

The interdependence of human rights and the environment

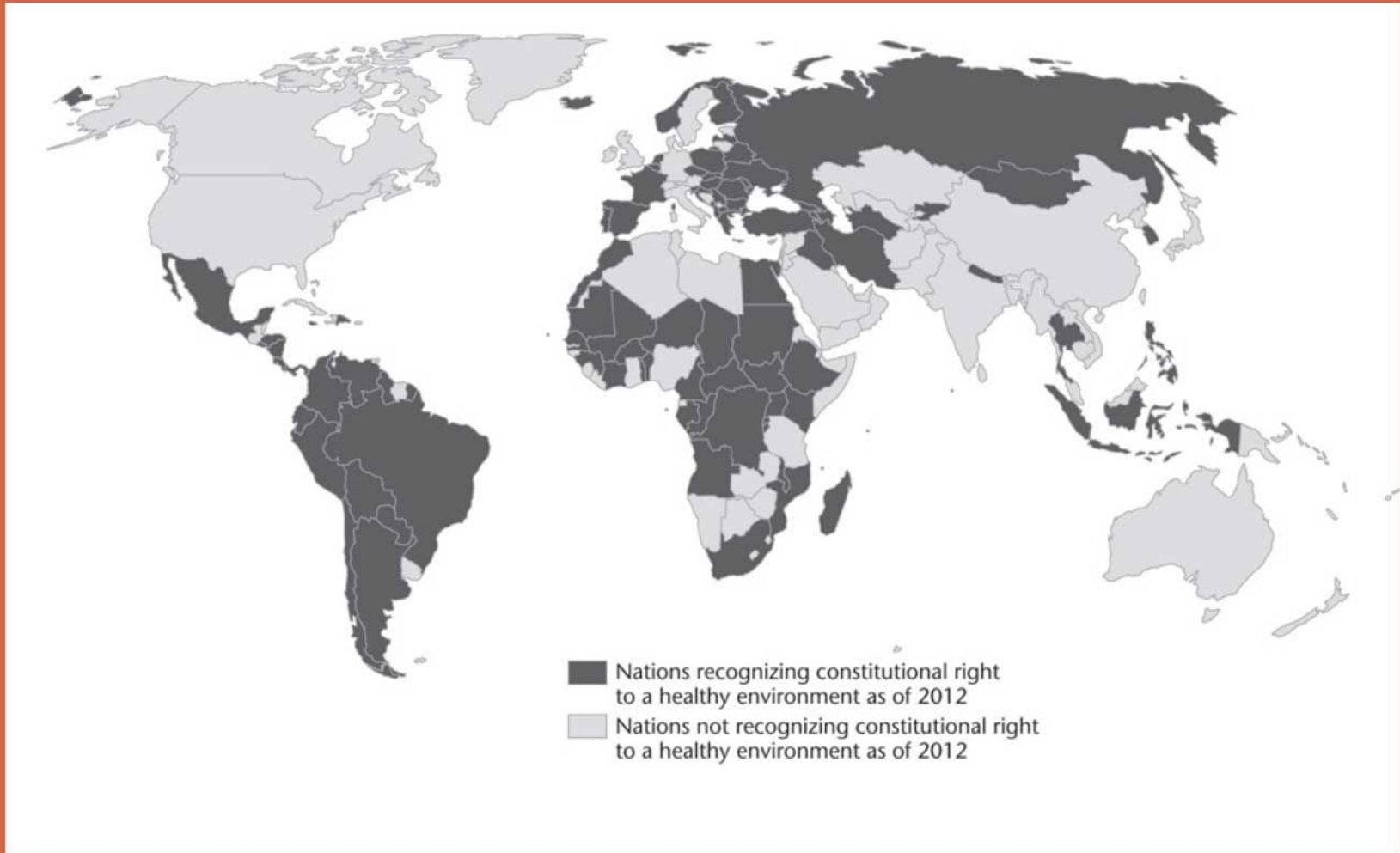
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)



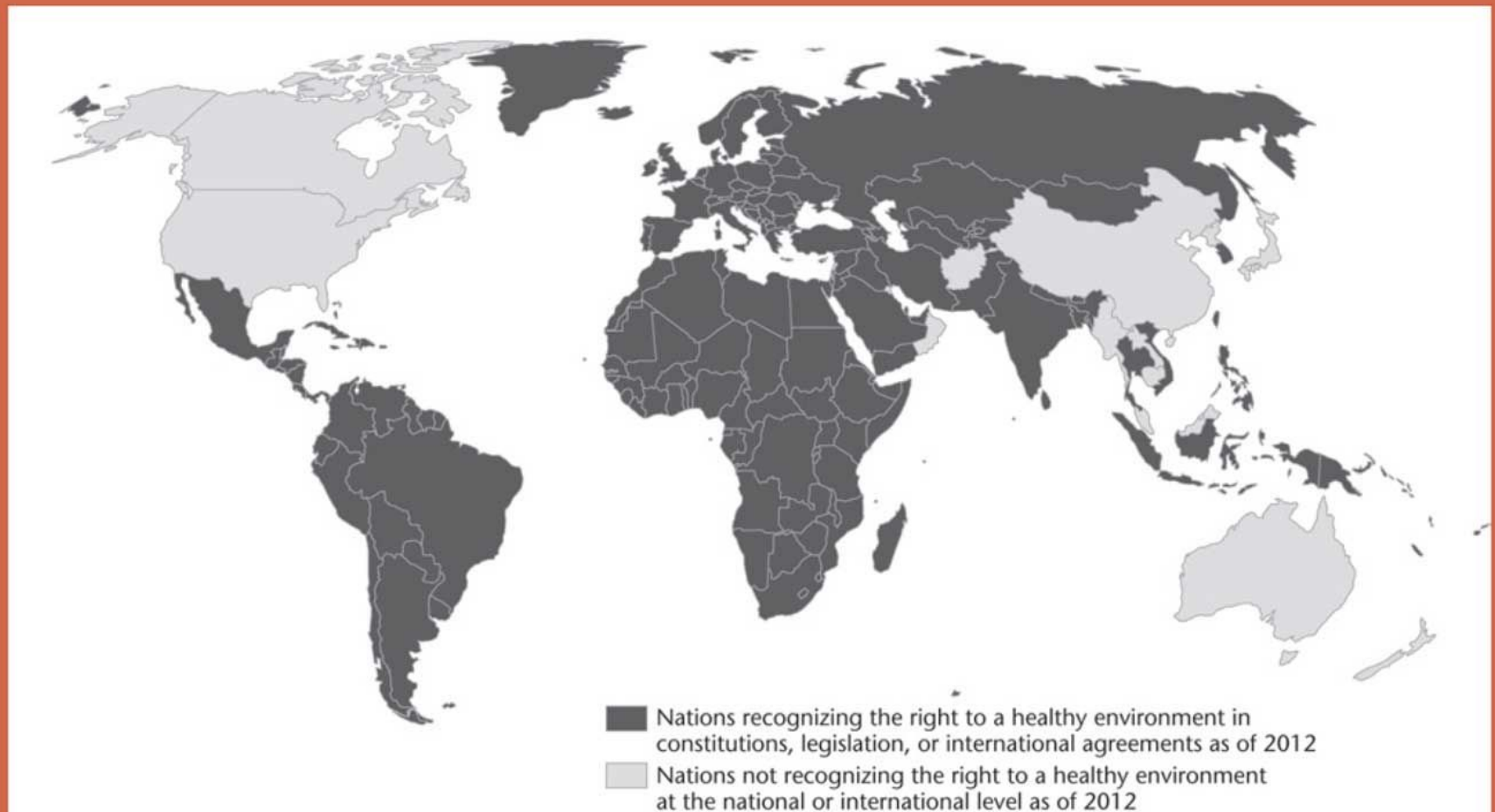
The Universal Declaration as a word cloud



100+ national constitutions include a right to a healthy environment



Even more recognize the right in legislation or regional treaties



“Greening” human rights



International jurisprudence on human rights and the environment

- **rights to life, privacy** – European Court
- **right to property** – Inter-American Court
- **rights to water, health** – Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- **rights to food, housing, water** – United Nations special rapporteurs, treaty bodies



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FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

2018

The main human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment
of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Human rights and the environment are interdependent

- A healthy environment is necessary for the full enjoyment of human rights.
- The exercise of human rights is vital to the protection of the environment.

Procedural obligations

- Protection of environmental defenders
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

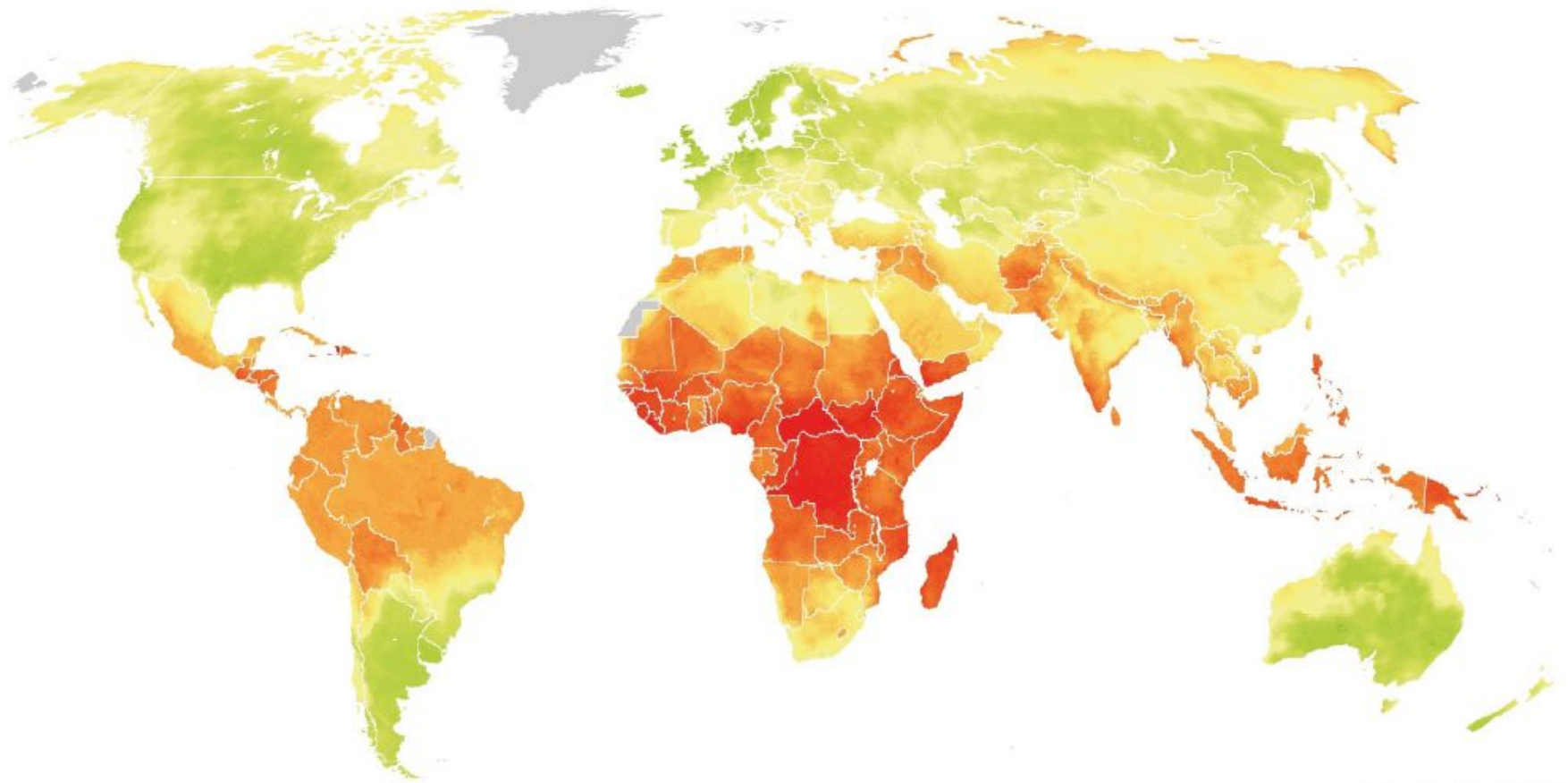
Procedural obligations

- Access to information
- Assessment of environmental and social impacts
- Public participation in decision-making
- Access to justice (effective remedies)

Substantive obligations

- Environmental standards should:
 - be non-discriminatory and non-retrogressive
 - take into account relevant international standards
 - strike a reasonable balance between environmental and other societal goals
 - be implemented and enforced

International cooperation is necessary to address global threats



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Protection of the most vulnerable

- Non-discrimination
- Additional steps to protect those most at risk:
 - women
 - children
 - disabled
 - older persons
 - persons living in poverty
 - indigenous peoples and traditional communities

The UN Human Rights Council



Promoting a human rights perspective on the environment

- Country visits
 - Madagascar, Uruguay, Mongolia
- Communications
- Environmental human rights defenders
 - www.environment-rights.org/
- Judicial conferences
 - South Africa, Brazil, Pakistan

UN website (google "ohchr knox")



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Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment (former Independent Expert on human rights and the environment)

Introduction



All human beings depend on the environment in which we live. A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and

Latest news:

UN rights experts condemn Viet Nam for incommunicado detention of blogger 'Mother Mushroom'
8 March 2017

States must fulfil human rights obligations in protecting biodiversity, UN expert urges
1 March 2017

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