ISHR update: The draft resolution on environmental human rights defenders has now been formally ‘tabled’ at the Human Rights Council, meaning it is scheduled for consideration and adoption by the Council on 22 and 23 March. The draft resolution is a timely and important statement on the vital role of environmental human rights defenders in safeguarding biodiversity, addressing climate change, achieving sustainable development and promoting and protecting all human rights.

However, while the resolution contains some important elements, several of the below civil society asks are still missing. In particular, the resolution should:

- more clearly identify and name the root causes and perpetrators at the heart of the insecurity facing environmental human rights defenders;
- increase the demands on States and businesses with regard to conducting due diligence on business and development activities; and
- include specific calls on investors and development finance institutions to use their influence to better protect environmental human rights defenders.

As the negotiations at the Human Rights Council enter their final phase, ISHR calls on all States and civil society to continue to push for the inclusion of key civil society asks, and to use the remaining days to work towards the adoption of a strong resolution on environmental human rights defenders. The resolution, as currently drafted, is an important step but does not yet represent the unequivocal signal in support of environmental activists the Council should send.

Civil society* from across the world are calling on all UN Member States to demonstrate their support to environmental human rights defenders.

At its current 40th session, the Human Rights Council is discussing a draft resolution on environmental human rights defenders. This is a timely and important initiative as UN agencies, human rights organisations and the media have documented unprecedented killings and attacks against people defending land and the environment.

It is important for the Council to adopt a resolution that reflects the gravity and the reality of the situation
defenders face every day. Our organisation therefore call on members of the UN Human Rights Council to ensure that the resolution adopted by the Council clearly:

- Outlines the root causes of the threats against environmental human rights defenders, including development and commercial activities with adverse social and environmental impacts, or those imposed on communities without meaningful consultation and respect for their rights;
- Recognises that environmental human rights defenders confront multiple adverse interests when challenging State and corporate activities, and highlights the collusion between different actors which hinders the work of defenders and aggravates their vulnerable position;
- Clearly names the industries and activities most dangerous to defenders, such as the mining industry, natural resource exploitation, agribusiness and large-scale development projects;
- Acknowledges the wide number of States that have recognised the right to a healthy environment in their internal legal order;
- Recognises that the lack of effective access to information, access to participation and access to justice causes environmental conflicts and leads to violence against defenders;
- Calls for the development of protection mechanisms for environmental human rights defenders in line with best practice identified by the Special Rapporteur;
- Articulates the specific risks women and indigenous human rights defenders face and the need for an intersectional approach in assessing and designing protection measures for defenders;
- Calls on States to ensure that all communities are meaningfully consulted and can participate genuinely in matters that affect their rights and, in particular the use, management and conservation of their land and natural resources;
- Calls on States to guarantee the right to free, prior and informed consent for indigenous peoples;
- Calls on States to adopt legislation that creates due diligence obligations for companies registered in their jurisdictions and those of their subsidiaries;
- Articulates the responsibility of businesses to respect the rights of human rights defenders and highlights measures companies should take to contribute to addressing their insecurity;
- Adequately articulates the responsibility of investors and the obligations of development finance institutions to respect human rights in the context of their investments and to develop and implement effective policies to prevent and address threats; and
- Stresses that an open civic space, including respect for the rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association and movement, as well as the right to participate in the conduct of government and public affairs, is vital to the protection of both a healthy and sustainable environment and environmental human rights defenders.

The draft being negotiated in Geneva contains some of these essential elements, which must be defended, but also offers significant potential for strengthening.

As negotiations enter the final stretch, our organisations urge States to actively support the development of a resolution which clearly recognises the vital contribution of environmental human rights defenders to sustainable development and the effective enjoyment of human rights and formulates concrete asks of the States, development finance institutions and companies with the power of safeguarding that contribution.

Sincerely, *signatures are collected on a rolling basis

1. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
2. Amnesty International
3. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia)
4. CIVICUS
5. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
6. Earth Justice
7. Front Line Defenders
8. Global Witness
9. JASS (Just Associates)
10. IM-Defensoras
11. Christian Development Alternative (CDA)
12. Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association
13. Social Justice Connection  
14. Franciscans International  
15. Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos - Guatemala (UDEFEGUA)  
17. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights  
19. Coordination des associations et des particuliers pour la liberté de conscience  
20. La'o Hamutuk  
21. Karapatan Philippines  
22. Human Rights House Foundation  
23. HETAVED SKILLS ACADEMY AND NETWORKS  
24. International Commission of Jurists  
25. Conectas Direitos Humanos  
26. World Movement for Democracy  
27. Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE)  
28. Center for Civil Liberties  
29. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights  
30. Human Rights Concern - Eritrea (HRCE)  
31. International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)  
32. Humanitaire Plus (Togo)  
33. Coalition Burkinafé des Défenseurs des Droits Humains  
34. AMARA  
35. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)  
36. Odhikar  
37. Freedom House  
38. Red Internacional Unión Latinoamericana de Mujeres - Red ULAM  
39. Rivers without Boundaries Mongolia  
40. Asian Legal Resource Centre  
41. OYU TOLGOI WATCH  
42. Ligue Burundaise des droits de l’homme Iteka  
43. International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES)  
44. AVIPA association des victimes parents et amis du 28 septembre 2009 Guinée  
45. Porgera Red Wara (River) Women's Association Incorporated (PRWWA INC.)  
46. KRUHA - people’s coalition for the right to water  
47. Asia Pacific Network of Environment Defenders (APNED)  
48. EMPOWER INDIA  
49. EarthRights International  
50. Dawei Probono Lawyer Network (DPLN)  
51. Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice(ANEEJ)  
52. Partnership for Justice, Nigeria  
53. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)  
54. Huridocs  
55. Steps Without Borders NGO  
56. Humanists International  
57. Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CTDDH)  
58. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre  
59. Institute for Multi-Resource Development (IMdev)  
60. Not1More  
61. Patrons of Khuvsgul lake movement  
62. Liberia Coalition of Human Rights DefendersHuman Concern, Inc  
63. Brot für die Welt  
64. ARTICLE 19  
65. Peace Brigades International  
66. Metro Center Journalists Rights & Advocacy  
67. World Uyghur Congress
350.org
International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
Latinamerikagrupperna
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
Center for International Environmental Law (CIÉL)
SUDIA
Synergia - 36/5000 Initiatives for Human Rights
Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc.
Alyansa Tígí Mína (ATM)
Center for Women’s Global Leadership
Transformative and Integrative Build Out For All
Institute for Strategic & Development Studies
Reseau de Femmes du milieu Rural Haitien
East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)
FIFCJ
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)
Zo Indigenous Forum
MADRE
FOKUS Forum for women and development
Bougainville Women’s Federation
Human Rights Council-Ethiopia
Environment Defenders Advocacy
Porgera Women’s Rights Watch
Independent Human Rights Analyst and Strategy Advisor
Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO)
Community Resource Centre Foundation
MANUSHYA FOUNDATION
Equitable Cambodia
Friends with Environment in Development
Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB)
Association For Promotion Sustainable development
WoMin African Alliance
Both ENDS
Child Rights Connect
CONSEIL REGIONAL DES ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES DE DEVELOPPEMENT
Enda Lead Afrique Francophone
Human Rights Law Centre
Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
World Voices Uganda
Africa Center for Policy Facilitation
Estonian Forest Aid
Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE)
Collectif Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l’Homme et de la Démocratie (COCODHD)
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)
Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project
Forum Syd Sweden
COALITION AGAINST LAND GRABBING (CALG) - PHILIPPINES
UNLAD-BLFFA
Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)
BankTrack
CORE Coalition
The Gaia Foundation
Labour Behind the Label
Bataris Formation Center
124. Salva la Selva
125. Observatoire d'études et d'appui à la responsabilité sociale et environnementale (OEARSE)
126. REd de Género y Medio Ambiente
127. London Mining Network
128. Abibiman Foundation
129. Ecodesarrollo
130. The Kesho Trus
131. Organisation mondiale contre la torture
132. PAPUA NEW GUINEA MINING WATCH GROUP ASSOCIATION INC
133. 11.11.11 - Koepel van de Vlaamse Noord-Zuidbeweging
134. Center for Global Nonkilling
135. Centro salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropiada
136. Coalition Ivoirienne des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CIDDH)
137. Friends of the Earth NI
138. Forest Peoples Programme
139. Environmental Investigation Agency
140. Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (FUNDEPS)
141. Bank Information Center
142. Africa development Interchange Network
143. Voluntariados Intag
144. Mangrove Action Project
145. IUCN NL
146. Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC)
147. Amazon Watch
148. HRM @Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan@
149. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
150. Asociación ambiental e cultural Petón do Lobo
151. Asociación galega Cova Crea
152. Amigos e Amigas dos Bosques "O Ouriol do Anllóns"
153. Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme (RECODH)
154. CNCD-11.11.11
155. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
156. Rainforest Foundation Norway
157. Women Working Worldwide
158. Greenpeace
159. AMDH- Maroc
160. In Difesa Di , per i diritti umani e chi li difende
161. Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines
162. The Fund for Global Human Rights
163. People in Need
164. ABColombia
165. Al-Haq
166. Denver Justice and Peace Committee
167. Dominicans for justice and peace
168. End Ecocide on Earth
169. Zenú Network
170. Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-determination and Liberation
171. Jamaa Resource Initiatives
172. National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF)
173. Bretton Woods Project
174. Transparency International
176. GTANW
177. Campaign for Peace & Democracy (Manipur)
178. Otros Mundos AC/Chiapas, México
179. NGO Forum on ADB
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<td>Femmes et Droits Humains</td>
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<td>CIDSE - International family of Catholic social justice organisations</td>
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*Photo: Flickr*