

GA: Environment

Explanation of vote by First Secretary Katrine Ørnehaug Dale to the General Assembly after adoption of the resolution on clean, healthy, sustainable environment, 28 July 2022.
28. Jul 2022

Today the General Assembly has adopted a resolution which confirms the numerous linkages that exist between human rights and the environment, and politically recognizes the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It sends a strong political signal to all states to step up efforts to protect the environment, to reduce emissions, and to choose sustainable solutions. And in doing so, ensuring that human rights are protected and promoted.

A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is the foundation of human life, and the protection of the environment is a necessary precondition for the enjoyment of human rights for present and future generations.

This resolution sends a strong and important message on the necessity of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for the enjoyment of existing human rights. It is Norway's view that the political recognition through this resolution does not have any legal effects and thus cannot be used as a legal argument.

We regret that some important elements did not make it into the final version of the text. Human rights defenders, including environmental human rights defenders, play a crucial role in the promotion and protection of human rights as they relate to the enjoyment of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Recognizing the important and legitimate work that human rights defenders do is highly relevant in the context of this resolution. We regret that this has not been reflected in the text as it was in resolution 48/13 from the Human Rights Council that this resolution is based on.

We would also have liked to see a reference to the future discussions that a right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment warrants.

Despite a rushed process and important elements missing in the text, Norway voted in favor of this resolution today.

It is important that we stand together to protect and promote human rights also in our efforts to combat climate change and environmental degradation that amplify conflicts and force people all over the world into increasingly vulnerable situations.