

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment

Open call for Inputs

“Promoting Environmental Democracy: Procedural elements of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”

The Special Rapporteur has completed a series of six thematic reports on the substantive elements of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including clean air, safe and sufficient water, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity and a safe, livable climate. His next thematic report will address the procedural or participatory elements of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including access to information, public participation and access to justice with effective remedies. In light of the Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment, the report will also address related topics including the rights to environmental education, freedom of expression and association, and safe spaces for environmental human rights defenders. The Special Rapporteur is seeking inputs on the topic from States, rightsholders and stakeholders through responses to the questions below.

Your replies will inform the Special Rapporteur’s analysis and contribute to his report, which will be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2023.

Questions

The Special Rapporteur invites and welcomes your answers to the following questions:

1. What are States’ obligations—and businesses’ responsibilities—related to the rights to access information, public participation and access to justice with effective remedies in environmental matters? What are the major barriers to the full enjoyment of these rights? How can these barriers be overcome?
2. What are States’ obligations related to the right to environmental education, and the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association in environmental contexts? What are the major barriers to the full enjoyment of these rights? How can these barriers be overcome?
3. What can States and businesses do to ensure the safety of environmental human rights defenders?

4. Please specify ways that the rights to environmental education, access to information, public participation and access to justice with effective remedies, freedom of expression and freedom of association can be fulfilled for populations who may be particularly vulnerable to climate and environmental harms (e.g. women, children, persons living in poverty, Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic, racial or other minorities and displaced persons).
5. To what extent have the two regional treaties on environmental democracy—the Aarhus Convention and the Escazu agreement—been effective in advancing human rights related to access to information, public participation, access to justice with effective remedies, environmental education, freedom of expression and association, and safe spaces for environmental human rights defenders?
6. Please provide examples of good practices related to access to information, public participation, access to justice with effective remedies, environmental education, freedom of expression and association, and safe spaces for environmental human rights defenders.

Submission of responses

Please send your responses to the questionnaire **in Word format** by email to hrc-sr-environment@un.org.

However, submissions will also be accepted via regular mail at the following address:

UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment
Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division
UNOG-OHCHR
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

We kindly request that your submission be concise and limited to a maximum of 5 pages (or 2,000 words), not including appendices or attachments.

Due to a limited capacity for translation, we also request that your inputs be submitted in English, French, or Spanish.

To avoid unnecessary duplication: if you have recently replied to other questionnaires from UN human rights mechanisms (or other international bodies) with information that would be relevant to this request as well, we welcome your directing us to those replies.

The deadline for submission is 1 May 2023.

Unless otherwise requested, all submissions will be made publicly available and posted on the Special Rapporteur's homepage at the OHCHR website.
