



World Commission  
on Environmental Law

Commission Mondiale de  
Droit de l'Environnement | Comisión Mundial  
de Derecho Ambiental

## Year in Review 2016

### Ethics Specialist Group

**Chair: Klaus Bosselmann**

**Deputy Chair: Peter Burdon**

During the reporting period, two ongoing Ethics Specialist Group (ESG) projects - Climate Ethics (coordinated by Prue Taylor and Don Brown) and Earth Democracy (coordinated by Klaus Bosselmann, Peter Burdon and Ron Engel) – were further advanced. Conferences where collaborators of these projects presented included, *inter alia*, the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium in Oslo, June 2016, and the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawai'i in September 2016.

ESG members also played a significant role in helping to draft the “IUCN World Declaration on the Environmental Rule of Law” during the 1st World Environmental Law Congress in Rio de Janeiro, April 2016. ESG members were also instrumental for organizing several events during both the Oslo Colloquium and the World Conservation Congress.

Highlights for the year included:

- Organizing a very successful workshop “From Environmental Law to Ecological Law” on 21 June 2016 (during the IUCN Academy Colloquium) with nearly 100 participants who unanimously adopted the “Oslo Manifesto” calling on environmental law scholars and practitioners to focus on an ecological (eco-centric) approach to law-making at international and national levels. The Manifesto, in particular, commissions a working group to develop a roadmap (inclusive website and founding conference) for the establishment of an Ecological Law and Governance Association (ELGA) as a global platform for organizations and individuals promoting ecological law. ELGA will be officially launched mid-October 2017 in Siena, Italy and is provisionally chaired by the SG Chair (with other SG members being on the Steering Committee).
- Leading the workshop “How Can Ecologically Informed Global Ethics and Environmental Law Respond Effectively to the Great Moral Issues of Our Time?” on 2 September during the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Among other things, participants discussed ways to help IUCN take leadership on global ethics (e.g. with respect to climate change, biodiversity and Earth’s ecological integrity). It was noted that WCEL can do more to urge implementation of ethics resolutions initiated previously by SG in 2012, in particular, Resolution 004 “Ethics Mechanism”.

The Specialist Group is also instrumental in establishing the research collaboration [“Planetary Integrity Project”](#) (PIP) between a number of universities, NGOs (e.g. World Future Council, Oxfam, WWF) and professional organizations (including Stockholm Resilience Center, Global Ecological Integrity Group, and WCEL). Among its aims is a proposal to the United Nations Secretary-General to initiate a UN-based Global Stewardship Council. Other activities of members during the reporting period included conference presentations and multiple publications in the areas of global ethics, Earth jurisprudence, global environmental law, climate change, and ecological integrity, among others.