

**DAY 2: Tuesday, September 26, 2023**

**13:00 – 14:00 p.m. (GMT-5)**

**Regional Platform for Cooperation of Environmental Law Lecturers in Latin America and the Caribbean**

*Third session within the framework of the Regional Conference of the V Montevideo Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean region*

### **Brief introduction**

The global environmental situation is worsening and the window of opportunity for action is closing. Three crises - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution - are threatening well-being and limiting opportunities to reduce poverty and inequality and improve quality of life and livelihoods. These three crises are largely driven by human activity and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) was established to accelerate cooperation and urgent collective action, but currently, the world is veering off the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those related to the environment. Transforming humanity's relationship with nature is key to a sustainable future.

As described in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) publication, "Environmental Rule of Law: First Global Report" (EROL I)<sup>1</sup>, well-designed laws implemented by capable government institutions accountable by an informed and engaged public, lead to the achievement of environmental goals and commitments. Additionally, UN Human Rights Council Resolution 48/13 and UN General Assembly Resolution 76/300 affirm "Promoting the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment requires the full implementation of multilateral environmental agreements under the principles of international environmental law."

As countries in the region face increasingly complex environmental challenges, environmental law has expanded to become a remarkable environmental protection tool. The growth of this field has been benefited by insights from all branches of law but has now been consolidated with unique principles and tools that are inherently characteristic. The Latin American and Caribbean doctrine of

---

<sup>1</sup> Access: <https://www.unep.org/resources/assessment/environmental-rule-law-first-global-report>

Environmental Law is abundant, diverse, and cutting-edge, making a substantive contribution to the progressive development of Environmental Law.

The region also has a strong commitment to knowledge sharing, including both formal and informal networks for professional exchange and development, through the celebration of conferences, workshops, and events.

In this context, the establishment of a Regional Platform for Cooperation of Environmental Law Lecturers could play a crucial role in promoting education, research, and collaboration among experts in the field, with the aim of enhancing nations' capability to address environmental issues efficiently.

This initiative is developed within the framework of the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Environmental Law Programme) adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019 as an intergovernmental programme to support the development and implementation of Environmental Law at the national and international levels for a decade, until December 31, 2029.

## References

This initiative is built upon the existence of valuable spaces for teaching and disseminating environmental law, which facilitates enrichment and exchange among legal experts in the field at the regional, subregional and national levels in the countries of the region. It is understood that these exchange forums have contributed to the advancement of environmental law and the creation of bonds and networks.

Furthermore, it draws inspiration from successful and ongoing experiences in other regions of the world, such as the Association of Environmental Law Lecturers in African Universities (ASSELLAU) and the Association of Environmental Law Lecturers in Middle East and North African Universities (ASSELLMU). These academic networks of Environmental Law experts "promote dialogue and inquiry into the teaching, research, practice, and implementation of Environmental Law as it pertains to the countries and peoples of the region."

## Objectives

The Regional Platform for Cooperation of Environmental Law Lecturers in Latin America and the Caribbean aims primarily to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange among academics, lecturers, and researchers dedicated to Environmental Law in the region.

The platform aims to promote continuous improvement of education in this field, facilitate joint research, share best practices, and contribute to the development of strong legal frameworks and environmental policies in the region.

The platform will consider governance models (polycentric governance) to ensure democracy in the region.

## Benefits and activities

1. **Knowledge exchange** to facilitate discussion and dissemination of information and experiences, pedagogical approaches, teaching materials, and resources among lecturers from different countries. This will enrich the development and quality of Environmental Law education and enable adaptation to local realities.
2. **Collaborative research and innovation** that will foster cooperation in research projects related to Environmental Law at both regional and international levels. This will enable addressing environmental challenges from diverse perspectives and enrich the knowledge base in the region.
3. **Promote the exchange of experiences**, lessons learned, and knowledge on **climate litigation** in the region.
4. **Training and professional development**, aimed at promoting activities that contribute to the professional growth of educators and enhance their capacity to impart up-to-date knowledge to students.
5. **Support and encourage young lecturers and lawyers** from the region and/or those interested in environmental law issues in countries of the region.
6. **Support for public policies** through the generation of recommendations and proposals based on research and the accumulated experience of its members, to influence the design and implementation of environmental public policies.
7. **Promote and encourage** the inclusion of environmental legal education into the curricula of universities in the region.

8. **Lead collaborative projects** to promote greater awareness of environmental issues among students and lecturers at universities.
9. **Establishment of a robust network of connections** among environmental law lecturers and experts, as well as universities and academic institutions, fostering long-term collaboration and the dissemination of academic and professional opportunities.
10. **Promote discussion and networking** among law students to contribute to fostering interest in and study of Environmental Law in the region.
11. **Facilitate and promote the exchange of experiences** among Environmental Law Clinics in the region.
12. **Manage and facilitate social action** by strengthening the connection between universities and society through conferences, projects, and meetings in the field, contributing to the comprehensive study of Environmental Law.

### Structure and organization

The platform will be composed of lecturers from both formal and non-formal education, as individuals and/or representatives of universities, and educational and research institutions in the region.

A coordinating committee may be established to manage activities, make decisions, and ensure the achievement of the objectives of the Platform. Universities in the region interested in participating will also be invited to join the Regional Platform.

The United Nations Environment Programme will provide assistance in establishing communication channels among members and in coordinating and conducting activities, including virtual and in-person meetings, depending on available resources.

Given that the platform is developed within the framework of the Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law, it will maintain close contact with its national focal points.

### Presentation of the Regional Platform and Inaugural Meeting

The Platform will be introduced and have its inaugural meeting during the Regional Conference of the Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law in Panama City on September 26, 2023.

During this meeting, platform members will exchange their perspectives on the Platform's future work and initial activities. Subject to resource availability, the Platform will hold annual conferences and publish reports and knowledge materials for the benefit of the regional and international community.

### Founding Members<sup>2</sup>

Marcelo Cousillas, University of the Republic and University of Montevideo, Uruguay

Leila Devia, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Mario Peña, University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica

Mariano Castro, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Peru

Teresa Cruz, University of La Havana, Cuba

Néstor Cafferatta, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

### Agenda for the Platform Launch

Session Roadmap	
Session 3	Regional Platform for Cooperation of Environmental Law Lecturers in Latin America and the Caribbean
Date, time and duration	13:00 – 14:00 (Panama Time (GMT-5), September 26, 2023 Duration: 1 hour
Audience	In-Person (Panama City) and Virtual (Zoom)

<sup>2</sup> The universities mentioned are institutional reference where people have formal or non-regulated teaching careers. These mentions do not imply institutional representation.

Language		Spanish<>English, with simultaneous interpretation		
Time			Programme	Responsible
Start	Finish	Duration		
13:00	13:10	10 min	<p><b>Welcome remarks</b></p> <p>Introduction to the Platform, purpose, and objectives</p>	<p><b>Speakers</b> (5 min each)</p> <p><b>Patricia Kameri-Mbote</b>, Director of the Law Division, UNEP  <b>Andrea Brusco</b>, Regional Coordinator Environmental Governance, UNEP</p>
13:10	13:55	45 min	<p><b>Roundtable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of founding members of the Platform</li> <li>• Presentation of Their Regional Experience in Environmental Law</li> <li>• Open Discussion on Platform Objectives, Regional Needs, and Opportunities, and Next Steps</li> </ul>	<p><b>Founding Members of the Platform and other speakers</b> (7 min each)</p> <p><b>Leila Devia</b>, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina  <b>Mario Peña</b>, University of Costa Rica  <b>Mariano Castro</b>, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru  <b>Marcelo Cousillas</b>, University of Montevideo, Uruguay  <b>Teresa Cruz</b>, University of La Havana, Cuba  <b>Néstor Cafferatta</b>, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina</p>
13:55	14:00	5 min	<p><b>Conclusions and closing remarks</b></p>	<p><b>Andrea Brusco</b>, Regional Coordinator Environmental Governance, UNEP</p>