



# Right to a healthy environment: good practices

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







# Summary

The report (and its annexes) describe good practices of States in recognizing the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and implementing the procedural and substantive elements of the right. This fundamental human right is now recognized in law by more than 80 percent of United Nations Member States (156 out of 193). The procedural elements are access to information, public participation, and access to justice/effective remedies. The substantive elements include clean air, a safe climate, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems. In the context of the global environmental crisis, accelerated diffusion and adoption of good practices to protect human rights is imperative.

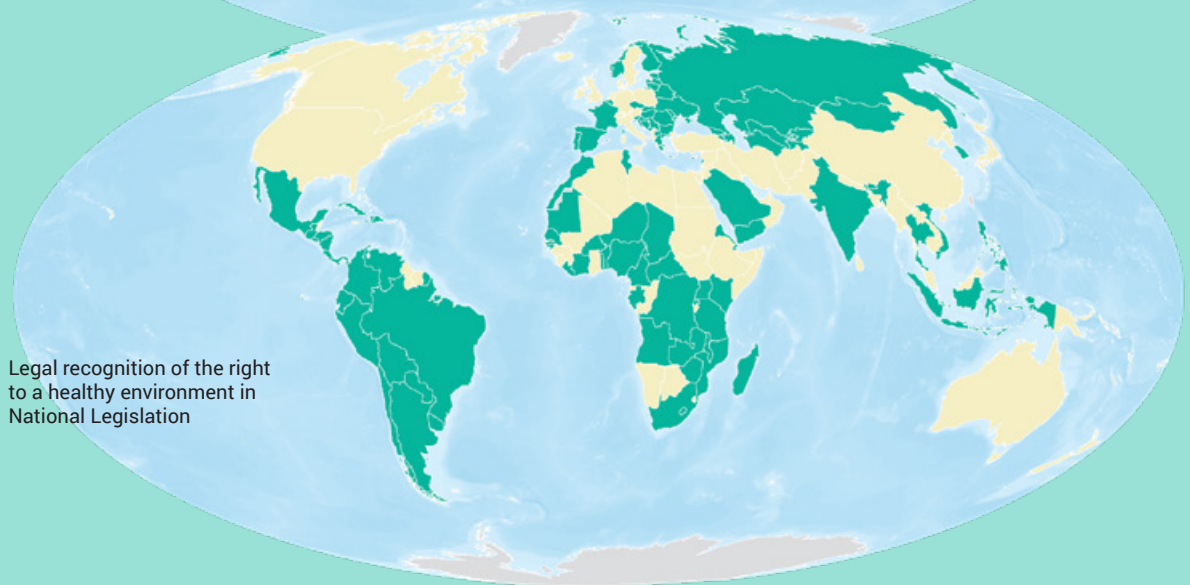
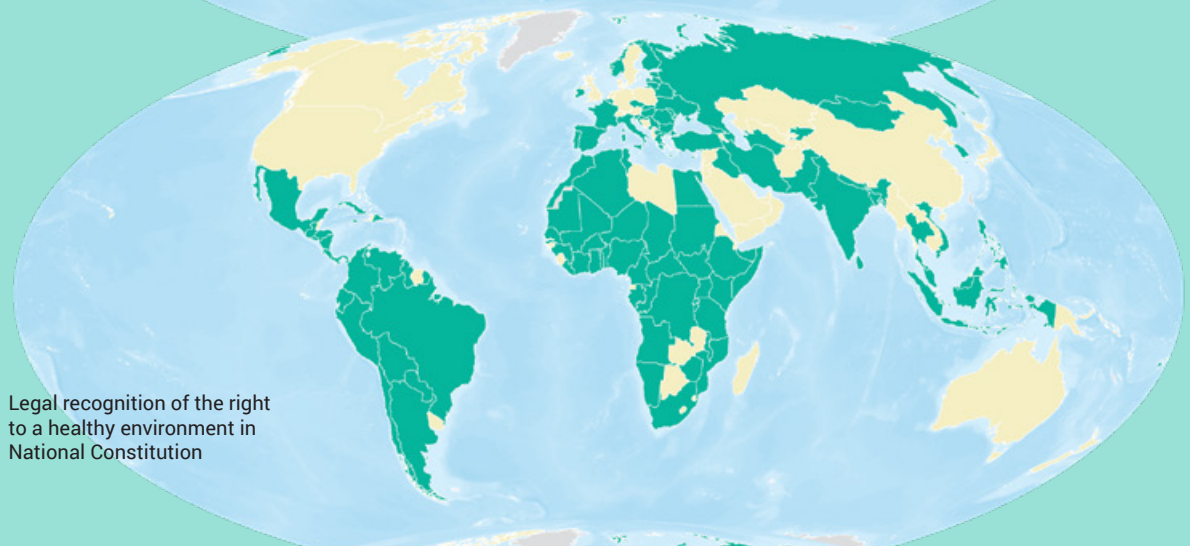
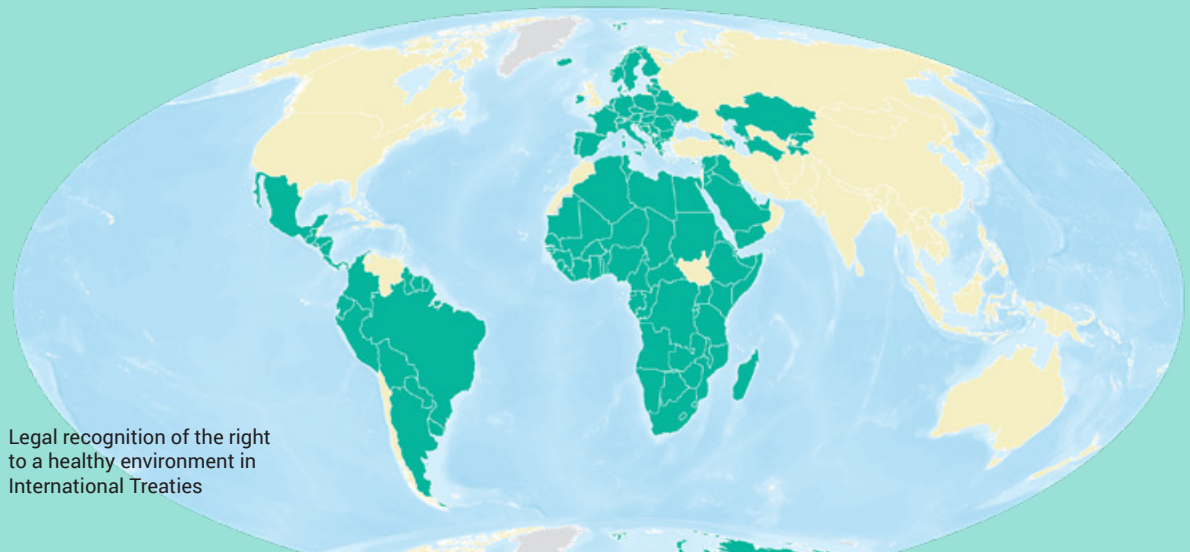
Healthy environment



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# I. Introduction

## 1

In 2018, the Human Rights Council appointed Dr. David R. Boyd to serve as the Special Rapporteur on human rights obligations related to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/Res/37/8). Over the past year, the Special Rapporteur submitted reports on country visits to Fiji and Norway (A/HRC/43/53/Add.1 and A/HRC/43/53/Add.2), presented thematic reports on clean air to the Council (A/HRC/40/55) and on a safe climate to the General Assembly (A/74/161), hosted an experts' meeting "on experience and best practices of States at the national and regional levels with regard to human rights obligations relating to the environment," and submitted a summary report on discussions at that meeting (A/HRC/43/54).

## 2

The present report highlights good practices in the recognition and implementation of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The term "good practice" is defined broadly, to include laws, policies, jurisprudence, strategies, programs, projects and other measures that contribute to reducing adverse environmental impacts, improving environmental quality and fulfilling human rights. The good practices address both the procedural and substantive elements of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The procedural elements are access to information, public participation, and access to justice/effective remedies. The substantive elements include clean air, a safe climate, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems.

## II. The process of compiling good practices

### 3

The Special Rapporteur circulated a call for inputs on good practices related to the implementation of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in April 2019. He would like to thank Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Venezuela for their informative responses. A number of international organizations, civil society organizations and individuals also provided useful inputs.<sup>1</sup> As requested by the Human Rights Council, on 20-21 June 2019 the Special Rapporteur co-hosted, with UN Environment, an experts' seminar to discuss the experiences and good practices of States with regard to the implementation of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

### 4

The Special Rapporteur also created a global online “researchathon” which resulted in the submission of hundreds of good practices from more than 175 UN Member States.

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