

PRESS CONFERENCE WITH WORKING GROUP ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND BIODIVERSITY

Who: Working Group on Human Rights and Biodiversity

Speakers: **Milka Chepkorir** (Sengwer women's organisation), **Ben Schachter** (OHCHR), **Lakpa Nuri Sherpa** (IIFB), **Cristina Eghenter** (on behalf of NGOs), **Mrinalini Rai** (Women Caucus),

What: Message to COP15, Question and Answer Session for participants in Montreal

Date: 8 December 2022, 12:00-12:30 Eastern Standard Time

Place: Room 220D, Palais des Congres, Montreal, Canada | **Online at:** www.cbd.int/live

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PRESS RELEASE: A truly transformative Global Biodiversity Framework needs human rights at its heart

Indigenous peoples, local communities, women, girls and youth make a joint call for a meaningful integration of Human Rights.

Embargoed 12:00 EST, 8 December 2022

Montreal, 8 December 2022

As global leadership meets in Canada to negotiate the text of COP15, the Human Rights and Biodiversity Working Group launches a briefing today highlighting what it takes to integrate a human rights-based approach, and how this can ensure effective, inclusive, equitable and just implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework, and the achievement of its goals and targets.

"Rights-based approaches to conserving, protecting biodiversity are the only equitable and effective way," said David Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment (OHCHR). "Rights should be at the heart of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and included in action plans."

The new briefing, [“A Rights-based Path for People and Planet – Proposals for realising Human Rights in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”](#) released today, serves as a guide to how a human rights-based approach should be integrated into the post-2020 GBF.

Developing and implementing the GBF with a human rights-based approach means that the biodiversity policies, governance and management practices agreed on at COP15 do not violate human rights.

“The increase in systematic repression, criminalization and killing of Indigenous Peoples around the world in the name of conservation and development must stop immediately,” said Ramson Karmushu, Research, Learning and Advocacy Manager at IMPACT on behalf of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB)

Some colonial conservation practices violate human rights by evicting Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands to create national parks, such as in the [brutal evictions of Maasai peoples in Loliondo, Tanzania in June this year](#).

“The conservation responses adopted in colonial times have been sustained and even refined with increased militarization.” Said Milka Chepkorir of the Sengwer Women’s Organisation.

The HRWG have recognised specific targets within the GBF where human rights have direct relevance, such as Target 3, where recognition of land and tenure rights [can create increased and improved conservation outcomes](#).

A human rights-based approach to the GBF also means that those making decisions and implementing such policies and practices actively seek ways to support and promote human rights in their design, implementation and monitoring.

“We are not getting this environment framework right unless we have a rights-based approach...We need to include strong human rights language in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to ensure the protection of people and the planet,” said Benjamin Schacter, Coordinator for Environment and Climate Change at OHCHR

[Analysis undertaken by the HRWG](#) has shown that a human rights-based approach to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is a necessary condition for stopping biodiversity loss and degradation in an equitable, effective, efficient and transformative way.

“The GBF must reflect the actions and enabling conditions needed for genuine transformative change, addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss and putting equity for nature and all people at the centre.”

“We also call for a global biodiversity framework that strongly reflects and takes into serious account the views, needs, and priorities of children and youth,” said a representative of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), the official coordination platform for youth participation in the Convention of Biological Diversity.

[The HRWG states that the success of the Framework](#) will depend on ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and reducing inequalities, enhancing greater access to education and respecting the principle of intergenerational equity. The GYBN have also suggested the addition of a principle in the GBF on intergenerational equity.

“We need to support the youth programs more. If we don’t involve the youth, we are missing out,” said Mphatso Martha Kalemba, Principal Environmental Officer at the Environmental Affairs Department of Malawi.

Parties and other allies from South to North and East to West are advocating for human rights-based approaches in the GBF. Nina Mikander, Senior Specialist of the Biodiversity Ministry of the Environment, Finland encourages;

“[...] all Parties to embrace the human rights-based approach going forward. From our experience, I can say we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

As we move into the final rounds of negotiations in December, the question is not *if* a human rights-based approach is needed, but *how* such an approach should be integrated into the framework, and *what* amendments are needed to make it effective.

This new briefings answer those questions and renews the HRWG’s calls to ensure the Post-2020 GBF integrates a human rights-based approach so that it can achieve its aim for humans to live in harmony with nature.

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Further information

Spokespersons will be available for interview following the press briefing and throughout COP15. For information on event and for interviews with member of the working group, please contact:

- Celina Thaller de Zarate (celina.thallerdezarate@su.se)
- Tom Dixon (tdixon@forestpeoples.org)

Further reading

Speakers from the Human Rights Working Group will go into more depth on the importance of this approach at a [side-event this evening](#).

The following briefings were prepared by the Human Rights and Biodiversity Working Group to support the integration of human rights into the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

- *Paper 1 – [Human Rights in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)*
- *Paper 2 – [How to Integrate Human Rights into the Biodiversity Conservation in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)*

- *Paper 3 – Implementing a Human Rights-Based Approach to Biodiversity Conservation*
- *Paper 4 – A Rights-based Path for People and Planet – Proposals for Realising Human Rights in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*

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