

## Oral Statement by Earthjustice

### Human Rights Council Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child

#### Realizing the rights of the child through a healthy environment as a child rights concern

Geneva - 1 July 2020

Thank you Ms. Vice-Chairperson,

Today's discussion is of very high relevance as we are still currently suffering from COVID19, a pandemic zoonoses that highlights how all lives depend on how we manage our relations to ecosystems.

The High Commissioner's report and the Panels are providing relevant illustrations in this matter.

We therefore strongly support the call for action launched today on "**Realizing children's right to a healthy environment**" and support all its recommendations.

As it has been mentioned earlier, it's more than timely that the HRC acknowledges the existing wide national and regional recognition of the right to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. COVID19 shows that we are running late. The HRC must act now without delay and any postponement and show that it takes "Building Back Better" seriously.

The Paris Agreements has recognized in its Preamble the impact of climate change on children. It underlines the importance of human rights and intergenerational bounds.

It's the responsibility of Human Rights Council today to follow-up and appoint a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Climate Change who will be able to devote the attention children's rights need in this matter.

Finally we must never forget how environmental harm and exposure to toxic substances, including plastics, affect children. This was clearly flagged in the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) 2019 report on Health and Plastics, demonstrating the hidden cost of plastic for human health, **especially for children**.

The HRC should encourage the United Nations Environment Assembly, to develop its Global framework addressing the full lifecycle of plastics, which must integrate a comprehensive child rights-based approach.

Thank you for your attention.