



WFD

Conference on

Environmental

Democracy

MARCH 2022



WFD



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

In partnership with:



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE

While democracies perform better in many instances in terms of addressing environmental and climate issues than autocracies, the gap between existing commitments and necessary action remains substantial. Most governments so far have failed to address climate and other environmental crises adequately, despite overwhelming evidence about the extent of human impact on climate and global ecosystems.

Both global democracy and the global environment are at risk. In light of the unprecedented international consensus on the urgency to address climate change and environmental degradation, a political failure to respond effectively risks worsening the already falling public confidence in the ability of democratic governments to deliver results for citizens. In parallel, the December 2021 Summit for Democracy convened by US President Joe Biden has taken stock on the growing threats to democracy and galvanised action across the democratic world in response.

Thirty years after the vision of environmental democracy was enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), results on the ground are still thin. This is at least partly due to the dearth of implementing organisations and donors focusing on this work, with democracy assistance and environmental and climate programming separated into two distinct fields that rarely, if ever, interact. Innovative approaches to assist governments in delivering democratic governance, climate action, environmental justice, greater transparency, and robust citizen participation are needed, now more than ever, to deliver on people's expectations of a safe, just, and prosperous future. The action required to avoid the most devastating effects of climate change and environmental degradation involves wide-reaching and unprecedented changes to all levels of society, politics, and economics. In the aftermath of Glasgow's COP26 (2021), the 1.5 °C target of the Paris Agreement is almost within reach, but only if nations are able to deliver their ambitious pledges. This will necessitate more durable, effective, and responsive democratic institutions, more accountable systems of governance, and stronger political will.

There is an urgent need for democratic governments to stand up to the challenge and lead societies down a path of accelerated technological and behavioural transformation that leaves no one behind. Democratic governments will also need to innovate to expand globally the political space required to deliver these transformations, and to understand societies' preferred pathways to sustainability. They need to ensure democracy delivers worldwide, both for citizens today and for future generations.

Who we are

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) believes that we need strong democracies to prosper and to protect our rights and freedoms. In a democracy, all people – no matter their identities, backgrounds, interests, or religious beliefs – should be able to take part in political life and have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Democracy underpins the solutions to the major challenges of our time, from inequality to health, climate change and rising authoritarianism.

That is why WFD is working to strengthen democracy across the world. For thirty years, we have worked with parliaments, political parties, electoral bodies and civil society to help make countries' political systems fairer, more inclusive and more accountable. Our work on environmental democracy to help address major challenges – such as avoiding the most devastating effects of climate change – is underpinned by experience, relevance and evidence of impact.

Our work on environmental democracy

In July 2020, WFD launched the Westminster Environmental Democracy Initiative (WEDI). Through WEDI, WFD has committed to developing programming and research at global, regional, and country levels, mainstreaming environmental action across its democracy support portfolio.

Democracy support organisations bring an insider's understanding of political dynamics; experience with tools like political economy analysis; support with implementing of legislation; and maintain strong working relationships with political parties and their leadership. WFD believes that democracy support organisations ought to leverage this convening power and trusted relationships with political decision-makers, civil society and citizens to help form broad-based coalitions capable of generating political action on the environment.

But this work cannot succeed without the invaluable contributions of environmental organisations, experts and activists who bring the technical expertise, grassroots networks, community understanding and advocacy skills needed to ensure policymakers make decisions that are evidence-based, ambitious, and aligned with the interests of all people (including future generations). Long-term partnership between these two sets of actors is required to achieve the ambitious climate and environmental changes necessary to preserve our planet.



Welcome to our **3-day hybrid Conference on Environmental Democracy** to help catalyse a new wave of enhanced, transformational cooperation between the democracy support and environmental communities to unlock the potential of the environmental democracy approach.

Our partners

We are delighted to be partnering with the [National Democratic Institute \(NDI\)](#) and [World Resources Institute \(WRI\)](#) for this event. As two leading organisations in the field of environmental democracy, NDI and WRI bring a wealth of experience to the conference.

About the conference

The conference will explore possible frameworks for environmental and democracy support organisations to work together, each bringing their respective strengths to generate the urgent changes required if we are to preserve the ambition of the Paris Agreement, confirmed at COP26, and remain under the 1.5C target.

- **Day 1 (online)** will provide an introduction to environmental democracy, including its philosophical and political origins, stretching back to the UN Stockholm meeting (1972). It will consider how environmental democracy has been enshrined in international agreements, such as the Aarhus Convention, and highlight the potential of the recently ratified Escazu Agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The final session will provide a space for global academic evidence sharing. It will showcase the key findings of WFD-sponsored research on the environmental democracy approach and environmental governance advancement nexus by the Grantham Institute on Climate Change and the Environment of the London School of Economics.

- **Day 2 (online)** will bring together civil society leaders, multilateral organisations and international experts to examine trends and challenges in the advancement of the three pillars of environmental democracy: access to information, access to decision-making and access to justice.
- **Day 3 (hybrid)** will conclude the conference with an in-person, high-level deliberative session, focusing on donor and political leadership from across the world. Participants will contribute to, and endorse, a roadmap for immediate action to bring together environmental and democracy support organisations, with political leaders and donors.

Agenda

Day 1: Tuesday 29 March 2022 (online)

Environmental Democracy and the International Agenda

Time (BST)	Session	Details
13:00 – 14:45	Session 1	Why is Environmental Democracy important to International Development?
	Welcome (5mins)	Anthony Smith , Chief Executive, WFD
	Scene-setting keynote (20mins)	<i>Post-COP26: Where next for Environmental Democracy and foreign policy?</i> Nick Mabey , Chief Executive, E3G.
	Response (10mins)	Nick Bridge , UK Special Representative for Climate Change, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
	Panel (1hr)	<i>Why is it important to work politically when addressing environmental challenges?</i> Chair: Fiona Harvey , Environment Correspondent, The Guardian
	Q&A (15mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tommy Garnett, IUCN Sierra Leone; CEO, Environmental Foundation for Africa • Maia Bitadze MP, Chairperson, Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee, Parliament of Georgia • Marta Szigeti Bonifert, former Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) • Lisa Badum MdB, Member of the German Bundestag • Abdel Rahman Sultan, Deputy Director, EcoPeace Middle East
14:45-15.00	Break (15mins)	
15:00-16.15	Session 2	Environmental Democracy and International Agreements
	Panel (1hr)	Chair: Richard Graham MP , Chair of the Board, WFD
	Q&A (15mins)	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Nino Gokheshvili, Vice-Chairperson of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) • Ana Barreira, Director of Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente (IIDMA) • Prof. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger, Fellow, Cambridge Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resource Governance
16:15 – 16:30	Break (15mins)	
16:30 – 18:00	Session 3	The Democracy and Environment Nexus
	Panel (1hr 15) Q&A (15mins)	<p>Chair: Richard Youngs, Senior Associate, Carnegie Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Daniel Lindvall, Researcher, Department of Earth Sciences, Natural Resources and Sustainable Development; Climate Change Leadership, University of Uppsala • Carole Excell LLM, Director, Environmental Democracy Practice, World Resources Institute • Dr Alina Averchenkova, Distinguished Policy Fellow. Lead, Governance and Legislation, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment • Prof. Evan Lieberman, Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Day 2: Wednesday 30 March 2022 (online)

Implementing the three pillars of Environmental Democracy

Time (BST)	Session	Details
13:00- 14:30	Session 1	Access to Information: Trends and Challenges
13:00-13:10	Intro/recap (10mins)	Devin O’Shaughnessy , Senior Strategy and Policy Adviser, FCDO <i>The three pillars of Environmental Democracy</i>
13:10-14:30	Panel (1h5mins) Q&A(15mins)	<p>Chair: Thomas Hughes, WFD Governor, Oversight Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosario Pavese, Senior Regional Coordinator, Americas, Open Government Partnership

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brice Böhmer, Climate and Environment Lead, Transparency International • Mark Robinson, Executive Director, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) • Dr Aled Williams, Senior Adviser, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre
14:30-14:45	Break (15mins)	
14:45-16:00	Session 2	Participation in Decision-Making: Trends and Challenges
	Panel (1hr) Q&A (15mins)	<p>Chair: Alisha Todd, Director General, ParlAmericas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birgitta Ohlsson, Director, Political Parties, National Democratic Institute (NDI) • Edison Broce, Member of Panama’s National Assembly • Hannah Mowat, Campaigns Coordinator, FERN – Forest and Environment Resources Network • Augustine B. Njamnshi, Executive Secretary of Bioresources Development and Conservation Programme Cameroon (BDCPC), Member of the Access Initiative, Member of the Board of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)
16:00-16:15	Break (15mins)	
16:15-17:30	Session 3	Access to Justice: Trends and Challenges
16:15-17:30	Panel (1hr) Q&A (15mins)	<p>Chair: Yamide Dagnet, Director, Climate Justice, Open Society Foundations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Arnold Kreilhuber, Deputy Director, Law Division, UN Environment Programme • Justice Antonio Benjamin, Superior Court of Justice, Brazil, President of the Global Judicial Institute on the Environment • Malini Mehra, CEO, GLOBE • Anaïs Berthier, Head of EU Affairs, ClientEarth • Quinn McKew, Executive Director, Article 19

Day 3: Thursday 31 March 2022 (hybrid event, from London)

Putting Environmental Democracy into practice: what needs to happen?

Time (BST)	Session	Details
12:00-12:07	Recap: Days 1- 2	Anthony Smith , Chief Executive, WFD
12:07-12:15	High-level Statement	Alok Sharma , UNFCCC COP26 President
12:15-12:30	Opening Speech	Theo Clarke MP , International Development Committee, UK House of Commons
12:30-13:30	Political leadership	<p>Chair: Paul Williams, Director, Open Societies and Human Rights, UK FCDO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Mohamed Nasheed, Speaker, Maldives Majlis • Han Seung-soo, Prime Minister of Korea (2008-2009), Vice President of Club de Madrid • Hon. Fadli Zon, Chair, Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, Indonesia • Hon. Andaleeb Abbas, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Member of Standing Committee on Climate Change, National Assembly of Pakistan • Hon. Emmanuel Marfo, Chair, Committee on Environment, Science and Technology, Parliament of Ghana • Johanna Arriagada, Action on Climate Empowerment Strategy Lead, Adaptation Team, National Climate Change Office, Ministry of the Environment, Chile
13:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Bridging the gap: Connecting the worlds of democracy assistance and environmental protection	<p>Chair: Dr Lauren Van Metre, Senior Advisor, National Democratic Institute (NDI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna George, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency • Ann Cathrin Pedersen, Programme Manager, Environmental Governance Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

		<p>To respond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General, International IDEA • Sandra Hamid, Director, Environment, The Asia Foundation (TAF) • Andrew Norton, Director, International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED) • Robin Prest, Simon Fraser University, International Climate Engagement Network • Derek Mitchell, President, National Democratic Institute <p>Q & A with the in-person audience 15'</p>
15:30-15:45	Break (15mins)	
15:45-17:30	Donor leadership	<p>Chair: Nick Bridge, UK Special Representative for Climate Change, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenny Ohlsson, State Secretary to the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs • Birgitta Weibahr, Lead Policy Specialist Democracy and Human Rights, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - Sida • Jan Wahlberg, Climate Ambassador, Finland • Kathryn Stratos, Deputy Director, Climate & Cross-Sectoral Strategy, USAID • Ro Tucci, Director, Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, USAID • Anja Casper-Berretta, Head of Regional Programme for Energy Security and Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung <p>Q & A with the in-person audience 15'</p>
17.30-17.45	Closing speech	<p>Introduced by Anthony Smith, WFD Zac Goldsmith, UK Minister for the International Environment and Climate</p>
17:45-18:00	Conclusions and next steps	<p>Anthony Smith, Chief Executive, WFD Derek Mitchell, President, National Democratic Institute</p>
18:00-19:00	Reception	

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) is the UK public body dedicated to supporting democracy around the world. Operating internationally, WFD works with parliaments, political parties, and civil society groups as well as on elections to help make countries' political systems fairer, more inclusive and accountable.

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