

First Announcement (2 July 2021)

University of Eastern Finland – UN Environment Programme Course on Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Seventeenth (17th) Course on the Post-2020 Biodiversity Agenda, late September- December 2021, online

The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are jointly organising a cutting-edge course on international environmental law-making and diplomacy. The course is organised in collaboration with the Government of Finland.

The course seeks to transfer experience in the field of international environmental law to current and future negotiators of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). It also provides a forum to foster North-South and South-South co-operation and to take stock of recent developments in MEAs as well as diplomatic practices in the international environmental arena.

This year will mark the seventeenth edition of the course. For the first time, the course will take place virtually to ensure equal participation opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will consist of two parts. Part I comprises a **series of webinars** on key issues and will be open to the public. Part II will provide virtual **training on MEAs negotiating skills** for a select group of participants completing both parts of the course.

Part I: The webinars focus on the theme **The Post-2020 Biodiversity Agenda** and consist of lectures by experienced diplomats, government officials, international civil servants and members of academia. They will cover a range of topics, such as the post-2020 biodiversity agenda; biodiversity and human health after COVID-19; progress towards agreement on marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; biodiversity and international human rights; and biodiversity and climate change

The **theme** of this year's course, '**The Post-2020 Biodiversity Agenda**', is timely and important as the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are expected to decide on a new 10-year framework for the conservation of biodiversity to replace the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Globally, biodiversity is governed by a range of multilateral environmental agreements, including the CBD, the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic

Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention (WHC), the International Plant Protection Convention, and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Negotiations are also ongoing under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on a legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

While important advances have been made in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements over the years, the current system has not been sufficient to effectively respond to the biodiversity crisis we are facing. As negotiators come together to decide on a new 10-year framework, it will be a crucial time to reverse these alarming trends and avert further loss of biodiversity. The webinar series will provide an overview of the key challenges and responses.

Part II: A group of select participants will be invited to complete a series of online lectures and virtual exercises designed to build their MEAs negotiating skills.

This part of the course is intended for **experienced government officials engaged in international environmental negotiations**. In addition, applications from other stakeholders, such as representatives from academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, will also be considered.

Approximately 30 participants, with an equal geographical distribution and taking into account gender balance will be selected to complete Part II. Participants that successfully complete Parts I and II will be awarded a Diploma.

The **Draft Programme** will be published on the Course website in August. The application deadline is Friday, **13 August 2021**.

Further information

Course website:

<https://sites.uef.fi/cceel/uef-unesp/> or
<http://unenvironment.org>

Contact address:

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