

A Law to Stop the Destruction of Nature

Mock Trial on 'Ecocide' at UK Supreme Court Tomorrow

London / Hamburg, 29 September 2011. On 30 September 2011, the UK Supreme Court in London will host a mock trial on a proposed law against ecocide organized by the Hamilton Group. "There is a growing legal norm against the destruction of the environment, but a lack of formal mechanisms to enforce this. The mock trial is a vital step in building political momentum and legal mechanisms to protect the environment now and into the future," says Alyn Ware, Consultant for the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and Councillor of the World Future Council (WFC).

The trial will be shown live on SKY at <http://news.sky.com/home/supreme-court>.

The WFC has been actively working to develop a Draft Code of "Crimes against Future Generations" to ensure personal and corporate responsibility and is therefore supporting the mock trial as a partner. More information on this work on "Future Justice" can be found at http://worldfuturecouncil.org/just_societies.html.

The trial will focus on two of the following ecocidal practices: deforestation of the Amazon, Arctic drilling, fracking for shale gas in Nigeria, the major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri Mountain in India, unconventional tar sands extraction in Canada, and deep sea mining in the Central and Eastern Manus Basin. More information on the trial can be found at www.worldfuturecouncil.org/ecocide.html.

Indian activist and WFC Councillor Vandana Shiva says: "The ideal of limitless growth is leading to limitless violations of the rights of the Earth and of the rights of nature. This is ecocide. We need to stop the destruction of the very basis of life on Earth and of human survival. The trial on ecocide is a very important step in waking us up to the violence which is the foundation of the current economy. We need another model that is non-violent, a model which makes peace with the earth. Ecocide must stop."

UK barrister Polly Higgins has proposed to the United Nations that ecocide, the environmental equivalent of genocide, become affirmed as the 5th International Crime Against Peace alongside genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war crimes. Under the law, heads of state and directors of corporations would be required to take individual and collective responsibility for their actions. Top UK legal representatives, Michael Mansfield QC, the prosecuting barrister, and Nigel Lickley QC, the defence barrister, together with supporting legal teams, will lead the case for and against the CEOs of two fictional major corporations. Before the case is heard, legal argument will be put as to whether ecocide and the Earth's right to life should be applied to the charge against the two defendants.

Judge Christopher Weeramantry, former Vice-President of the International Court of Justice and WFC Councillor, says: "If people of the Stone Age had been able to cause damage to the environment and to our generation, we would have condemned them as savages, brutes and barbarians. Our generation and particularly those who are specially entrusted with the care of the environment will have to answer before the bar of history for our default and abuse of trust."

Affirming a law against ecocide is fundamental in addressing humanitarian and environmental issues on a global scale. Implementation of the law has the potential to change inter-governmental policy and action on climate change and provide the necessary legal framework to halt the over-exploitation of natural resources.

The World Future Council is a foundation that brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. The Council consists of up to 50 respected personalities from all five continents who have successfully promoted change.

Contact

For further information, invitations to the trial and press conference, interviews with participants or expert witnesses contact: Simon Hamilton simon@thehamiltongroup.org.uk +44(0) 7931 382275

Contact World Future Council UK

Alistair Whitby
Senior Policy Officer
Future Justice and Future Policy Award

World Future Council Foundation
100 Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5NQ

Phone: [+44 \(0\)7784 28 68 58](tel:+44207784286858)

Fax: [+44 20 7321 3738](tel:+442073213738)

alistair.whitby@worldfuturecouncil.org

www.worldfuturecouncil.org

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