first step towards operationalising the right to a healthy environment in the area of children's rights. Good practices could be drawn from this experience during the event.

Opening speakers

Nataša Pirc Musar, President of the Republic of Slovenia

Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

Panellists

Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children International

David R. Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

Joan Carling, indigenous rights activist and environmental defender, Philippines

Nafiso, child perspective from Somalia

Camila Zepeda, Mexico's Chief Climate and Biodiversity Negotiator

Moderated by

Benjamin Schachter, Coordinator, Environment and Climate Change Team, OHCHR

The event is co-organised by the Republic of Slovenia, Franciscans International, Save the Children International, UNEP, OHCHR and CIEL.

Supported by CRIN, Earthjustice, GANHRI, Human Rights Watch, UNDP and Universal Rights Group.