
Fifth Montevideo Environmental Law Programme Regional Conference
Legal responses to combat the three planetary environmental crises in Latin America and the Caribbean

25-26 September 2023
Panama City, Panama

Background

In March 2019, the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo V). Montevideo V is a ten-year intergovernmental programme running from January 2020 to December 2029. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the secretariat of the programme. The objectives of Montevideo V include supporting the development and implementation of adequate and effective environmental legislation and legal frameworks to address environmental issues and the promotion of the role of environmental law in the context of effective environmental governance.

To effectively address the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean, multi-dimensional and innovative responses are required. Despite legal frameworks established to address environmental issues, environmental degradation continues, and climate change exacerbates these problems. The Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Law Conference aims to bring together regional and international experts to discuss solutions for effective environmental governance.

The Fifth Montevideo Programme Regional Conference in Latin America and the Caribbean builds on the success of previous conferences, seminars and trainings held in the region since the first edition of the Montevideo Programme five decades ago, gathering participants from academia, judiciary, governments, civil society, and the private sector to discuss environmental legal issues in the region.

Objectives

The conference will bring together regional and international experts to share knowledge, experiences, lessons learned, and best practices in environmental law in the context of the specific challenges that Latin American and Caribbean countries face to tackle the three planetary environmental crises.

Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Conduct the Latin American and Caribbean stakeholders' consultations on legal and policy solutions to combat climate change and biodiversity loss in the region.

2. Promote and advance the implementation of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in the region and the protection of human rights defenders in environmental matters in the region, considering the celebration of the Second Annual Forum on Environmental Human Rights Defenders.
3. Present the Second Global Report on Environmental Rule of Law and analyze recent global developments and trends in the context of the region.
4. Launch the Regional Platform of Environmental Law Lecturers in Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. Promote collaboration and networking among stakeholders to strengthen the effective implementation of environmental law.

General information

The conference will be hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme Latin America and the Caribbean Office, in Panama City, Panama. The sessions will be conducted in Spanish and in English and will be held in hybrid mode and broadcast to allow a broader number of participants.

Programme

DAY 1: Monday, September 25, 2023

LEGAL RESPONSES TO COMBAT THE THREE PLANETARY ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES: CLIMATE CHANGE

Time	Activity
08:20 - 08:55	Accreditations
09:00 - 10:00	Welcome and introduction to the Regional Conference The Fifth Montevideo Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and objectives of the Conference • Overview of the Montevideo Programme • Presentation of the work status and advances made by the Programme
10:00 - 10:30	Regional consultation: Climate change priorities for the region Overview of legal issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of climate change issues in the region

- Key legal progress of Climate Change in the region
- Presentation on the background of the stakeholder consultation

10:30 - 12:30 <i>(with coffee break)</i>	Working groups for interactive discussions (dialogue based on guiding questions) Stakeholder consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtable dialogue based on guiding questions, considering opportunities and challenges for the development, implementation, and harmonization of appropriate legal and institutional frameworks at the national or subnational level • Additional goals: Identification of opportunities for regional cooperation, best practices, and building on capacities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
12:30 - 13:00	Feedback and conclusions Presentation of feedback from rapporteurs, conclusions, and next steps: preparation of a report for the National Focal Points on options for clearly defined priority areas for legal responses to address climate change.
13:00 - 13:50	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:30	The right to a healthy environment in Latin America and the Caribbean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the Information Note: 'What is the Right to a Healthy Environment?' and the progress made in the region • Reflections on the Human Right to a Healthy Environment in the region • Short discussion on the Second Annual Forum of Human Rights Defenders in environmental matters and expected outcomes • Roundtable
15:30 - 15:45	Break
15:45 - 17:00	The role of legislation in promoting ambient air quality management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of Guide on Ambiente Air Quality Legislation • Share lessons learned and future ambitions related to legislation • Discussion on how the Guide can support countries

Programme

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

LEGAL RESPONSES TO COMBAT THE THREE PLANETARY ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES: BIODIVERSITY

Time	Activity
09:00 - 9:30	Regional consultation: Biodiversity priorities in the region Overview of legal issues

- Presentation of the legal issues raised by biodiversity in the region
- Legal state and regional progress of Biodiversity in the region
- Developments of the region to address biodiversity loss and achieve international goals
- Presentation on the background of the stakeholder consultation

09:30 - 11:30 (with coffee break)	<p>Working groups for interactive discussions (dialogue based on guiding questions) Stakeholder consultation</p> <p>Roundtable dialogue, based on guiding questions, considering opportunities and challenges for the development, implementation, and harmonization of appropriate legal and institutional frameworks at the national or subnational level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional goals: Identification of opportunities for regional cooperation, best practices, and building on capacities.
11:30 - 12:00	<p>Feedback and conclusions</p> <p>Presentation of feedback from rapporteurs, conclusions and next steps: preparation of a report for the national focal points on options for clearly defined priority areas to strengthen, develop, or implement appropriate legal and institutional frameworks at the national or subnational level to implement biodiversity-related goals and commitments.</p>
12:00 - 12:50	<p>Lunch Break</p>
13:00 - 14:00	<p>Launch ceremony and first meeting: Regional Platform of Environmental Law Lecturers in Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the initiative • Context and goals • Further steps • Discussion to enhance the network in the region
14:00 - 15:00	<p>Roundtable: Environmental Defenders, Environmental Justice and Climate Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the Information Note on Climate Emergency and Human Rights prepared by the Environmental Legal Clinics Alliance in the region • Presentation on the 2023 Climate Litigation Report • Open discussion
15:00 - 15:15	<p>Break</p>
15:15 - 16:00	<p>Appreciation session: The Role of the Judiciary in the Advancement of Latin America and the Caribbean Environmental Law</p>
16:00 - 16:30	<p>Closing remarks</p>

Documents of interest

Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law	
Delivering for People and the Planet: Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law	Access
Report of the resumed first global meeting of national focal points for the Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, 4 July 2022	Access
Co-Chairs' Summary of the fifth meeting of the steering committee for implementation, 10 March 2023	Access
Co-Chairs' Non-Paper - Agenda Item 4(b), Priority areas for implementation	Access
Biodiversity	
Raoul Wallenberg Institute 2023, Multi-actor Dialogue and Forums on Biodiversity	Access
Raoul Wallenberg Institute 2021, Mind the Compliance Gap: How Insights from International Human Rights Mechanisms Can Help to Implement the Convention on Biological Diversity	Access
The Right to a healthy environment	
UNEP 2023, What is the right to a healthy environment?	Access
UNEP 2023, The Right to a Healthy Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean	Access
UNDP 2021, The Escazú Agreement, Human Rights and Healthy Ecosystems	Access
The role of legislation in promoting ambient air quality management	
UNEP 2021, Regulating Air Quality: The First Global Assessment of Air Pollution Legislation	Access
UNEP, 2023, Guide on Ambient Air Quality Legislation	Access
Justice and Climate Change	
UNEP 2023, Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review	Access
UNEP Press Release 2023, Climate litigation more than doubles in five years now a key tool in delivering climate justice	Access
Extension of deadline to submit observations to the request for an Advisory Opinion Submitted by the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Colombia	Access
Additional resources	
UNDP, Learning for nature	Access

