

Geneva Environment Network briefing

The Montevideo Programme V: A decade of action on environmental law on the occasion of the UNEP Environmental Law Week

Concept note and agenda

3 November 2026, 09:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CET / 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. EAT

Hybrid: International Environment House 1 (Room 2) | Online

Background

By its [resolution 4/20](#) of 15 March 2019, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted the [Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law \(Montevideo Programme V or “the Programme”\)](#) for the decade 2020-2029. Serving as the foundational framework for UNEP’s environmental law initiatives and activities since 1982, the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme has significantly shaped the development and implementation of environmental law at national, regional, and international levels through its four previous iterations.

The Programme’s primary objective is to promote the development and implementation of environmental rule of law, strengthen related capacities in countries and contribute to the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since its inception, the Montevideo Programme V has served as a catalyst for legal and institutional reform across countries and regions, enabling Member States to translate global environmental commitments into effective domestic legal frameworks and enforceable norms, strengthen their regulatory and institutional capacities and built partnerships across sectors, actors and stakeholders to advance effective and inclusive environmental governance.¹

Amongst its focus areas, the Montevideo Programme V promotes and enhances access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, collectively known as ‘access rights’.² In this context, the Programme has served as an inclusive platform for member states, partners and stakeholders,³ to exchange environmental information and enable the meaningful participation by civil society actors and other stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes.

By forging impactful networks and partnerships to advance effective environmental rule of law and achieve good environmental governance at all levels, the Programme has benefitted

¹ [Handbook for The Fifth Montevideo Programme on the Progressive Development and Implementation of Environmental Law](#), UNEP (2024).

² [Environmental Rule of Law: Tracking Progress and Charting Future Directions](#), UNEP (2023).

³ Partners and stakeholders of the Montevideo Programme V include: public administrations, parliaments and other legislative bodies and the judiciary, academia, legal professionals, civil society organizations, environmental defenders, Indigenous Peoples, youth organizations, women organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector, secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other United Nations entities, in line with the [Montevideo Programme V Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#).

significantly from the expertise, knowledge, innovation, practical experience and perspectives of partners and stakeholders.

The year 2026 marks an important juncture for the Montevideo Programme V. Following the [first global meeting of national focal points for the Montevideo Programme V held in two parts in 2021 and 2022](#), and the [second global meeting held in 2024](#),⁴ and in line with a decision of the Programme's [steering committee for implementation](#) a **third global meeting** is planned online for 4-5 November 2026. The third global meeting will provide an opportunity for national focal points, as well as partners and stakeholders, to review progress in the implementation of the Programme, provide thought leadership for its strategic direction and guidance to the Secretariat for its implementation during the remainder of its fifth iteration, in line with the [UNEP medium-term strategy 2026-2029](#) and [programme of work](#).

Objectives

As part of UNEP's Environmental Law Week, in the lead up to the third global meeting of the Montevideo Programme V, the briefing will serve as an opportunity to:

1. Raise awareness about the Montevideo Programme V, how to engage in its implementation and discuss expectations for the upcoming third global meeting.
2. Invite thought leaders and partners of the Programme to share their experience engaging in the Programme's implementation and discuss how a platform such as the Montevideo Programme V can further enhance access rights through strengthened stakeholder engagement.

The event will be held in English and in hybrid format (International Environment House and online).

Agenda

Time	Agenda item
5 minutes	1. Welcome and opening remarks <i>Diana Rizzolio</i> Geneva Environment Network Coordinator, UNEP <i>Patricia Kameri-Mbote</i> Director, UNEP Law Division
25 minutes	2. Overview of the Montevideo Programme V: achievements and future trends

⁴ Including, amongst its outcomes: [Options for clearly defined priority areas to combat the biodiversity crisis](#); [Options for clearly defined priority areas to combat the climate crisis](#); a [Partnerships and stakeholder engagement strategy](#). A full report of the meeting, including progress in advancing the implementation of the Programme's implementation roadmaps is available here: <https://leap.unep.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/2411780E%20UNEP-Env-Law-MTV5-GNFP-2-6%20English.pdf>

	<i>Andrea Rizzo</i> Head of Environmental Governance Section, UNEP Law Division Q&A with the audience
55 minutes	3. Panel discussion <i>Moderated by Marianna Bolshakova, Environmental Law and Governance Coordinator, UNEP Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia</i> <i>The panel discussion will bring together a diverse set of speakers to explore how the Montevideo Programme V can strengthen environmental rule of law and advance access to environmental information, public participation and justice. Drawing on experiences from governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society, the discussion will highlight good practices and lessons learned in promoting environmental rule of law.</i> Speaker 1 (in-person): Ms. Tina Hočevár, Environmental Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva Speaker 2 (in-person): Ms. Maryna Yanush, Officer, UNECE Aarhus Convention secretariat Speaker 3 (online): Mr. Gibrilla Kamara, Manager, Legal Affairs, Compliance and Enforcement Department, Environment Protection Agency, Sierra Leone. National Focal Point and Steering Committee member Montevideo Programme V Speaker 4 (online): Ms. Sara Tusevliak, Environmental Human Rights Defender, Co-chair of the First European Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders Speaker 5 (online): Mr. Alejandro Iza, Director of the Environmental Law Centre, IUCN Q&A with the audience
5 minutes	4. Closing remarks <i>Diana Rizzolio</i>

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