



## **Environmental Justice: A win-win for Marine Litter and Pollution**

Tuesday, 4 December 2018, 13h30 – 15h00 (Salle XV1, Palais des Nations, United Nations Office, Geneva)

**A side event to the Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics**

Co-sponsored by

**United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

A topic that has not received much attention over the years is that of environmental justice in the context of marine litter and microplastics pollution. The numbers speak for themselves: 8 million tonnes of plastic leaking into the ocean every year, 11.1 billion plastic pieces suffocating coral reefs in the Asia-Pacific region, more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050... But what do these numbers mean for people who may be disproportionately affected at the local level, or those who are based inland and near non-coastal waterways that eventually lead to the marine environment? Local communities, including indigenous people, as well as people from low-income and rural populations who often depend on wild seafood for their diet, face greater risks to their health and livelihoods from marine litter and microplastics, which can be a million times more concentrated with chemicals than surrounding water. Often, the most affected groups and individuals have the smallest voice when it comes to decision-making around tackling marine litter and plastics pollution generally, or even in conversations around environmental justice in the area of plastics pollution. To strive toward environmental justice, we need participatory laws and governance on marine litter and microplastics that empower people and unleash innovative capacity. We need environmental actions that include all communities affected by and able to take up solutions to tackle marine litter and microplastics pollution. This side event will unpack the issues related to environmental justice in the context of marine litter and microplastics pollution, identify entry points for different stakeholders, ideas on good practices for including principles of community organizing and equity in environmental actions, and policy recommendations towards addressing marine litter and microplastics pollution challenges.

**Join us for a conversation!**

### **Invited Speakers:**

- David Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment
- Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš, Founder and Director, Azul
- Sanimili Liku Bulai, Acting Senior Environment Officer, Fiji Department of Environment
- Griffins Ochieng, Executive Director, CEJAD
- Olena Marushevska, Senior expert, Zakarpattya Oblast Branch of All-Ukrainian Ecological League
- Baskut Tuncak, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics

**Moderated** by Lara Ognibene, Legal Officer, UN Environment

