

John Knox, J.D.

Professor of Law at Wake Forest University

Winston-Salem, NC, US

Knox's six years with the U.N. shaped his expertise on the issue of human rights and the environment.

Biography

John Knox is a globally recognized expert on international law, human rights law, and environmental law. In 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) appointed him to a three-year mandate as its first Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Since this appointment, Knox has promoted the use of internationally and constitutionally recognized human rights, including rights of freedom of expression and assembly, to defend the environment from harm.

The Council extended Knox's mandate in 2015, and appointed him to be the first-ever Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights and the environment. Knox has published and presented more than a dozen reports to the Council, addressing the application of human rights to a wide array of issues, from climate change to biodiversity to the rights of children.

In his final report as Special Rapporteur, he set out 16 "framework principles" that provide guidance for the implementation of human rights obligations in the environmental context. Among these principles, Knox argues for international recognition of the human right to a healthy environment.

He continues to contribute to international education initiatives intended to combat threats to vulnerable populations. In 2017, Knox joined the Universal Rights Group and several other organizations in developing and launching an educational web portal, environment-rights.org, which provides an extensive list of resources for environmental defenders and human rights advocates.

Areas of Expertise

Paris Climate Treaty, International Trade Law, Global Warming, EPA, Climate Change, Environmental Law, Human Rights Law, International Relations, International Law, Trade Law, Environmental Policy, Environmental Issues, Biodiversity, Environmental Defenders, Environmental Protection Agency, Human Rights Advocates, Paris Agreement

Affiliations

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), UNDP-SEPA Environmental Governance Program, Universal Rights Group, Wake Forest University Center for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability, Center for Progressive Reform, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), American Society of International Law, NAFTA Environmental Commission

Education

Stanford Law School

J.D. Law

Rice University

B.A. Economics

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