

NEWS RELEASE



*Spanish version, see below
Vea abajo la versión en español*

Peru: UN experts urge ratification of landmark Escazú Agreement to promote responsible business conduct

GENEVA (10 August 2020) – UN experts on business and human rights today urged Peru to ratify the landmark "Escazú Agreement," saying it offers an historic opportunity to make companies more responsible for their impact on the environment and to protect human rights defenders.

"This landmark regional treaty not only provides guarantees for good environmental governance and human rights, it is also a catalyst for sustainable development and responsible business conduct in the region," said Anita Ramasastry, chairperson of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. "We urge the Government to take the next vital step forward by ratifying the Agreement."

The "Escazú Agreement" is the informal name of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. The world's first regional environmental treaty, it has been signed by 22 countries, and aims to guarantee the right of present and future generations to a healthy environment and sustainable development.

The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights [recently commended Peru](#) for its leadership in the six-year-long negotiations that led to the agreement in March 2018. Peru signed it in September 2018, and the agreement now is before Peru's Congress for ratification. If Peru does ratify, only one more country will need to ratify for the agreement to come into force.

The Escazú Agreement represents a critical step towards effective implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and other international standards on responsible business conduct, said the Working Group. "Equally, ratification of the treaty represents an opportunity for businesses to fulfil their important role in respecting the environment and human rights and consequently gain legitimacy and enhance their sustainability."

Implementation of the agreement in Peru should also strengthen transparency of decision-making processes about the environment, bring people into those processes, and provide remedies and redress to victims of environmental harm.

The Escazú Agreement also contains vital provisions for human rights defenders. "In a region where human rights defenders risk their lives as they defend people and the

environment against negative impacts of business activity, this regional treaty is critical,” said Dante Pesce, vice-chair of the UN Working Group.

The treaty contains specific provisions for the protection of human rights defenders that should help build trust and common ground among different actors, including businesses. That, in turn, would contribute to a safe and enabling environment for defenders. Implementation of this regional treaty will also contribute to improved legal certainty and prevent socio-environmental conflicts, the experts said, because it seeks to strengthen the participation of indigenous peoples and other local communities in the negotiation and resolution of such conflicts.

The Working Group’s recommendation was endorsed by **Francisco Cali Tzay**, [Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples](#); **Mary Lawlor**, [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#); **David R. Boyd**, [Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment](#) and **Marcos A. Orellana**, [Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes](#)

ENDS

[The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises](#) (also referred to as the **Working Group on Business and Human Rights**) was established by the Human Rights Council in 2011. The Working Group is composed of five independent experts of balanced geographical representation. They are: **Surya Deva**, **Elżbieta Karska**, **Githu Muigai**, **Dante Pesce (Vice-Chair)**, **Anita Ramasastry (Chair)**.

Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

For more information and **media requests**, please contact Alexia Ghyoot (+41 22 917 9038 / aghyoot@ohchr.org)

For media enquiries regarding other UN independent experts, please contact Ms Kitty McKinsey (kmckinsey@ohchr.org)

Follow news related to the UN’s independent human rights experts on Twitter [@UN_SPExperts](https://twitter.com/UN_SPExperts).

Concerned about the world we live in?
Then STAND UP for someone’s rights today.
#Standup4humanrights
and visit the web page at <http://www.standup4humanrights.org>