



# An Audience: Biodiversity, Climate Change and Human Rights Biographies

## Wednesday 9 June 2021

**Elizabeth Maruma Mrema** is the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. She was the Director of the Law Division and has worked with UNEP for over two decades. Prior to joining the Law Division in June 2014, she was the Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division, in charge of coordination, operations and programme delivery from 2012 and for one year, also serviced as Acting Director to the same Division. In 2018, in addition to her role as the Law Division Director, she was also the Acting Director of the Corporate Services Division where she led the management of the human resources, financial operations and management and other administrative functions for the entire Organization.

In 2009 she had been appointed as the Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Acting Executive Secretary of the UNEP/ASCOBANS and Interim Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Gorilla Agreement, all based in Bonn, Germany and held that position until 2012 and thereafter she joined the Ecosystems Division in Nairobi, Kenya. In these portfolios, she over saw and ensure effective conservation of migratory animals globally as well as implementation of a number of specific species agreements covering geographical areas where animals or birds or marine species migrate during their lifetime.

Elizabeth's work at UNEP has focused on the development, implementation and enforcement environmental laws both at national, regional and international level. She has played different roles in UNEP over the years that have included being a coordinator of capacity building and compliance and enforcement projects related to environmental law and the multilateral environmental conventions. She was a Senior Legal Officer and Chief of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) Support and Cooperation Branch in the then Division of Environmental Conventions (DEC), and later a Principal Legal Officer and Chief of the Biodiversity/Land Law and Governance Branch in the then Division of Environmental Law and Conventions.

Before joining UNEP, Elizabeth worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and left as a Counsellor/Senior Legal Counsel. During her time with the ministry, she was also a lecturer in Public International Law and Conference Diplomacy at Tanzania's Centre for Foreign Relations and Diplomacy. She had also served as a pro bono visiting lecturer at the University of Nairobi Law School and in the past at the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), Rome, Italy.

A lawyer and career diplomat with LLB (Hons) from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, LLM from Dalhousie University, Canada and Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations and Diplomacy (Summa Cum Laude) from the Centre of Foreign Relations and Diplomacy in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. She has published several articles related to international environmental law, compliance and enforcement of conventions and developed, among others, a number of multilateral environmental agreements negotiation tools, handbooks and guidelines currently used by UNEP in its capacity-building programmes.

**John H. Knox** is the Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law at Wake Forest University. He is an internationally recognized expert on human rights law and international environmental law. From 2012 to 2015, he served as the first United Nations Independent Expert, and from 2015 to 2018, as its first Special Rapporteur, on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In that role, he submitted a series of reports to the UN Human Rights Council on the application of human rights law to environmental issues, including climate change and the conservation of biological diversity. In 2018, he concluded his mandate by presenting Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment to the United Nations, and by calling upon the UN General Assembly to recognize the human right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

His recent scholarship has focused on issues arising at the intersection of human rights and environmental protection. In 2018, he published a co-edited volume of essays on the human right to a healthy environment, and he is currently writing a book on the evolution of environmental rights in international law. In 2003, he was awarded the Francis Deák Prize, established by the American Society of International Law to honor a younger author who has made a "meritorious contribution to international legal scholarship." For four years, until 2005, he chaired a national advisory committee to EPA on the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the first regional environmental organization in North America, and from 2008 to 2012, he was of counsel to the Center for International Environmental Law. He is currently on the board of the Universal Rights Group, a human rights institution in Geneva, and of Wake Forest University's Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability.

After graduating from Stanford Law School in 1987 and clerking for Judge Joseph T. Sneed of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, John served as an attorney-adviser at the Department of State from 1988 to 1994. He spent four years in private practice in Austin, Texas and taught at Penn State for eight years before joining Wake Forest in 2006. He is married to Julie Winterich, a professor of sociology at Guilford College, and they have three daughters.

**Stephen Turner** is a Senior Lecturer at Essex Law School and a member of the Human Rights Centre. He has research interests in international environmental law, climate change, global environmental governance and corporate responsibility. He has written extensively on the subject of human rights and the environment. He has authored two books that focus on 'rights-based' approaches approaches to environmental governance: 'A Substantive Environmental Right' (Kluwer Law International, 2009) and 'A Global Environmental Right' (Earthscan /Routledge, 2014). Between 2015 and 2019 he led the 'Standards in Environmental Rights Project' which resulted in the publication of a book that analysed the different types of 'standards' that are evolving within the field of environmental rights: Turner, Shelton, Razzaque, McIntyre and May (Eds) 'Environmental Rights - The Development of Standards' (CUP, 2019). At the University of Essex he teaches international environmental law, corporate law and is the co-director of postgraduate research.