

**Joint statement
Core Group Human Rights and the Environment**

HRC 45 – GD Item 3

Geneva, September 2020

Madam President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Core Group on Human Rights and the Environment - namely the Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, Switzerland and my own country Costa Rica.

The Human Rights Council adopted its first resolution on human rights and the environment in 2011. Since then we studied and discussed numerous complex aspects of the relationship between human rights and the environment. For instance through resolutions, dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment as well as other relevant stakeholders and side events. Over the years, the existing links between human rights and the environment have enjoyed cross-regional support within the UN membership.

The number and scope of laws, judicial decisions, and academic studies dealing with the nexus between human rights and the environment have increased significantly. By count of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, the number of states recognizing the right to a healthy environment has grown over the last years and so has the public support to acting decisively against climate change and environmental degradation. There have been increasing calls for a global recognition of such a right among experts and civil society, but also among states' and leading UN representatives.

During her oral update at the 44. Session, the High Commissioner outlined that "the right to a healthy environment is grounded in measures to ensure a safe and stable climate; a toxic-free environment; clean air and water; and safe and nutritious food." In addition, the UN Secretary General intends to increase the UN's support to laws and policies that regulate and promote this right as mentioned in his Call to Action.

With this in mind, the core group on human rights and the environment started an informal consultation process on a possible international recognition of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It is currently undertaking individual and small group consultations among all regional groups. This shall be followed by regional consultations and other events. We thank those who already engage in this process and we are looking forward to continuing the discussions with further States, UN Agencies, civil society and other stakeholders. It is our believe that a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation. Therefore a possible recognition of the right at a global level could have numerous important implications on our and future generations.

I thank you.