In connection with an official visit to **Uruguay**, to take place from **24 to 28 April 2017**, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, Mr. John Knox, would like to take your feedback into account. The visit will include discussions with government officials and representatives of civil society about good practices and challenges in the implementation of human rights obligations relating to environmental protection.

Governments have a general obligation to protect the environment (including by regulating businesses and other private actors) in order to protect the rights that depend upon it, including rights to life, health, food, water, and housing. These obligations include duties of the State to provide information about environmental matters, facilitate public participation in environmental decision-making, and provide effective remedies for environmental harm. Governments must protect environmental defenders from harassment and violence. Governments also have heightened duties to protect those whose rights are most vulnerable to environmental harm.

The Special Rapporteur will present a public report on the country visit to the United Nations Human Rights Council in March 2018.

Any responses you provide to the questions below would be greatly appreciated. You need not answer all of them – you can focus on the ones that are relevant to you.

If you would like your submission to be considered *during* the visit as well as after it, please send any responses to the questions to [srenvironment@ohchr.org](mailto:srenvironment@ohchr.org) **as soon as possible** but no later than **31 March 2017**.

If you reply by **14 May 2017,** your submission will not be considered during the mission, but it will be taken into account for the Special Rapporteur’s report to the UN Human Rights Council.

Please feel free to share this message and the questions with anyone who might be interested in contributing.

**Your responses will be kept *confidential*. Neither you nor your organization will be identified, and your response will not be attributed to you or your organization, even if the Special Rapporteur raises issues that you brought to his attention.**

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Questions

1. Uruguay has ratified many **international and regional human rights treaties and environmental agreements**,
   1. How well are these agreements implemented on the ground?
      1. Are there any good examples? Why are these good examples?
      2. Are there any challenges? What are the causes? How can these be improved?
   2. Are there any other international/regional agreements that need to be ratified by Uruguay in order to protect and promote a wide range of human rights (e.g., rights to information, participation, access to remedies, an adequate standard of living, food, health, land, housing, water, sanitation, cultural life, etc.) from environmental harm (e.g., environmental degradation, pollution, climate change, deforestation, harm on ecosystems, etc.)? If so, how would this ratification help to protect and promote human rights?
2. What are the major **domestic laws and regulations** that are placed to protect and promote human rights from environmental harm? How well are they implemented?
   1. Are there any good examples? Why are these good examples?
   2. Are there any challenges? What are the causes? How can these be improved?
3. What are the most **urgent human rights and/or environmental issues** that would require the attention of the Special Rapporteur? These issues can be related to the guarantee of procedural rights (e.g., rights to information, participation and access to remedy), the protection/realization of substantive rights (e.g., rights to health, an adequate standard of living, food, land, housing, water, sanitation, cultural life, etc.) and/or linked to the rights of certain groups/individuals who are in exceptionally vulnerable situations to environmental harm (e.g., indigenous peoples, women, children, rural communities, etc.).
   1. What is the cause? What needs to be done?
   2. How can the Special Rapporteur contribute in making the situation better?
4. How well are **environmental human rights defenders** (those who work to protect the environment and/or the human rights that depend on it) protected in Uruguay?
   1. Are there any good practices in promoting the activities of environmental human rights defenders? Please elaborate if you have specific cases.
   2. Are there any challenges? If so, what are the causes? What can be done to improve the situation? Please elaborate if you have specific cases.
5. How would you evaluate practices of **businesses** whose activities have environmental implications (e.g., mining, forestry, fishing, etc.) in Uruguay, including multinational, domestic and state-owned businesses? How well do the businesses respect and protect human rights? What role does the Government play in addressing human rights violations perpetrated by business enterprises?
6. Please provide contact details of any **key persons and/or civil society organizations** (e.g. academics, government officials, research institutes, environmental organizations, victims’ organizations, etc.) who you think it would be useful for the Special Rapporteur to be in touch with, either in Uruguay or elsewhere.
7. Please indicate if you have any suggestions for **places to visit outside Montevideo** and key persons to contact to meet during the field visit.
8. Are there any **specific questions** that you would like the Special Rapporteur to raise with a particular government body/ministry?
9. Following the visit, the Special Rapporteur will submit an official report of the visit to the Human Rights Council which will include his **recommendations** to the Government of Uruguay and possibly to other relevant stakeholders (e.g., UN agencies, CSOs, businesses, etc.). Are there any specific recommendations that you wish the Special Rapporteur to consider? If so, please indicate and explain why.
10. Please let us know if there are **any other issues** that you want to bring to the attention of the Special Rapporteur.