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Convention on environment and human rights crucial for ecological protection – Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

1 July 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today lauded the world’s leading international convention on environment and human rights as a powerful tool for environmental protection and the promotion of civil rights, saying the instrument also helped to combat climate change and air and water pollution.

“The Convention’s critical focus on involving the public is helping to keep governments accountable,” Mr. Ban said in a [message](#) to the fourth meeting of Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – the so-called Aarhus Convention.

“There have been many achievements over the past decade, including the entry into force of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, the first global legally binding instrument of its kind,” Mr. Ban noted in the message, delivered on his behalf by Jan Kubiš, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

He said that the growing caseload of the Convention’s Compliance Committee, which offers members of the public the opportunity to trigger action, is a healthy sign of constructive engagement.

Mr. Ban also pointed out that the convention is building synergies through cooperation with other international organizations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) and the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)).

Collaboration with international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is also yielding results, he added.

The Secretary-General said he was pleased that this week's meeting focuses on the role of the convention in promoting sustainable development, pointing out that as the world prepares for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Brazil next year, it should be remembered that the convention is one of the major results of the Rio Declaration adopted at the first Earth Summit nearly 20 years ago.

“As the convention enters its second decade, we applaud the accomplishments of the past while acknowledging the challenges ahead. I trust that the treaty's spirit of openness, participation and justice will ensure that the public stays constructively engaged in order to achieve even greater progress in the future,” Mr. Ban added.

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