# BuildBackBetter IUCN Virtual Dialogues

**Environmental human rights defenders in the pandemic**

**THE GENEVA ROADMAP & STRENGTHENING IUCN ACTION**

Faced with the deteriorating situation of environmental human rights defenders during the pandemic, how can the conservation community respond more effectively?

"I want to stop naming names of dead defenders and start naming actions we are doing to protect our defenders" - Grethel Aguilar

**Challenges**

1. COVID and lockdowns have prevented environmental defenders from doing their job.
2. COVID and isolation have increased violence towards women, including the ones defending their territories.
3. COVID has generated greater budget cuts.
4. Leaders and defenders are getting sick too.
5. COVID, and without surveillance, illegal activities from mining to land grabbing are increasing.

Unless indigenous peoples are counted, they remain invisible to the decision-making process and therefore their concerns are ignored. Policy decisions and services. The pandemic has surfaced this problem..." - ABI "Iracema"

**Recommendations to IUCN**

- Security adaptation to Resolution 239.
- Opening of global action plans.
- Avoiding membership, national Committees and Commissions and the implementation of regional alliances.
- Making World Conservation Congress a game changer for equitable action.
- Utilizing IUCN’s representative role in the United Nations and the process for the protection of human rights.
- Supporting an adaptation to the "use and free up" of IUCN’s limited resources.

**Lessons Learned**

- Networks work like the platform Fundación Pueblos Indígenas works to maintain communication between women defenders.
- IUCN focuses on conservation based on human rights.
- Give all defenders the means to communicate with each other.
- Create funds to help environmental defenders.
- Coordinate information and skills across sectors.

"We know that States around the world have contributed to the economic and social policies. IUCN could help make the case as to why protection of human rights defenders should be part of it" - Mary Lawlor

"The pandemic has increased mobility for IUCN and we cannot afford what is happening and it has reached our capacity to self-organize." - Mary Lawlor

**Responding to the crisis: Geneva Roadmap 4 action goals**

1. Preserve the title of marginalized peoples against environmental actors
2. Break isolation and secure effective access to protection
3. Restore environmental justice ensuring due civic rights and accountability
4. Bridge initiatives and enhance cooperation

**Watch and share this film**

Responding to the Environmental Defenders Crisis. Film by Melanie Nolte

https://vimeo.com/475116723