



Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment

A JOINT CENTER OF COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL
AND THE EARTH INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Global Pact for the Environment and the Sustainable Development Agenda

September 25, 2019
Columbia University

PROGRAM

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Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI)

The Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI), a joint center of Columbia Law School and the Earth Institute at Columbia University, is a leading research center and forum dedicated exclusively to the study, practice and discussion of sustainable international investment (SII) worldwide. Through research, advisory projects, multi-stakeholder dialogue and educational programs, CCSI constructs and implements an investment framework that promotes sustainable development, builds trusting relationships for long-term investments, and is easily adopted by governments, companies and civil society. For more information, see: <http://ccsi.columbia.edu>.

Le Club des Juristes (CDJ)

Created in 2007, Le Club des Juristes is France's first legal think tank, comprised of a diverse range of legal professionals including lawyers, judges, academics, and notaries. The CDJ has twin aims: to promote innovative legal debate, and to improve legal literacy by the public. To these ends, the CDJ pushes legal debates outside the confines of legal communities to comment on current news (social, economic, political and institutional) from a relevant legal perspective. <http://www.leclubdesjuristes.com/>

Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. SDSN aims to accelerate joint learning and promote integrated approaches that address the interconnected economic, social, and environmental challenges confronting the world. SDSN works closely with United Nations agencies, multilateral financing institutions, the private sector, and civil society. <http://unsdsn.org/>

Iberdrola

Iberdrola is a power utility based in Spain, the United States, the UK, Mexico, and Brazil. It is the second largest integrated utility in Europe. Iberdrola considers the mandate to decarbonize the economy an opportunity rather than a challenge, and has worked over the past decade to become the world leader in wind energy. Iberdrola has committed to carbon neutrality by 2050 and is well on its way: renewables account for 60% of installed capacity and Iberdrola's emissions in continental Europe are 67% below peer companies. Thanks to an internal carbon price, Iberdrola has cut emissions 75% since 2000. Iberdrola's actions on climate change have been recognized by the Global 100, CDP, Dow Jones Sustainability Index, FTSE4Good or the Climate Disclosure Leadership Index.

During the 2017 UN General Assembly (UNGA), French President Emmanuel Macron and a group of “Friends of the Pact” held a Summit to launch diplomatic efforts for a proposed Global Pact for the Environment. The Global Pact was intended to serve as a legally binding “umbrella text” that would synthesize the principles outlined in existing international environmental conventions and treaties under one guiding document. The Global Pact also aimed to re-center rights-based discourse in environmental protection, codifying the right to a healthy environment in international law.

In May 2018, the UNGA adopted [Resolution 72/277](#), “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment” (A/72/L.51), which requested that the Secretary General submit “a [technical and evidence-based report](#) that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation” to the UN General Assembly and established an *ad hoc* open-ended working group “to consider the report and discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments.” The Working Group’s meetings concluded in May 2019.

This conference, the third annual of its kind hosted by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, and the *Club des Juristes*, will build upon this work and discuss opportunities for a Global Pact to strengthen international environmental governance. This year’s conference focuses on the ability of a Global Pact for the Environment to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by linking the 2030 Agenda to the international environmental legal system.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted unanimously by the 193 UN member states in September 2015. It established 17 consensus “Sustainable Development Goals” to guide efforts to achieve environmentally sustainability and socially inclusive economic development for all by 2030.

The imperative for environmentally sustainable and inclusive development is also one of the pillars upon which a potential Global Pact stands. By formally recognizing an individual right to a healthy environment and instructing state parties to incorporate the duty to protect this right into respective domestic and international policies, the Global Pact aims to unify and reinforce existing international environmental law and principles, as well as international human rights law.

This conference will explore potential connections between 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Pact for the Environment, touching upon opportunities for mutual reinforcement and considering priority provisions for Global Pact negotiators to include to maximize impact. Panelists will discuss how would a Global Pact serve the three overarching pillars of the Sustainable Development Agenda, including to promote social inclusion and economic development in addition to environmental protection.

September 25, 2019, Wednesday

5:15 – 5:40 *Introductory Remarks:*

Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session, UN General Assembly

5:40-6:00 *The need for a new approach to effectively address the world’s environmental challenges*

After three substantive sessions held in Nairobi from January until May 2019, the ad hoc open-ended working group released a set of recommendations -adopted by consensus- for consideration by the General Assembly, with the aim of strengthening the implementation of environmental law and achieving the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The great environmental challenges we are facing call for “a new approach” to address them effectively.¹ The working group co-chairs will highlight their consensus-based recommendations and convey their importance in bolstering the environmental law system at all levels, as well as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moderator:

Nicholas Robinson, Executive Governor of the International Council of Environmental Law

Panelists:

Francisco Duarte Lopes, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations

Satya S. Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of New York Office at UN Environment

6:00 – 7:15 *Putting the Global Pact to work for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set an ambitious schedule for addressing our most pressing global challenges; regrettably, as UN Secretary General António Guterres has noted, “we are not keeping pace” to meet this unanimously endorsed timeline.² While the content of a potential Global Pact for the Environment (or similar instrument) remains uncertain, this panel seeks to explore ways in which a Global Pact could be designed to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Panelists will discuss what is truly needed for international governance and institutions to address our related environmental and social crises, and how a Global Pact (and the momentum around it) can provide the new instruments, institutions, and investments needed to support the creation of a just, prosperous, and sustainable world for all.

¹ A/RES/70/, parag. 13.

² United Nations Economic and Social Council, “World ‘Not Keeping Pace’ in Implementing Sustainable Development Goals, Secretary-General Stresses, as Development Financing Forum Begins,” Meetings Coverage: Forum on Financing for Development, 1st & 2nd Meetings (15 April 2019) <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ecosoc6972.doc.htm>

Moderator:

Nicholas Robinson, Executive Governor of the International Council of Environmental Law

Panelists:

Joan Carling, Co-Convener, Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development

John Denton, Secretary General, International Chamber of Commerce

Geneviève Dufour, Professor of Law, University of Sherbrooke

Carroll Muffett, President and CEO, Center for International Environmental Law

Stewart Patrick, Director, International Institutions and Global Governance Program, Council on Foreign Relations

Carlos Sallé, Director, Energy Policies and Climate Change, Iberdrola

7:15 – 7:30 *Closing Remarks*

Yann Aguila, Partner, Bredin Prat; Professor of Public Law, Sciences Po and Paris Bar School; Chair of the Environmental Law Commission, Club des Juristes

7:30 – 8:30 *Reception*