

Thank you Madame Chair. My name is Ana Barreira from the International Institute for Law and the Environment. I speak on behalf of the NGO Major Group, with the support of the Indigenous Peoples and Children and Youth Major Groups.

We welcome Draft Decision 6 on Advancing Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability. Environmental rule of law is essential for achieving internationally agreed environmental commitments. It is also essential for ensuring effective implementation, compliance and enforcement of national environmental laws.

We believe this draft decision should build on the building blocks of governance, law and justice systems, including the following: (1) secure access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters; (2) support the key role of public interest lawyers, scholars, and civil society; (3) involve ombudspersons for future generations; (4) respect the principle of non-regression, whereby existing levels of environmental protection are not diminished.

We respectfully suggest this draft decision be amended as follows.

First, the decision should include a paragraph acknowledging the principle of non-regression in order to achieve environmental sustainability.

Second, the decision should also respond to the call of the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability that stressed the need for legally binding instruments on Principle 10.

Third, the decision should encourage involvement of civil society in compliance mechanisms of MEAs;

Fourth and last, the decision should request UNEP's Executive Director to:

1. Strengthen the implementation of the UNEP Bali guidelines, particularly on access to justice, including by providing adequate financial support and capacity-building;
2. Include national Ombudspersons for Future Generations in all efforts to improve the effectiveness of rule of law systems;
3. Provide countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region with assistance in support of their efforts in the elaboration a regional instrument on Principle 10;
4. Engage public interest lawyers, scholars and civil society, all of whom are essential actors in the implementation of this decision;
5. Facilitate a structured exchange of information between compliance review bodies of MEAs, in order to identify good practices and strengthening of the mechanisms.

We believe these amendments will strengthen stakeholders' trust in international processes to advance Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability.

Thank you for your attention.

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