

Environmental Protection and the Judiciary

10:00 – 16:30 | FRIDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2026
YEREVAN, ARMENIA



Global Judicial Institute
on the Environment
Institut Judiciaire Mondial
de l'Environnement
Instituto Judicial Mundial
del Ambiente



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Environmental Protection and the Judiciary

Hosted by the Armenian Judiciary, in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, Global Judicial Institute on the Environment, IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law, UN Environment Programme and Asian Development Bank

10:00 – 16:30, Friday, 30 October 2026

Komitas Museum-Institute, 28 Arshakunyats Avenue, Yerevan

(simultaneous interpretation in Armenian and English)

Introduction

The judicial colloquium on environmental protection and judiciary will convene judges from Armenia and around the world to exchange insights on the role of courts in contributing to the protection of nature and strengthening the environmental rule of law, share experiences and expertise on key principles and good practices, and collectively reflect on the developments and outcomes of the 17th Conference of the Parties (CBD COP17) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in Yerevan, Armenia.

The discussion will provide an opportunity to take stock of recent advances in environmental legislation and the role of the judiciary in its effective interpretation, as well as in supporting implementation and enforcement. These developments include the recent adoption of the Armenia's Law on Climate 2026, amendment of Armenia's framework for environmental impact assessment (EIA) to systematically account for biodiversity in 2023, and the upgraded ambition to double the coverage of protected areas by 2030 enshrined by the Law on Specially Protected Areas. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore avenues to improve the protection of key biodiversity areas and ecosystems.

The exchanges will also be situated within the broader normative and legal evolution of biodiversity governance, bringing together a diverse range of international speakers from across the globe against the backdrop of CBD COP17. Speakers will be invited to share experiences and expertise in judicial efforts to advance ecosystem protection, discuss emerging trends and principles in biodiversity-related adjudication, and explore potential pathways for courts to improve the environmental rule of law.

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Objectives

- **Identify and unpack the drivers and dynamics of environmental law in Armenia:** the event is designed to reflect the specific circumstances of Armenia, with a particular emphasis on biodiversity conservation, climate change, and water governance, providing panelists with an opportunity to take stock of the COP17 host country's progress and plans for upgrading ecosystem protection.
- **Improving awareness of the judicial toolkit of biodiversity protection:** the discussions will enrich participants' knowledge of the toolkit of measures available to judges and courts to strengthen biodiversity protection and the environmental rule of law, encompassing both enduring elements such as planning and permitting decisions and emerging aspects such as the rights of nature.
- **Enhancing understanding of the role of courts across the judicial lifecycle of biodiversity protection:** the event will chart the historical role and evolution of courts in ecosystem protection and the environmental rule of law, encompassing the judicial lifecycle of the interpretation of rules and principles, their practical application and implementation, and enforcement and remedies.

Audience

Armenian and international judges, government officials, legal professionals and other stakeholders.

Program

Time	Title	Description
10:00 - 10:30	Opening Speeches: Surveying the Key Elements of the Environmental Rule of Law Group Photo	This opening session will set the conceptual foundations for the discussion, introduce recent developments in environmental law within Armenia and at the international level, and explore the role of courts in environmental protection. It will also highlight Armenia's leadership on biodiversity in hosting this dialogue and CBD COP17. Chair: CBD Secretariat (tbc) Opening remarks: • Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (tbc) • Artur Atabekyan, Chairman, Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia • Srbuhi Galyan, Minister of Justice of Armenia (tbc) • Hon. Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin, National High Court of Brazil and President of the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment

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		• H.E. Hambardzum Matevosyan, COP17 President and Minister of Environment, Armenia (tbc) • Representative, Asian Development Bank Introduction to the objectives and format of the forum: • Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), Asian Development Bank
10:30 - 11:30	Panorama: Environmental Law around the World - Objectives, Principles and Instruments	This panorama will examine how courts define, interpret, apply and enforce the environmental rule of law. This will introduce the prevailing principles of international environmental law, the suite of instruments used in its practical implementation, and the role of judges and courts in this process. Chair: Yeranuhi Tumanyants, Member of the Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia • Hon. Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin, National High Court of Brazil, President of the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment • Karen Tumanyan, Member of the Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia • Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Director, Law Division, UN Environment Programme • Hon. Justice Brian Preston, Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, Australia • Dr. Luc Lavrysen, Former President of Constitutional Court of Belgium and Professor Emeritus at Ghent University
11:30 – 12:30	Panel I: Examining the Toolkit – the Legal System of Climate, Forests, Water, Biodiversity and Pollution and Waste	The environmental rule of law is grounded in the regulation of climate change, forests, water, and pollution and waste. While these are deeply interconnected, they are governed through distinct sets of instruments. This introductory session will explore the commonalities and differences between these legal domains, provide an overview of their essential elements, and situated them within real-world examples and practices. This panel will examine how courts adjudicate across various legal domains, how to reduce tensions and ensure coherence across frameworks, how to catalyze a shift from fragmentation to integration in the environmental rule of law, and their role in strengthening biodiversity and ecosystem protection.

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		Chair: Hon. Justice Karen Zariqyan, Head of Administrative Court of Armenia • Pollution and Waste: Hon. Justice Prakash Shrivastava, Chairperson, National Green Tribunal of India • Climate: Hon. Deputy Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi, Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea • Water: Dr. Luc Lavrysen, Former President of Constitutional Court of Belgium and Professor Emeritus at Ghent University • Forests: Nick Bryner, Professor of International Environmental Law, Louisiana State University • Biodiversity: Tim Scott, Senior Environmental Policy Advisor, United Nations Development Programme • Judicial Education: Tatev Sujyan, Rector of the Academy of Justice of Armenia
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	Panel II – Access to Justice: Comparative Insights and Armenian Perspectives	The transparency, integrity, and equity of environmental laws depend on the provision of access to justice. This panel will provide a platform to collectively examine the core pillars of the right to access, request and receive environmental information, legal avenues for multi-stakeholders, public participation in environmental decision-making, and the ability to resolve disputes, register grievances and seek remedial action. Chair: Tatev Sujyan, Rector of the Academy of Justice of Armenia • Hon. Justice Sapana Malla, Supreme Court, Nepal • Hon. Justice Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh, Supreme Court of India • Hon. Justice Liza Grigoryan, Judge of the Court of Cassation of Armenia • Hon. Justice Anne Omollo, Environment and Land Court, Kenya • Hon. Justice Brian Preston, Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, Australia

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15:00 – 16:00	Panel III – Implementation, Administration and Enforcement	Environmental laws must be implemented and enforced to be effective. However, the institutional capacity to enact adopted measures is challenging. This panel discussion will explore the variety of avenues for ensuring compliance, the toolkit of enforcement measures available to courts, and the distinction and interplay between administrative and criminal enforcement in the environmental rule of law. It will also provide a platform for collectively examining both enduring challenges such as how to bridge legal commitments and their practical enforcement, as well as rising trends such as the increasing attention to crimes that affect the environment. Chair: Hon. Justice Liza Grigoryan, Court of Cassation of Armenia Speakers: • Hon. Justice Kari Kuusiniemi, President, Supreme Administrative Court of Finland and President of European Forum of Judges for the Environment • Hon. Justice Karen Zariqyan, Head of Administrative Court of Armenia • Hon. Judge Eufrazina Paiva, Supreme Council of the Judiciary of Angola • Hon. Judge Bambang Mulyono, Chief Judge of The High Court of Medan, North Sumatera, Indonesia • Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), Asian Development Bank
16:00 – 16:15	Closing Reflections and Next Steps	• Hon. Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin, National High Court of Brazil and President of the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment • Yeranuhi Tumanyants, Member of the Supreme Judicial Council of Armenia • Narine Avetsiyan, Principal Private Sector Development Officer, Asian Development Bank
16:15 – 17:00	Networking Coffee/Tea	