

United Nations Mandate on Human Rights and the Environment

John H. Knox, UN Special Rapporteur

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Today I issue my [28th and final newsletter](#) as the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment.

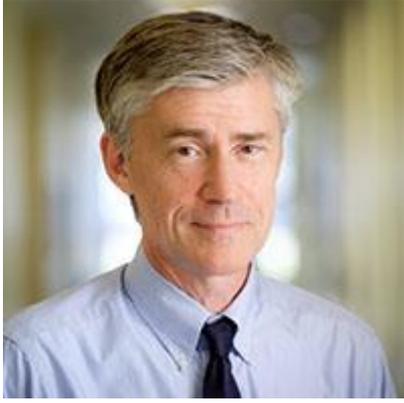
This newsletter introduces David R. Boyd, my successor as the Special Rapporteur as of 1 August 2018. David is a professor at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada, and one of the leading experts in the world on the relationship between human rights and the environment. He will be an outstanding special rapporteur! As David takes over the mandate, the social media accounts and communication mechanisms associated with the mandate will be transferred to him as well. While this may take a few weeks in some cases, he will immediately have access to emails sent to srenvironment@ohchr.org.

David will report to the UN General Assembly on 25 October. Because reports have to be submitted several months in advance of their presentation, David and I worked together to draft the report and I turned it in this month.

The report urges the General Assembly to recognize the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Vehicles for recognition could include a new agreement, such as the Global Pact for the Environment proposed by France last year, and/or a new General Assembly resolution, such as the 2010 General Assembly resolution that recognized the rights to water and sanitation.

As the report explains, the right would not be an empty vessel waiting to be filled. Human rights law already says a lot about the environment! My last report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/37/59) presented 16 Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment, which summarize the principal obligations of States under human rights law relating to the environment.

I hope that all of you will support the movement for global recognition of a human right to a healthy environment. As I told the Council, there is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come, and this is an idea whose moment is here.



About John Knox

John Knox is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. He is also the Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law at the Wake Forest University School of Law.