

# GLOBAL PACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Global Pact for the Environment (GPE) aims to serve as a legally binding “umbrella text” that codifies consensus principles of international environmental law to improve environmental protections and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In doing so, the GPE will act as a third international Covenant, codifying the principles enshrined in the 1992 Rio Declaration just as the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both ratified in 1966, did for the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948.

The GPE offers four key innovations:

1. The GPE would give legal value to principles of international environmental law, balanced between rights and duties. In particular, it would establish an universal right to a healthy environment, building upon the international human rights covenants. While 177 states have recognized some constitutional, legislative, or judicial right to environmental quality, the human right to a healthy environment has not been codified in international law. The lack of a universally recognized right to environment is a glaring omission in existing human rights governance.

3. The GPE would unify the guiding principles of international environmental law in one internally coherent document. The GPE intends to clarify points of tension in international environmental law that have arisen given the existing sectoral approach to governance.

2. The GPE would help the States to design and develop the necessary public policies to better achieve the Agenda 2030. Without a public policy that establishes the objective conditions to guarantee the enjoyment of a healthy environment, the effective realization of the SDGs is simply impossible.

4. The GPE would provide non-state actors access to enforcement mechanisms. While most international treaties create commitments between states, the GPE also seeks to establish clear commitments between states and their citizens.

In doing so, the GPE could critically strengthen environmental protections and catalyze a new era of international environmental governance.