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World Commission
on Environmental Law

Commission Mondiale de
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de Derecho Ambiental



Environmental Law Journey



The Environmental Law Journey would like to thank all its partners and participants for contributing to a number of events that dealt directly or indirectly with environmental law - its drafting, implementation and enforcement.

Legal practitioners, academics, policy makers, judges, and civil society organizations and individuals came together to discuss and discover how environmental law can be instrumental in the conservation of nature and natural resources.

This document will briefly reflect on some of the major outcomes of the Environmental Law Journey during the World Conservation Congress.

Environmental Law Journey outcomes

The IUCN Environmental Law Programme organized over 30 events in an Environmental Law Journey that spanned four days and covered topics ranging from crime and corruption to environmental rights to the role of judges in protecting nature.

Events were organized that deal directly or indirectly with environmental law, its drafting, implementation and enforcement. In particular, the events that related indirectly to environmental law provided opportunities to showcase synergies with a number of themes that were featured in other Journeys at the Congress, including: business, SDGs, climate change, key biodiversity areas, wildlife trafficking, life on land and governance. For example, a knowledge café on integrated planning invited a small group of experts to have an in-depth conversation about how land use planning laws and policies can be used to ensure that climate change and biodiversity concerns are taken into account, both within and outside protected areas. Further, a workshop on managing transboundary ecosystems brought practitioners from Asia, Africa and Latin America to share lessons from governance of shared waters.

The journey also featured events that related directly to environmental law. Those events provided an important opportunity for legal practitioners, academics, judges, governments and legal experts to discuss how environmental law can be instrumental to conserve nature and its natural resources. In particular, events related to environmental justice and increasing accountability for crimes against the environment were widely attended by a broad number of stakeholders, including judges and government officials from around the world. For example, a workshop was organized discussing how responsibility and accountability can be increased. Also the growing role of judges was discussed. In particular, much attention was given to wildlife crime and the relationship between judges and wildlife crime, with real-life examples. Moreover, a number of events were organized that showcased the importance of the use of legal principles in the strict and wider sense, to overcome environmental challenges, such as the precautionary principle and the principle of non-regression.

The World Commission on Environmental Law during its meeting also reiterated some of the outcomes of the first IUCN World Environmental Law Congress that took place in Rio de Janeiro in April 2016, which included the discussion on the first draft of the World Declaration on Environmental Rule of Law. The goal of this Congress and document was to build the environmental rule of law as the legal foundation for environmental justice, based on ecological, social and cultural responsibility to achieve a healthy, peaceful, inclusive and sustainable future. It endeavors to extend to the environmental arena the procedural and substantial principles and protections enshrined in the rule of law, coupled with strong institutions for the development, implementation and enforcement of laws, regulations and policies at national, sub-national, regional and international levels. The document can be found [here](#). The meeting also re-iterated the importance of the newly created Global Judicial Institute for the Environment, which will have as its mission to support the role of courts and tribunals in applying and enforcing environmental laws and promote the environmental rule of law and the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. The Charter for the Global Judicial Institute for the Environment can be found [here](#).

The journey also featured early-career lawyers during a moot court on inter-generational climate justice. Law students made the case for global climate responsibility before some of the world's

top environmental jurists.

Finally, it was an important moment to reflect on the role of law in the future of conservation. A small team of videographers were present at the Congress to ask participants whether law, in their opinion, has a place in the future of conservation. Their answers included that law provides frameworks, standards and reinforcement that conservation cannot do without; but at the same time, law must consider cultural and social practices and needs and best available science, and it must complement, not cut off, the fundamental relationship between humans and nature. The video can be seen [here](#).

Contact:

This journey was put together by the Environmental Law Programme, including the World Commission for Environmental Law (WCEL), the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law and the Environmental Law Centre (ELC) and its partners.

Organizers:

