



## **Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature to Commemorate International Mother Earth Day**

***Theme: “Harmony with Nature and Biodiversity: Contributions of Ecological  
Economics and Earth-centred law”***

*Trusteeship Council, Friday 22 April 2022*

### **I. Introduction**

1. Summary of the Eleventh Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature on 22 April 2022 at the United Nations Headquarters to commemorate International Mother Earth Day. The overall theme of the dialogue was “Harmony with Nature and Biodiversity: Contributions of Ecological Economics and Earth-centred Law.”
2. Opening statements were delivered by H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Luis Alberto Arce, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and H.E. Ms. Teresa Ribera, Vice-President and Minister of Ecological Transition, Spain.
3. The keynote speakers were H.E. Ms. Marie Toussaint, Member of Parliament of the European Union; H.E. Ms. Barbara Trachte, Secretary of State for the Brussels Region, Belgium; H.E. Ms. Caren Fox, Deputy Chief Judge, Māori Land Court, New Zealand; Ms. Camila Zárate, Coordinator of the Commission on Environment, Rights of Nature, the Commons and Ecological Model of the Constitutional Assembly of Chile; and Mr. Manjeri Subin Sunder Raj, PhD, Rights of Nature advocate and Law Professor, Christ (Deemed to be University), India.
4. There were two scientific panels. The morning panel was composed of the following nine panellists: Ms. Vanessa Hasson de Oliveira, General Director, CSO/MAPAS and Mr. Jose de Abreu, Florianopolis City Councilor, Brazil; Ms. Yenny Vega, President, CSO/International Observatory of the Rights of Nature and Mr. Alexandre Boulerice, Canadian MP, New Democratic Party; Ms. Claudia Brindis, Operative Director, CSO/ELC Mexico and Mr. Max Correa, Congressman, Mexico; Dr Leonel Fuentes, Dean of the Faculty of Jurisprudence, Social Sciences and Policy, University of Guayaquil, Ecuador; Dr Hernando Bernal, Agrologist, PhD in Development Studies and Intl Cooperation, University of the Basque Country, Spain; and Mr. Craig Kauffman, Ph.D. Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Political Science, at the University of Oregon.

5. The afternoon panel was composed of the following nine panellists: Mr. Irikefe V. Dafe, President, CSO/River Ethiopie Foundation (RETFON) and Ms. Mabel Emmanuel, Director at the Ministry of Environment, Nigeria; Ms. Callie Veelenturf, Executive Director, CSO/Leatherback project and Mr. Juan Diego Vásquez, Senator at the National Assembly of Panama; Mr. Mario Cervera, Mayor of the Alcázares, Spain and Dr Teresa Vicente, Professor of Philosophy of Law and Director of the Human Rights and Rights of Nature Faculty, University of Murcia, Spain; Dr Marcela Peixoto, Lawyer, Solidarity Economy-Articulated first Rights of Nature law in Brazil; Ms. Kate Raworth, Author of Doughnut Economics, Co-founder Doughnut Economics Lab; and Ms. Megan Egler, MSc, PhD Candidate, Leadership for the Ecozoic (L4E), Gund Institute for Environment, University of Vermont, USA.

6. Participants at the Dialogue included high-level representatives of Member States, representatives of international organizations and observers, representatives of major groups and civil society.

7. The meeting had before it the report of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature (A/75/266), as well as the General Assembly resolution (A/74/236) on Harmony with Nature, adopted on 26 July 2019.

## II. Opening Session

8. **The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid**, opened the dialogue by expressing his gratitude to all esteemed delegates, the Plurinational State of Bolivia's role in the dialogue, and to the distinguished panellists and guests. He opened by recognizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that calls for a world in harmony with nature, but also noting that our world is far from the seventeen goals set forth, requiring a “shift in our thinking, in our approach, in our development path”. He further elucidated that our laws must reflect our understanding of rights and the right to live in harmony with nature. He highlighted that in the two centuries since the Industrial Revolution, entire ecosystems have been destroyed by human activity causing unprecedented change to the climate and wreaked havoc on our planet – the only home we have. President Shahid acknowledged that we must not shy away from taking responsibility for the destruction we have caused. He called for embracing education, technology, and science, which can help us safeguard nature and build a harmonious relationship with the planet we call home. He closed by calling for harmony with nature as our sustainable pathway forward from the Covid-19 pandemic and the achievement of the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

9. **H.E. Mr. Luis Arce, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia**, recognized his State's role in collective action toward harmony with nature. He called on everyone to reflect on and rekindle relationships with Mother Earth. He added that an essential solution to the crisis that Mother Earth faces is to design new economic and structural models. President Arce highlighted overconsumption and unequal land distribution for forestry and agriculture as problems that must be solved to create a sustainable and resilient planet. He pointed to a new Mother Earth economy that is based on community knowledge and collective rights for Mother Earth and her productive capacities within a framework of diverse cultures and beings. He announced that the Plurinational State of Bolivia intends to constitute a Group of Friends of Harmony with Nature aimed at

preparing transformative, inclusive, and action-oriented proposals to respond to present and future challenges with equity and social and ecological justice.

10. **H.E. Ms. Teresa Ribera, Vice-President and Minister of Ecological Transition, Spain** recognized her own State's novel solution to protecting Mother Earth by Parliamentary Action to recognize the legal personhood of the *Mar Menor* and act to restore the salt lake's ecosystems. She expanded upon the human interdependence with nature and urged to recognize humankind's vulnerability in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss. She noted the work in this process of local citizen organizations that are creating new paradigms to live in harmony with one of Europe's greatest salt lakes.

### III. Keynote Speakers

11. **H.E. Ms. Marie Toussaint, Member of Parliament of the European Union** noted the need for a paradigm shift in our political and legal systems to redesign our relationship with nature from that of domination to harmony. She highlighted the unlivable conditions on Earth, caused by such actions as pollution and deforestation, that will result in significant deaths. She further highlighted that this would require a revolution to change our laws, our politics, our economy and to decide to live within the limits of our planet. Such transformational change she sees in local areas in Europe, and she is working to insert this paradigm shift into European Parliament law.

12. **H.E. Ms. Barbara Trachte, Secretary of State for the Brussels Region, Belgium** noted that Belgians would need four planets to support their standard of living, yet in her capacity is making strides toward transformational change through an economic transition called #shiftingeconomy program. This new economic model prepares, supports, and makes economic players aware of business models with social and environmental centrality. By engaging in the Brussels Doughnut Economic model, the team seeks to help give citizens a quality of life that does not exceed environmental limits. Ms. Trachte calls for reconnecting with the Earth through new economic models.

13. **H.E. Ms. Caren Fox, Deputy Chief Judge, Māori Land Court, New Zealand**, discussed the Whanganui River 2017 Claims Settlement and the common ancestry of the Whanganui iwi with the 290 kilometres of this river for their tribal identity. Ms. Fox highlighted this ancestry in the phrase used by Māori iwi, "I am the river, and the river is me." In the aftermath of the 2017 Claims Settlement, Ms. Fox informed that progress is slow, but management entities are constituted, and the strategic plan is completed in draft and about to be circulated to the public. In conclusion, the Whanganui Treaty Settlement was a recognition of the tribal right to exercise authority over the river; as well as an opportunity to appreciate the river as a living entity, and public awareness of tribes and their ancestral relationship with the river.

14. **Mr. Manjeri Subin Sunder Raj, PhD, Rights of Nature advocate and Law Professor, National Law School; of India University, Bengaluru, India**, spoke of the ecological jurisprudence progress over decades in the Indian court system, starting with two provisions in 1976. Mr. Subin Sunder Raj highlighted the Indian court's recognition of a need to move from the anthropocentric to the eco-centric and the socio-cultural importance of the environment for many Indian communities, as noted in various court cases. Lastly, he emphasized the various

successes of animal welfare laws and the progress in securing personhood rights and guardianship status for two rivers in India. He concluded by recognizing the Earth jurisprudence process in India as one that works through the court system, rather than national laws that provide “blanket” rights for all of Nature.

15. **Ms. Camila Zárate, Coordinator of the Commission on Environment, Rights of Nature, the Commons and Ecological Model of the Constitutional Assembly of Chile** spoke of the new constitutional process in Chile and its aim to be a plurinational, intercultural, and ecological state. Ms. Zarate informed of Chile’s Constitutional Assembly recognition of Rights of Nature, as well as animal rights, and the de-privatization of water and common natural elements. Finally, she proposed the concepts of rights of nature and human rights tribunals that are being discussed in the Constitutional Assembly, as well as the role of a custodianship body to defend nature and the formation of an autonomous court to protect nature. She concluded by calling on all to guarantee the survival of life.

#### **IV. General Statements from Member States and Stakeholders**

16. **Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China** stated that the planet, Mother Earth, is our “one common home,” and the pandemic has demonstrated the close connection between people and Nature. Because we all rely on the single living system, we must restore Earth’s environments. The delegate explained that the Group of 77 and China advocates for developing new holistic, economic metrics; transforming the global financial system; developing countries receiving more aid from developed nations; and countries joining together to support sustainable lifestyles.

17. **Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States** added that island nations have an exceptionally close relationship with nature but are compelled to prioritize economic advancement. Island people understand that the protection of nature must inform policy decisions, but economic realities make implementation difficult. We need to include social, environmental, and economic considerations in our decision-making to make development sustainable and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. **The delegate of the European Union** explained that living in harmony with nature assumes peace and he condemned the Russian war in Ukraine, which has horrific environmental consequences. He highlighted that we must decouple environmental growth from the exploitation of natural resources and shift our economic systems away from practices that harm nature. The EU is committed to protecting 30% of Earth’s lands and ocean by 2030 and counts on China, the host of the upcoming CBD COP meeting, to facilitate actual progress. The EU recognizes the interdependence of humans and all other life and believes we must live in harmony with Nature.

19. **The delegate from Thailand** noted that living in harmony with nature is a strand in his nation’s cultural DNA. His country is working on reducing carbon emissions and “moving forward toward an economy that is green and circular.” The pandemic has shown the devastating consequences of failing to live in harmony with nature, and further stated that collective welfare depends upon both the people and Nature being healthy.

20. **The delegate from Nicaragua** noted the urgent need to support the Dialogue and raise awareness of the need to protect Mother Earth. Developed nations must change their consumption patterns and honour their commitments to developing nations, which are the least responsible for the environmental crisis but the most afflicted by it. He further highlighted that as the world recovers from the pandemic, we must place love and solidarity ahead of other goals, and that ecosystems and Mother Earth are the guarantors of our future.

21. **The delegate from China** noted that his country possesses rich biodiversity and was one of the first supporters of the international Convention on Biodiversity. He highlighted that China is a leader in preserving biodiversity and has served as a “global model” of cooperation among developing nations. He stated that the framework for the second part of COP 15 is being negotiated, and that China’s ambitions for the conference are pragmatic and effective.

22. **The delegate from New Zealand** referred to the President of the General Assembly’s warning that we are at the precipice of irreversible biodiversity loss, but she added that hope is not lost. New Zealand’s innovative action of bestowing legal personhood on a river and a forest supplies a framework for a new approach to creating guardianships for components of the natural world. Each country and national entity is unique but recognizing the rights of Nature can be an effective strategy globally for incorporating indigenous wisdom into law.

23. **The delegate from India** emphasized that the health of people and of the planet are inextricably linked. Therefore, the urgency to move away from the throwaway culture of developed nations and adopt circular economies. The people of India have always recycled in the broadest sense, by recovering and re-using. Global alliances are needed of pro-planet people, and the imperative to improve synergies between biodiversity preservation and international agreements.

24. **The delegate from Nepal** urged that Nature is “not a commodity, it’s our common home”, which is particularly evident in the context of the pandemic. The delegate further highlighted that reckless plundering has caused a planetary crisis that threatens the existence of humanity, and that we must work for harmony with nature and ecological justice. He further stated that current progress is too little and too slow and that we must incorporate the rights of nature into the context of the SDG’s and that humanity must listen to the planet”.

25. **The delegate from the Maldives** emphasized that drastic action to protect the planet is needed as well as the urgency to synchronize our policies on development with nature and the need for Earth-centered law, evidence-based decision making, and a retreat from traditional energy sources.

26. **The delegate from Cuba** noted that living in harmony with nature means ethical, social, economic and environmental standards which means challenging the current economic order. He stated that developed countries must effectuate commitments they have made; Consumption and production patterns must support coherent development policies and harmony with Nature. Human life must be more rational and just and that hunger, not man, must disappear.

27. **The delegate from El Salvador** advocated for increased action for a clean, sustainable environment for all, including future generations; the importance to address waste and plastic pollution, and that financial commitments made must be upheld. The countries with low emissions are suffering the most. El Salvador champions the move to circular economies, which use “waste” as a resource to be reused, and the move from words to action, emphasizing that “we need better cooperation and mobilization of financial resources”.

28. **The delegate from Oman** highlighted the urgency to rethink the old anthropocentric paradigm and create an inclusive dialogue and opportunity to defend Earth-centered laws and Ecological Economics to define new concepts.

29. **Representatives from several academic institutions and civil society organizations made interventions** and expressed thanks for the opportunity to interact during the Dialogue. For example, in the context of the drafting of the new constitution of Chile to be approved next September, activism has played a key role regarding the protection of human beings and non-humans as well. Chilean people have spoken for the Rights of Nature, of water and of non-human animals highlighting the importance to speak on behalf of those who have no voice. Representative of the University of the Basque Country highlighted the importance of Education and the involvement of students in their own learning process through inclusive and active methodologies. In this regard, the Department of Applied Economics of the University of the Basque Country is working in the Nature centric paradigm as part of the principles of Ecological Economics that allow Nature to be considered a legal subject thus abandoning the anthropocentric paradigm in which Nature is considered an object. A representative from the University of Sussex highlighted the importance of communicating the Earth-centred paradigm through the Arts.

## **V. Panel 1: Earth-centred Law to Protect Biodiversity in Harmony with Nature**

30. **Panels Moderator Dr. Pamela Martin, Professor of Politics and Executive Director UN Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, Coastal Carolina University, South Carolina, USA**, introduced both panels. Dr. Martin observed that we need systemic change in the law and legal paradigms and hope for transformation that will nest our legal systems in Mother Earth’s embrace and thereby reflect the reality that human and ecological systems are inextricably intertwined. She highlighted that panel members would describe constitutional pathways, hundreds of eco-centric laws already adopted around the world, new models and methods, and new governmental structures. The presentations by the panellists can help expand the use of new understandings, models, methods, and structures. She emphasized the importance to make changes because present extractive economies steal the heart and soul of communities. She called to imagine and build a world where all children can live in harmony with nature and further noted the transformational nature of the presentations on the panels toward eco-centric models for a new paradigm change.

31. **Co-panellists Ms. Vanessa Hasson de Oliveira, General Director, CSO/MAPAS and Mr. Jose de Abreu, Florianopolis City Councillor, Brazil**, presented their work on local levels to implement the Rights of Nature and a Buen Vivir (well-being or good living) school and movement throughout Brazil. Ms. Hasson noted the extreme levels of biodiversity in her country and the lack of federal-level laws to protect and live in harmony with nature. In 2018, the cities of



Bonito and Paudalho passed Rights of Nature laws, and in 2019, so did Florianopolis. City Councillor Jose de Abreu expanded on this city on the Island of Santa Catarina, explaining that agroecology was the central tenet of their new law. The Rights of Nature law in Florianopolis also recognized local, traditional communities and their relationship with Nature. Mr. Abreu highlighted the significant public, civil action involved in this new legal framework.

32. **Co-panellists Ms. Yenny Vega, President, CSO/Intl.Observatory of the Rights of Nature and Mr. Alexandre Boulerice, Canadian MP, New Democratic Party,** presented their pioneering work to recognize river rights in two rivers in Canada, and their significance to the indigenous peoples and a new paradigm of sustainable development in the country. She further noted that water is alive, and that the Magpie River was granted rights “as an unstoppable force and flow that can break down all barriers” and was granted such rights in joint laws in the municipality and among the Innu community. She further elucidated on the process of recognizing the rights of the St. Lawrence River in Canada, a process that includes 15 municipalities, 5 indigenous Nations, 7 non-governmental organizations, 2 research centres, and thousands of citizens. Mr. Boulerice outlined the St. Lawrence River rights project as one that is a reckoning with indigenous communities, as well as a recognition of rights beyond the anthropocentric. He further explained such rights expand the global understanding of development to one that recognizes limits to development and provides a balance of Nature, culture, traditions, and people living in harmony with Nature.

33. **Co-panellists Ms. Claudia Brindis, Operative Director, CSO/ELC Mexico and Mr. Max Correa, Congressman, Mexico,** explained the movement to promote the National Earth Protection Law in Mexico from 2013, which moved from the states of Guerrero, Mexico City, and Colima and Oaxaca toward proposals at the federal level. Ms. Brindis highlighted their strategies of Strategic Litigation for Rights of Nature Clinics and their work to recognize the collective rights of Nature in Mexico. Mr. Max Correa emphasized the recognition of Rights of Nature from the State of Mexico to the national Congress as also a process of recognizing the cosmovisions of indigenous peoples and a move away from the current, anthropocentric system.

34. **Dr Leonel Fuentes, Dean of the Faculty of Jurisprudence, Social Sciences and Policy, University of Guayaquil, Ecuador** presented the pioneering case of Los Cedros Forest decision from the Ecuadorian Constitutional Court to illustrate the advancements in Rights of Nature laws in Ecuador since the constitutional articles for Rights of Nature passage in the 2008 Constitution. He noted that while the national government was passing decrees to promote mining expansion, at the same time the Constitutional Court was making decisions that were favourable for protecting Nature and defining those protections. He clarified that the Los Cedros case is important in that it outlines rights of Nature, water rights, and environmental permitting. It furthers the application of the precautionary principle to protect Nature’s rights and that this principle was not upheld by the government when it granted a mining permit. Dr Fuentes points out that the Los Cedros case brings rights of Nature law to its furthest developments in Ecuador, while providing secondary laws.

35. **Dr Hernando Bernal, Agrologist, Ph.D. in Development Studies and International Cooperation, University of the Basque Country, Spain** viewed the Rights of Nature through the lens of biomimicry, arguing that once we understand Nature, we can create the proper systems that allow it to exist and flourish. Dr Bernal explained that biomimicry is a transdisciplinary and holistic

science that allows for translating Nature’s phenomenology and learning from it to protect and live in Harmony with Nature. Dr Bernal ended by highlighting the International, Interuniversity, and Interinstitutional Biomimicry International network that works at global and local levels to create a new Biocene/Naturecene.

36. **Dr Craig Kauffman, Associate Professor, University of Oregon, USA** discussed a new tool for Earth Jurisprudence, the Eco Jurisprudence Monitor which is an open access online platform of ecological jurisprudence initiatives. This monitor captures the variety of laws that promote an ecological civilization to transform our social and economic systems. The monitor is meant to provide information and data on all legal provisions, that right now total 410 across 41 countries and various international policies. Dr Kauffman further outlined the timeline of the Monitor and the next steps for it.

## **VI. Panel 2: Ecological Economics to Protect Biodiversity in Harmony with Nature**

37. **Mr. Irikefe V. Dafe, President, CSO/River Ethiopie Foundation (RETFON) speaking via video also on behalf of Ms. Mabel Emmanuel, Director at the Ministry of Environment, Nigeria,** addressed their 30-year collective action network called River Ethiopie Trust and work to live in harmony with Nature through solidarity. Mr. Dafe emphasized the dire situation of our planet and the need not to return to the way we were before Covid, but to improve our ways of life and collective, mutual relationships with one another and with Nature. He concluded by pointing out the important work of organizations and the Federal Government of Nigeria on Earth jurisprudence and a River Ethiopie Bill of Rights proposed in 2019.

38. **Co-panellists Ms. Callie Veelenturf, Executive Director, CSO/Leatherback project and Mr. Juan Diego Vásquez, Senator at the National Assembly of Panama,** discussed their pathbreaking passage of the Rights of Nature law at the national level in Panama, informed by the scientific investigations of locals and Ms. Veelenturf, as well as collaboration with indigenous communities. Ms Veelenturf noted the extreme impacts of anthropogenic forces on marine life to include incidental capture and illegal commerce of wildlife. Mr. Vasquez also noted these impacts cross state borders, calling upon neighboring states to recognize Nature’s rights, as well as to work toward global harmony with Nature accords. Their work reflects the importance of science, grassroots collective action, indigenous community knowledge, and networks of national and international solidarity to implement Rights of Nature laws.

39. **Co-panellists Mr. Mario Cervera, Mayor of the Alcázares, Spain and Dr Teresa Vicente, Professor of Philosophy of Law and Director of the Human Rights and Rights of Nature Faculty, University of Murcia,** discussed the valiant collective efforts of civil society in Murcia, Spain to recognize the rights at local and national levels of *Mar Menor*, the largest saltwater lake in Europe. Mayor Mario Perez Cervera explained the dangerous destruction of the lake by agricultural and industrial pollutants. He emphasized the right of *Mar Menor* to be a healthy ecosystem and its deep connections to the people of Murcia, Spain, and the planet. Through a legal clinic with students and tremendous civilian support, Dr Teresa Vicente, in collaboration with the mayor, explained the eutrophication of *Mar Menor* and the great impacts it had on the community, uniting them and their identities with *Mar Menor*. Through the Popular Legislative Initiative at the National Congressional level of Spain, Dr Vicente and colleagues



presented the Rights of the *Mar Menor* on 5 April. Such an initiative required over 500,000 civilian signatures, a testament to the grand connection of the people of Spain and Murcia to the *Mar Menor*, and all the living world.

40. **Dr Marcela Peixoto, Lawyer, Solidarity Economy-Articulated first Rights of Nature law in Brazil** intertwined the theories of Earth Jurisprudence and ecological economics through practical examples in Brazil and the MAPAS organization. She highlighted the work of seed guardians, agro-ecology, and a grassroots movement to create localized, solidarity economies, such as the work in Bonito, Brazil. Dr Peixoto explained that the Rights of Mother Earth in Brazil is work that combines the cultural, the economic, the legal, and the natural worlds while creating small, sustainable indigenous and campesino-directed cooperatives, changing jurisprudence and economic paradigms.

41. **Dr Kate Raworth, Author of Doughnut Economics, Co-founder Doughnut Economics Lab** focused on three interrelated concepts of the market, humanity, and economics to push our thinking toward new paradigms that focus on new goals for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – the Doughnut Economics model. This economic model, based on the Sustainable Development Goals, surrounds people by Nature so that every person has the essentials of life, while not overshooting the ecological ceiling. Rather than growth, this model emphasizes holistic well-being and balance for all living things. Dr Raworth concluded that 20<sup>th</sup>-century thinking sees rational humans, but 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking views social humans as members of a web of life.

42. **Ms. Megan Egler, MSc, Ph.D. Candidate, Leadership for the Ecozoic (L4E), Gund Institute for Environment, University of Vermont, USA** concurred with Dr Raworth's assessment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century ecological economics and criticized growth-based capitalism that "homogenized who we are and what we should value" as consumers, rather than how we relate to one another, to include Nature. Ms Egler's conceptions of the market included reciprocal relationships and caring, an exchange of dynamic relations among living beings. As a member of the Leadership for Ecozoic, Ms Egler explained that their work unites ecological economics in communities through new paradigmatic approaches to law away from growth-based foundations toward caring systems, laws, and economies.

## VII. General Statements from Member States & Stakeholders continued

43. General Statements from Member States and stakeholders were interspersed. Several statements were submitted via video addressing the developments of rights of Nature legislation in different countries and institutions, as follows:

Videos from: 1. H.E. Mr. Cillian Lohan, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee. 2. Dr. Caroline Regad and Dr. Cédric Riot, University Law Professors and Researchers, founders of the first university diploma in France on animal law and, in 2022, of the integration of the rights of the living in Earth Jurisprudence. 3. Mr. Jon Pult, Swiss MP-Social Democratic Party and Ms. Marionna Schlatter, Swiss MP-Green Party. 4. Ms. Cintia Balauo, President, CSO/Capibara Naturaleza, Argentina. 5. Mr. Frank Tumusiime, Co-director, CSO/ANARDE speaking also on behalf of Hon. Biyika Lawrence Songa, MP/Ora County, Uganda.

44. **A representative from civil society** further described a petition to protect the Maas River in the Netherlands. The petition is supported by political leaders from both left and right political parties.

45. **A delegate from Guatemala** noted his country's programme for protecting wooded lands by establishing indigenous or communal management.

46. **A delegate from Morocco** noted that climate change is creating substantial hardship for the 70% of Africa's population that is engaged in agriculture and called for improved soil management and reducing agricultural intensity, perhaps by reducing the number of plantings from three to one per year.

47. **A delegate from Senegal** said that we are asking too much of nature and giving back too little and the Earth has reached her limits. He said that we must address two questions: how can states meet their populations' demands, while also protecting Earth; and how can we fortify laws which are so fragmented.

### **VIII. Moderator's Wrap-Up: The Way Forward**

48. Moderator Dr Pamela Martin observed that the worldwide rapid increase of Earth Jurisprudence legislation is inspirational. Advances in science and law, combined with indigenous wisdom and cultural heritages are yielding new transdisciplinary approaches. Advances in Earth Jurisprudence have occurred locally and are now moving upward to state and national levels. She highlighted that it would be important to explore and understand exactly how this upward movement occurs. We have seen that the number of Member States participating in the discussion continues to increase. Living in Harmony with Nature is now a worldwide and universal call to reconnect with nature in a harmonious relationship, as nature's caretakers, and to pursue the SDGs in accord with that relationship. The focus on collaboration expressed in the Dialogue is noteworthy. She highlighted that we must share knowledge and spirit and foster ontological change to sharpen the focus on Nature, and that we must learn to thrive, rather than grow, guided by Mother Earth as our compass. She emphasized the importance of working for systems of reciprocity based on Harmony with Nature.