Roundtable on Human Rights and the Environment

Friday, 12 March 2004, 9h00 - 12h30
International Environment House, Room 3

The link between human rights and the environment has been recognized ever since the 1972 Stockholm Declaration declared that "Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being..." More recently, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development recognized the link between human dignity and access to basic requirements. The 2003 session of the Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution on "Human Rights and the Environment as part of Sustainable Development"; the Commission will consider the issue again at its forthcoming session (15 March –23 April 2004).

A political consensus that human rights and the environment are closely related clearly exists – but how have 30 years of high-level declarations been translated into reality? Today’s roundtable will examine the progress to date on human environmental rights and the legal, political and practical results of this debate.

9.00  Coffee/tea

9:30 Welcoming remarks by Mr. Frits Schlingemann, Director, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Europe

9:45 Introductory remarks by the moderator, Franz Perrez, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape

Presentations by the panelists:

- The concept of environmental human rights in law and practice, by Yves Lador
- Proceduralizing environmental rights – the example of the UNECE Aarhus Convention, by Marc Pallemaerts
- International courts and environmental human rights, by Philippe Sands QC
- Environmental Human Rights in South Asia, by Jona Razzaque, FIELD
- Human rights and the environment – the perspective of the human rights bodies, by Stefano Sensi

11:30 Discussion with panelists and participants

12:30 End
Panelists

Franz Xaver Perrez is an official at the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape where he serves as Head of Section, Global Affairs, International Division. He was formerly legal advisor in the WTO Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and legal counsel to the Department of Public International Law in the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Perrez has published in the fields of international environmental law, WTO law and sovereignty.

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 Pallemaerts is chairman of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and Professor of environmental law, Vrije Universiteit Brussel & Université Libre de Bruxelles; Senior Research Fellow, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Co-author of the book *Human Rights and the Environment*, published in 2002 by the Council of Europe. President of the Brussels-based think-tank ECOSPHERE (European Centre on Sustainable Policies for Human and Environmental Rights).

Philippe Sands QC is Professor of Law and Director of the PICT Centre for International Courts and Tribunals at University College London. His main publications include *Principles of International Environmental Law* (2nd edition, Cambridge Univ Presss, 2003) and *Bowett’s Law of International Institutions*. As a practicing barrister at Matrix Chambers in London he has acted as counsel in several international cases involving the precautionary principle.

Jona Razzaque is a barrister and staff lawyer at the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD). She is also a member of IUCN CEL committee on Environmental Law and Human Rights. Her research interest includes access to environmental justice in South Asia and she recently published a book on ‘Public Interest Environmental Litigation in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.’ She previously worked as a consultant in the joint UNEP-OHCHR Expert Seminar on Human Rights and the Environment (2002).

Stefano Sensi is a Human Rights Officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). His responsibilities include the mandate on human rights and the environment. Mr. Sensi has worked at the European Occupational Health and Safety Law Research Centre at the University of Salford (Manchester, U.K.), where he carried out research and lectured on Environmental Law and Health and Safety Law.
Registration form

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You are cordially invited to participate in this roundtable. Owing to the limited number of seats available, please indicate your participation in advance by completing this form and returning it by 9 March 2004 to Ms. Fatma Gordon at the address below by fax, post or email (Fatma.gordon@unep.ch).

Name:____________________________________________________
Organization:_______________________________________________
Phone:____________________________________________________
Fax:______________________________________________________
Email:____________________________________________________