

2nd IUCN World Environmental Law Congress
The Role of Judges: Environmental Law 2030 and Beyond

Initially, I would like to thank IUCN for inviting me to participate in its 2nd World Congress on Environmental Law. The role of Judges: Environmental Law 2030 and beyond, as President of the Latin American Federation of Judges and Vice-President of the International Association of Judges-IAJ.

I would also like to greet all the authorities present at this opening ceremony in the persons of Justice Hermann Benjamin, a world reference in Environmental Law, Justice Henrique Carlos de Andrade Figueira, President of the Supreme Court of the State of Rio de Janeiro, and Justice Jose Igreja Matos, President of the International Association of Judges - IAJ.

The topic chosen for this 2nd edition of the World Congress on Environmental Law could not be more appropriate: “The role of judges: Environmental Law 2030 and beyond”.

Both the International Association of Judges and the Latin American Federation of Judges have as their main objective the defense of judicial independence. Only an independent judge can freely exercise his or her role, enforcing environmental protection legislation, when called upon to do so.

Judicial independence is one of the pillars of democracy, as only an independent judge, that is, one who is protected from the

interference of political power, economic power and the pressures of society, is capable of providing true justice.

It is not, therefore, a privilege recognized in favor of judges, but rather a fundamental right of citizens of Democratic States to be submitted to a fair trial conducted by an impartial judge.

In Latin America, unfortunately, we have seen important challenges to environmental protection in recent years and, therefore, we must be attentive to the defense of judicial independence so that judges can perform their functions free of constraints when analyzing issues related to the environment.

No less important is the training of judges in Environmental Law because the environmental legal frame is in constant evolution, making it necessary for the Judiciary Branch follow up on that evolution.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the IUCN for its relevant initiatives in favor of the preservation of the environment, as well as highlight the importance of this partnership with the IAJ and the FLAM.

I am sure that the discussions that will take place over the next few days will bring very fruitful results, considering the quality of the speakers and the relevance of the topics that will be addressed.

I wish you all a good Congress!

Justice Walter Barone
President of the Latin American Federation of Judges
Vice-president of the International Association of Judges