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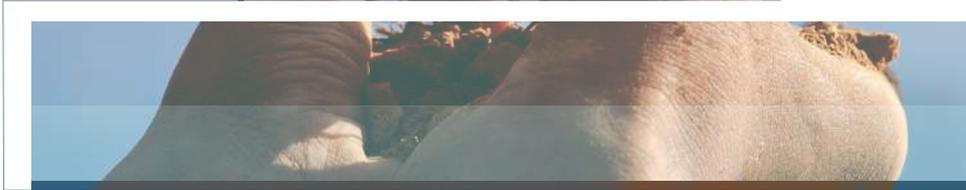
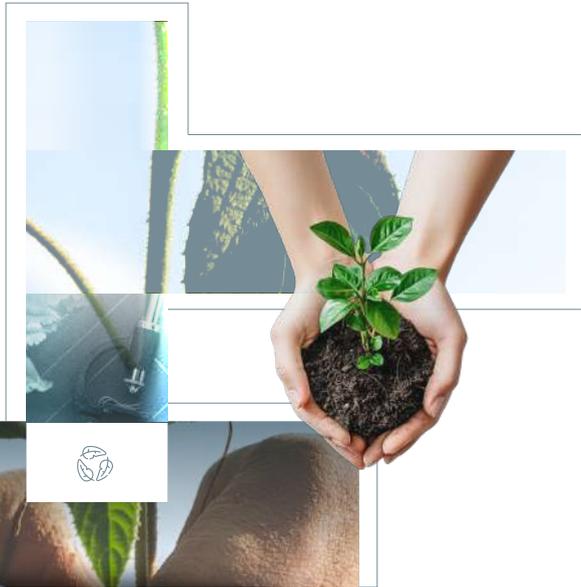


**ICESCO CHAIR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS**





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## GENERAL CONTEXT

The world is currently witnessing an unprecedented surge in environmental challenges. The impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident through rising temperatures, melting ice, and a growing frequency of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, wildfires, and devastating hurricanes. The danger posed by these phenomena goes beyond harming ecosystems; it constitutes a direct threat to fundamental human rights – foremost among them the right to life, the right to health, the right to access food and water, and the right to live in a sound environment. Accordingly, addressing these environmental challenges is a cornerstone for safeguarding human dignity,

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ensuring justice between generations.

In recent decades, the environment has become a central pillar of the international human rights system. The right to a healthy environment is no longer seen as merely a moral demand or a developmental luxury; it has been firmly established as an inherent human right. In 2021, the Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/RES/48/13, which recognizes the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. This resolution garnered broad support from the Council's Member States, with an overwhelming majority

voting in its favor. The matter was then referred to the United Nations General Assembly, which subsequently adopted Resolution A/RES/76/300, declaring that “access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right.”

In this context, a special mandate was established under the Human Rights Council, represented by the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. The mandate aims to monitor global progress and support national efforts to incorporate this right into legislation and public policy.

This recognition did not emerge in isolation from the broader international context; rather, it is the result of decades of concerted efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for environmental protection. Since the 1970s, the world has witnessed the development of an integrated system of international agreements and treaties, beginning with the 1972 Stockholm Conference, which laid the foundation for international environmental law. This trajectory became even clearer during the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference (Earth Summit), which marked a historic turning point with the adoption of Agenda 21 – a comprehensive action plan for achieving sustainable

development, grounded in the principles of integrating environmental protection with economic and social development.

**This conference gave rise to three foundational agreements that have since become pillars of international environmental law:**

📌 **The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992):** Aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and at ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. States Parties committed to developing national strategies for biodiversity conservation.

📌 **The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994):** Designed to address land degradation and combat desertification, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions.

📌 **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992):** Established the international legal foundation for addressing global warming. It was followed by the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which introduced the first legally binding commitments for industrialized countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2015, this process culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change, which established the system of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Under this framework, each country commits to preparing and regularly updating its national plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the overarching goal of limiting the rise in the global average temperature this century to well below 2°C, while striving to limit the increase to 1.5°C. The agreement also introduced financing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, the principle of climate justice, and provisions for technology transfer – all of which aim to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to fulfill their commitments.

Despite the significant momentum in the development of international legal frameworks, the gap between commitments and implementation remains one of the main challenges. Many countries, particularly developing ones, face difficulties in aligning their national legislation with international standards. They often suffer from weak institutional and technical capacities, as well as limited access to climate finance and support for climate action.

In this context, the countries of the Islamic world face a particular situation, as they are among the

regions most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and environmental disasters. These countries are severely affected by desertification, water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and the growing phenomenon of environmental displacement, despite their relatively limited contribution to global industrial pollution. This underscores the urgent need to strengthen their academic, institutional, and legal capacities to develop effective environmental legislation and to make optimal use of international financing mechanisms and seizing the opportunities provided by environmental agreements.

In response to this need, the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights, an initiative of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), is established to serve as an academic and research platform dedicated to advancing legal and human rights studies related to the environment, supporting the development of national legislative capacities, promoting environmental governance and climate justice, and contributing to the body of knowledge that informs national policies aimed at achieving sustainable development in Member States.

## CONTEXT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ICESCO CHAIR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S EFFORTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The establishment of the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights complements the Organization's ongoing role in supporting sustainable development and environmental protection across its Member States. This mission is rooted in the promotion of education, scientific research, and awareness-raising on environmental issues. ICESCO's efforts in this field are wide-ranging and include the launch of new programs and initiatives to support environmental innovation, the exploration of strategies to integrate culture and heritage into climate change mitigation, the promotion of smart and sustainable agriculture, the application of biotechnology to combat desertification, and the strengthening of partnerships with Member States to address climate challenges.



### **Among ICESCO's key environmental initiatives are the following:**

- **The "Green League of Innovators" Initiative:** Aimed at accelerating regional climate action by monitoring, promoting, and documenting best practices in environmental sustainability, while supporting innovation and concrete solutions to environmental challenges.
- **A Strategic Study on Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change:** ICESCO conducted a study on

leveraging culture and heritage to address environmental challenges, notably through modern technologies and artificial intelligence, in order to develop innovative and sustainable solutions.

- **Promotion of Smart and Sustainable Agriculture:** ICESCO supports Member States in developing sustainable agriculture programs, notably by strengthening national capacities and promoting the use of smart technologies in agricultural management.

- **Initiatives in Agricultural Biotechnology:** ICESCO has launched initiatives to support the use of biotechnology in agriculture, with the aim of improving food security, contributing to sustainable agriculture, and combating desertification.
- **Environmental Partnerships:** ICESCO is working to strengthen its cooperation with Member States, including Qatar, to implement training programs and support research initiatives related to climate change and the protection of natural resources. It has also signed an agreement with the “International Dialogue for Environmental Action” (IDEA) Association of Azerbaijan to promote cooperation in the fight against climate change and to enhance environmental protection, food and water security, support sustainable development efforts in the Islamic world, and encourage youth participation in climate action.

Within this context, the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights serves as a specialized academic and research platform to support higher education and scientific research in the field of environmental rights. It also aims to strengthen the capacity of Member States to develop environmental legislation and policies, establish

environmental justice, and combat desertification, drawing on existing initiatives and accumulated expertise in this domain.

The establishment of this Chair is also part of the ICESCO Chairs Program, approved by Resolution 4.1 of the Organization’s 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference, held from 8-9 December 2021, in Cairo. The Program seeks to support educational and scientific research institutions in Islamic countries.



## RATIONALE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHAIR

The establishment of the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights aligns with the Organization's efforts to support scientific research in its Member States and to enhance the role of universities as key drivers of environmental knowledge and policymaking. The creation of this Chair is based on a set of integrated justifications, across several dimensions, international, national, and scientific, as outlined below:

### a. International grounds

- **Strengthen** the international recognition of environmental rights through United Nations Resolutions 48/13 and 76/300, which calls for the generation of scientific knowledge to support the implementation of these obligations in national contexts.
- **Promote** academic research in international environmental law and monitor the development of relevant international agreements and mechanisms.
- **Contribute** to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 13, 14, and 15, which relate respectively to climate action, wildlife, and marine life.
- **Develop** an environmental justice approach as a comprehensive framework that integrates

human rights and international environmental policies.

### b. Member State-Specific Grounds

- Limited legal and institutional capacities in some Member States with regard to environmental legislation and the implementation of international obligations.
- The need to support universities in training experts and specialists in environmental rights to serve national policy needs.
- The development of environmental governance systems at national and regional levels to foster integration and cooperation among Member States.

### c. Academic Grounds

- **Address** the knowledge gap in environmental law and in legal and human rights studies within the Islamic world.
- **Strengthen** academic partnerships between universities and research centers in Member States.
- **Generate** applied knowledge to support policymakers in adopting legislation and policies grounded in scientific research and analytical approaches in the fields of law and the environment.
- **Raise** awareness within academia and society at large about environmental rights and their role in sustainable development.

## OBJECTIVES:

### General Objective:

To promote scientific research in the field of environmental rights and support the strengthening of the legal and institutional capacities of Member States, in order to contribute to environmental protection and the realization of environmental justice.

### Specific Objectives:

- **Develop** specialized academic studies and research on environmental rights and their international and national legal frameworks.
- **Provide** reference studies to assist Member States in drafting and revising their environmental legislation in accordance with international standards.
- **Train** a new generation of researchers and experts in the fields of law, environment, and human rights.
- **Conduct** comparative studies on best practices and national experiences in environmental protection.
- **Improve** access to international funding by designing legal and institutional projects aligned with the requirements of global climate funds.
- **Disseminate** environmental and legal knowledge through conferences, symposia, and scientific publications.

## ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct specialized research and studies on environmental rights and climate justice, by producing comparative reports and analyses that assess national legislation and practices in Member States, as well as examining legal developments and best practices at regional and international levels.
- Organize scientific symposia and international conferences to analyze the environmental challenges faced by countries of the Islamic world and explore strategies to address them.
- Establish partnerships with UN bodies and programs, as well as relevant regional and international organizations.
- Launch master's and doctoral scholarships, along with research programs to facilitate exchanges between universities and relevant institutions.
- Deliver specialized training and academic programs in environmental rights and climate justice.



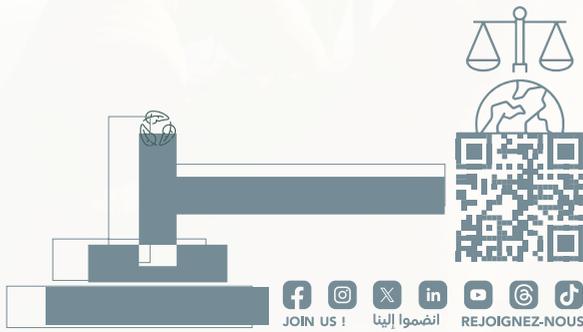
The establishment of the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights reflects the global momentum toward integrating environmental concerns into the human rights framework. It aligns with ICESCO's vision of building a knowledge-based society and advancing sustainable development across its Member States. Through this Chair, ICESCO seeks to create a pioneering academic model that bridges scientific research, legal practice, and public policy. The initiative also aims to train a new generation of experts and researchers in environmental rights, equipped to support Member States in meeting their international commitments.

Emphasizing the importance of coordinated academic and scientific efforts across Member States to enhance environmental awareness and establish environmental rights as a key pillar of development, ICESCO invites universities and research centers to engage with this unique initiative by submitting proposals to host the ICESCO Chair for Environmental Rights and participate in its research and training programs. This initiative aims to strengthen scientific research and promote the exchange of expertise among higher education institutions in Member States.









The image features a hand holding a small green plant with several leaves. In the foreground, there is a QR code and a set of social media icons. Above the QR code is a logo consisting of a scale of justice and a globe. Below the QR code and icons is a dark blue bar with a white square on the left side.

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