

John Knox, J.D.

Professor of International Law at Wake Forest University

Winston-Salem, NC, US

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Biography

John Knox is an internationally recognized expert on human rights law and international environmental law. In July 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Council 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. In 2015, his role was extended for another three years as special rapporteur. In that position, he is preparing a series of reports to the Human Rights Council on the relationship of human rights and environmental protection.

His recent scholarship addresses a wide variety of issues, including the human rights obligations of corporations, the application of human rights law to climate change, citizen suits in international environmental law, and the extraterritorial application of U.S. 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. More recently, he has provided pro bono assistance to environmental groups and to the Maldives, a small island state in the Indian Ocean.

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. His final report set out 16 “framework principles” that provide guidance for the implementation of human rights obligations in the environmental context.

Industry Expertise

International Affairs, Education/Learning, Legal Services, Environmental Services

Areas of Expertise

Environmental Law, Human Rights Law, International Relations, Sustainable Development, International Law, Trade Law, Environmental Policy, Environmental Issues

Affiliations

American Society of International Law, Wake Forest University Center for Energy Environment and Sustainability : Board Member, Center for Progressive Reform : Member Scholar

Education

Stanford University
J.D. Law

Rice University
B.A. Economics

Accomplishments

The Francis Deák Prize

Awarded by the American Society of International Law to a younger author for meritorious scholarship published in The American Journal of International Law (AJIL).

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