We want to thank the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, Mr. David Boyd; UNEP, Universal Rights Group and the New York University, in addition to the multiple cosponsors, for organizing this important Expert seminar to raise momentum on a matter that is very dear for us.

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia, Switzerland, and my own country, Costa Rica. Together, we support the universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

2. Our countries, members of the Core group on Human rights and the environment, promoted the recognition by the Human Rights Council, through resolution 48/13, of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, gaining also the support of more than 70 Member States cosponsors.

3. This recognition represents an international milestone for environmental and human rights law, that adds to the already existing legal basis of this right at national and regional levels. The right is also rooted in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and more than 155 Member States have recognized some form of the right to a healthy environment, either in international agreements, their national constitutions, environmental legislation or policies.
4. In addition to this recognition, the Human Rights Council resolution encourages Member States to adopt policies for the enjoyment of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as appropriate, including with respect to biodiversity and ecosystems. Moreover, the resolution invites the General Assembly to consider the matter.

5. Our countries believe, in this regard, that the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution, reaffirming this recognition, is key to increase priority for environmental protection and climate action, as the last reports of the IPCC and the UN Secretary-General’s report on “Our Common Agenda” urge us to do.

6. It is our shared view that the universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment complements other recommendations in the OCA report as well as builds on our commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other instruments related to protecting the planet, climate action, and delivering for future generations.

7. We consider this recognition timely and of utmost importance as it is related to other rights and existing international law. The Core Group is ready to launch this process in New York and to engage in open, inclusive and transparent consultations in the coming months.

8. Engaging in inclusive and open consultations with all stakeholders, including the private sector and the pertinent civil society, is also vital to achieve the right outcome and delivering on the promise together.
9. We invite Member States to support this initiative, convinced that this be the culmination of a long history and legal basis on the elaboration of this right, and will additionally represent both a message of hope for present and future generations, and spur ambition and action in a critical juncture.

Thank you.