

**Bachelet calls for urgent action to realize human right to healthy environment following recognition by UN General Assembly**

28 July 2022 – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet hailed today’s recognition of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment by the UN General Assembly and called for urgent action to make it a reality for all.

“This decision reflects that all rights are connected to the health of our environment. Every person, everywhere, has a right to eat, breathe and drink without poisoning their bodies in doing so, and to be able to live harmoniously with the natural world, without constantly growing threats of ecosystem collapse and climate catastrophe,” Bachelet said.

The General Assembly’s resolution 76/300 follows a landmark text adopted by the Human Rights Council last October, in its own [resolution 48/13](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session48/res-dec-stat).

“Today is a historic moment, but simply affirming our right to a healthy environment is not enough. The General Assembly resolution is very clear: States must implement their international commitments and scale up their efforts to realize it. We will all suffer much worse effects from environmental crises, if we do not work together to collectively avert them now,” Bachelet said.

Recognizing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and environmental degradation as the greatest human rights challenge of our era, Bachelet has long called for transformative economic, social and environmental policies that address inequalities and protect people and planet -- before tipping points are reached that would make any action too late.

“To survive and thrive, we must invest in environmental and social protection centred in human rights; hold governments and businesses duly to account for environmental harms; empower all people to act as agents of change for a healthy environment; and recognize and uphold the rights of those most affected by environmental degradation,” the High Commissioner stressed.

Environmental action based on human rights obligations provides vital guard rails for economic policies and business models. It emphasises the underpinning of legal obligations to act, rather than simply of discretionary policy.  It is also more effective, legitimate and sustainable, as made clear by the latest reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

“Today’s decision by the General Assembly marks the culmination of many years of advocacy by activists from all corners of the environmental justice movement. We know the scale of the dangers we face. If we are to protect our planet for present and future generations, it is now time for truly bold action by governments and the private sector as well.  And for all of us to stand together to make the right to a healthy environment our lived and shared reality.”