



The Environmental Democracy Index

Tuesday 9 June 2015, 12:30-14:00

International Environment House II
7-9 ch. de Balexert, Châtelaine (Geneva)

Biographies

Achim HALPAAP, UNITAR

Achim A. Halpaap is Associate Director, Training Department and Head of the Environment Unit at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) based in Geneva. He has overall responsibility for UNITAR's environmental training programmes and led the development of a range of new UNITAR programmes, courses and methodologies - including joint e-learning with UNEP on the green economy - to advance environmental sustainability in developing and transition countries. With an interest in linking science and policy, Achim has served as lead author for the policy chapter of the UNEP Geo-5 Report (2012) and is on the Advisory Board of the Yale University Governance, Environment and Markets (GEM) Initiative. From 2006-2008, Achim directed the UNITAR/Yale Environment and Democracy Initiative at the Yale Center of Environmental Policy and Law (YCELP), a joint center of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Yale Law School. From 2001-2005, was a Honorary Research Associate at the University of Cape Town, South Africa where he led an applied UCT/UNITAR research project to strengthen civil society engagement in South Africa's National Air Quality Management Framework. Prior to joining the UN in 1991, Achim headed the Chemicals and Waste Management Policy Section in the Environmental Policy Directorate of the Bayer Corporation, Germany. In 1989, he was a Lecturer in the International Studies Department of the University of Oregon, where he developed and taught an interdisciplinary graduate level course on Global Environmental Issues. Achim holds academic degrees from Yale University (Ph.D. & M.Ph), the University of Oregon (M.A.), and the University of Bonn (B.Sc.)

Jan DUSIK, Director and Regional Representative, UNEP

Jan Dusík was born in Plzeň, Czech Republic. Jan Dusik joined UNEP in July 2011 and is now the Director of its Regional Office for Europe. Over the years in the Czech civil service, Jan has been active in international environmental relations, both bilateral and multilateral. He was the Head of the Delegation of the Czech Republic to numerous meetings of parties of multilateral conventions and international organisations and their bodies (e.g. EU, UNEP, UN CSD, UN ECE, OECD). He served as the Vice - President of the Bureau of the UNEP Governing



Council for 2007-2009, as the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole during the 24th session and 10th special session of the UNEP Governing Council. He was the Chairman of the Bureau of the Aarhus Convention for the period 2008-2011 and chaired the 4th Meeting of Parties to the Convention in 2011.

Lalanath DE SILVA, WRI

Lalanath De Silva was a public interest litigator and advocate for over two decades. Pioneering the growth of public interest law in the area of the environment, he appeared in many of Sri Lanka's leading environmental cases on behalf of victims, communities and non-governmental organizations. He also worked for the Government of Sri Lanka for two years as the Legal Consultant to the Ministry of Environment and Forests. During that time he was responsible for drafting and enacting the bulk of Sri Lanka's environmental regulatory provisions. From 2002-2005 he served as a Legal Officer in the Environmental Claims Unit of the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) in Geneva. Together with a small group of international lawyers, he helped process the largest war reparations claims handled by the UNCC to monitor, assess, restore and compensate for environmental damage resulting from the 1991 Gulf War.

Lalanath joined the World Resources Institute (WRI) in 2005 as the Director of The Access Initiative (TAI) (www.accessinitiative.org). Until 2014, he was focusing on helping over 250 civil society groups in over 50 countries assess the status of access to information, public participation and access to justice in their countries. Through rigorous evidence based assessments, civil society partners identified gaps in access laws, practices and institutions and undertook activities that changed the situation on the ground. During his nine year tenure, he grew the TAI network to twice its size, introduced poverty sensitization to the TAI assessment tool, led the development of a new TAI water governance assessment tool and a TAI advocacy tool, initiated and organized biennial TAI Global Gatherings (Thailand, Ireland, Uganda and Brazil) and initiated and developed the Environmental Democracy Index (EDI).

From 2014, Lalanath has been entrusted with the newly formed Environmental Democracy Practice at WRI's Governance Center. At the core of the practice is access to information, citizen engagement, access to justice and accountability in environmental matters. The practice covers these rights generally and also specializes in sectoral applications in the areas of forests (Governance of Forests Initiative – GFI), water, sustainable cities and climate adaptation.

Lalanath qualified as a lawyer with honors from the Sri Lanka Law College, has a Master of Laws degree in law and marine affairs from the Law School, University of Washington, Seattle, USA, and a PhD from the Law School, University of Sydney, Australia. Additionally, on October 1, 2012 Lalanath was appointed by the Asian Development Bank as a Member of its Compliance Review Panel for a five year term.

**Jesse WORKER, WRI**

Jesse Worker is an Associate with The Access Initiative, which collaborates with partners across the world to improve access, participation and justice in environmental decision-making. His work currently includes helping to improve institutions governing climate change adaptation efforts.

Prior to joining WRI, Jesse worked as a climate change policy advocate as well as a Project Manager for an energy efficiency program evaluation. He has also worked in Senegal and Jamaica on community-based natural resource management and climate change adaptation. He speaks French as well as English.

Jesse holds a master's degree in Environmental Science and Public Policy from the University of Michigan and a B.A. in Anthropology and African studies from Indiana University.

Originally from Indiana but most recently from Michigan, Jesse lives in Takoma Park, Maryland with his fiancée. In his free time he enjoys cycling, hiking and rock climbing as well as growing and cooking his own food.

**Maria Cristina CÁRDENAS FISCHER, Chief, Technical Assist.
Branch, Basel, Rotterdam & Stockholm Conventions Secretariat**

Maria Cristina is currently chief of the Technical Assistance Branch of the Secretariat. She joined the Stockholm Convention Secretariat in October 2001 as a policy advisor, over the years she has been responsible for managing the areas of work of the Secretariat pertaining to technical assistance (including the regional centres for capacity building and transfer of technology), the financial mechanism under the Convention, the national implementation plans, the reporting obligations and the expert group on BAT and BEP. From October 2009-February 2012 she was the coordinator for the technical assistance programme of the secretariat of the Stockholm Convention.

Prior to joining the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, Maria Cristina, worked for the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1993 to 2001), as special advisor for environmental issues. Maria Cristina is a Colombian national and holds a BA in Philosophy from Bristol University in the United Kingdom.

**Birute ABRAITIENE, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations Office in Geneva**

Birute is Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the UN in Geneva. Before joining Geneva, Birute occupied various positions within the Foreign Affairs and European Ministries of her country. She previously was the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. She was based in Japan in 2008-2009, and the head of the Special



Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to Afghanistan in 2007. From 2003 to- 2006 , Birute was the Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations. Prior to that, Birute was in Diplomatic service of the Republic of Lithuania, Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Secretary of the Ministry of European Affairs
From 1992 to 1997 Birute headed the Press Bureau, Adviser to the Committees of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania.

Yves LADOR, Permanent Representative, Earthjustice

Yves Lador is Earthjustice Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. He works also as a consultant for international NGOs, mainly in the field of human rights and environment.

Marc HUFTY, Professor, Graduate Institute

Marc Hufty is professor of Development Studies at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies (IHEID), in Geneva, where he is associated with the Center for International Environmental Studies (CIES). His current research activities focus on multi-level governance processes applied to biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change, political ecology and environmental justice. He has taught and/or done field research in Azerbaijan, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Nicaragua, Madagascar and South Africa, and worked with CITES, UNEP, UNESCO, WWF, IUCN, among others.