



LAW

Environmental
Law
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Worldwide

advocate

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Connecting Communities
Protecting the Planet

Environmental Heroes Come to Eugene

IN THIS ISSUE:

Environmental Heroes Come to Eugene

(pgs. 1-2, 4-5)

Protecting the Climate in Uganda for the Next Generation

(pg. 3)

ELAW Fellows Program

Oksana Imetkhenova
(pg. 6)

@ELAWUS Tweets from Around the World

(pg. 6)

News from ELAW

Welcome
Ashley & Killian

ELAW Partners Named to Bangladesh High Court and Mexico Climate Commission
(pg. 7)

2015 ELAW Annual International Meeting March 1 - 5

More than 50 grassroots advocates from 30 countries arrived in Eugene in late February for the 2015 ELAW Annual International Meeting. They traveled to a meeting site in Yachats, on the Oregon Coast, and enjoyed five days of collaborating to protect the climate, defend critical ecosystems, and give communities back home a voice in building a sustainable future.

"The ELAW network links environmental heroes and friends across borders," says Bern Johnson, ELAW Executive Director. "The Annual International Meeting builds the bonds that make our network strong."

At this year's meeting, climate issues took center stage. "We want to hold corporations accountable for damaging our climate, keep coal in the ground, and help communities transition to clean green energy," says Bern. "Protecting our global climate is a shared challenge and we all need to work together."

The 2015 ELAW Annual Meeting was followed by the University of Oregon's Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC). ELAW partners presented their work in panel discussions and as keynote speakers.

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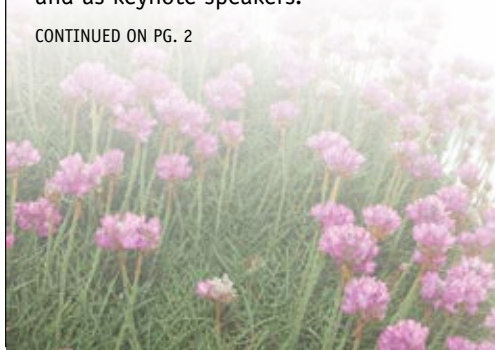
Some of the many faces of environmental heroes who traveled to Eugene, Oregon from around the world.

"Being an advocate for the environment in a developing country is a lonely job. Coming to the Annual Meeting, over many years, always energizes me. I meet many colleagues from all over the world engaged in the same fight. This never fails to refocus and strengthen my resolve."

Diana McCaulay
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Environment Trust



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Environmental Heroes Come to Eugene (CONTINUED)

ELAW U.S. Staff

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Lori Maddox
Associate Director

Mark Chernaik
Staff Scientist

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Community Outreach Coordinator

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The Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) helps communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet. We are a global alliance of attorneys, scientists and other advocates collaborating across borders to promote grassroots efforts to build a sustainable, just future.

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*ELAW partners from **Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania** arrived early to work with the ELAW team to build their capacity to protect communities and the environment through law and grow the corps of public interest attorneys in East Africa. The following are profiles of these ELAW Fellows.*

Many thanks to the Ford Foundation, the Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund of Tides Foundation, and donors for making these Fellowships possible.



KENYA

Ruth Mwongeli Nzioka is a young lawyer with a passion for environmental governance. She is an intern at the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG) where she says there is no better place to “learn and grow.” She received a Bachelor of Laws from the School of Law at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. See: www.ilegkenya.org



TANZANIA

Jamal Juma is Legal Program Officer at the Lawyers’ Environmental Action Team (LEAT). He trains communities on environment and land rights, organizes workshops and seminars, conducts research, and publishes policy briefs. He received his Bachelor of Laws from the University of Dar es Salaam. See: www.lead.or.tz



Saitoti Parmelo is Programme Officer for Environment and Climate Change at the Association for Law and Advocacy for Pastoralists (ALAPA). He is a member of the Maasai pastoralists community in Simanjiro District and was raised in the Simanjiro game controlled area. Prior to joining ALAPA, Saitoti conducted research on human-wildlife conflicts, forest conservation, and livestock marketing. Saitoti received a Bachelor of Laws from Tumaini University Makumira. He is a member of the legal, governance and safeguards unit of the REDD+ technical working group under the Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. See: www.alapa.or.tz



UGANDA

Frank Tumusiime is the Coordinator and Senior Research Fellow for Advocates for Natural Resources Governance and Development (ANARDE). He is also a senior partner at Frank Tumusiime & Company Advocates, a law office that specializes in strategic public litigation in the natural resources sector. Frank has published studies of the oil and gas sector and facilitated trainings for Members of Parliament, the Uganda Law Society, and civil society organizations. He holds a Master of Laws and is an enrolled and a practicing Advocate of the High Court of Uganda. See: www.anarde.org

UGANDA: Protecting the Climate for the Next Generation

Courageous, confident, compassionate. **Samantha Atukunda**, a young attorney intelligent and thoughtful beyond her years, greets audiences with a winning smile. But she shares a story of suffering.

At the 2014 ELAW Annual International Meeting in Lenzen, Germany, Samantha and her colleague Harriet Bibangambah described disturbing events that they attribute to climate change in Uganda, where their organization, Greenwatch, works. The dynamic team described increased flooding, drought, fatal mudslides, famines, unpredictable storms, and cases of mosquito-borne diseases. Samantha concluded that the Ugandan government could be doing more, and is choosing not to.

Scientists' predictions about the impacts of climate change in East Africa are worrying. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states that temperatures are expected to rise faster in Africa than in other parts of the world over this century. Some models predict serious drought conditions in Uganda, while others foresee wetter and stormier rainy seasons. Both outcomes spell disaster for Uganda.

Greenwatch has filed a case on behalf of four children, and all children born and unborn, to demand action to protect the climate.

ELAW Staff Scientists Drs. Mark Chernaik and Heidi Weiskel wrote an expert report and have been collaborating with Samantha and her colleagues to develop their arguments for the case.

"Legislatures and political leaders are failing to act boldly enough," says Mark. "Lawsuits around the world are needed to insure that the judicial branch of government can protect the rights of communities to a livable climate and healthy ecosystems."

"We owe it to the future generation to ensure that they live in a clean and healthy environment."

Samantha Atukunda
www.greenwatch.or.ug

Samantha and her colleagues are asking the Ugandan government to:

- Develop a climate change mitigation plan.
- Take measures to protect the plaintiffs and the children of Uganda from flooding events and other effects of climate change.
- Adhere to its obligations with regard to international conventions, treaties and protocols on climate change.
- Compensate climate change victims.

Samantha is reaching out to both international and local scientific experts to strengthen the case. We are thrilled that Greenwatch is meeting this challenge and applaud the vision and determination of Samantha and her colleagues.



Samantha and her son Abaho.

Environmental Heroes Come to Eugene

2015
ELAW Annual
International
Meeting
participant
countries:

ARGENTINA

AUSTRALIA

BRAZIL

CAMEROON

CANADA

CHILE

CHINA

COLOMBIA

ECUADOR

EGYPT

GERMANY

GUATEMALA

HAITI

INDIA

INDONESIA

ISRAEL

JAMAICA

KENYA

MEXICO

NICARAGUA

PANAMA

PHILIPPINES

RUSSIA

SOUTH AFRICA

TANZANIA

THAILAND

TURKEY

UGANDA

UKRAINE

UNITED STATES

ELAW partners from around the world traveled to Eugene recently to collaborate at the 2015 ELAW Annual International Meeting. ELAW Annual Meetings help make the ELAW network strong, so ELAW can help local advocates protect communities and the environment through law:

In **Australia**, partners at the **Environmental Defenders Office** are challenging plans for an enormous coal port that threatens the Great Barrier Reef, and the climate.

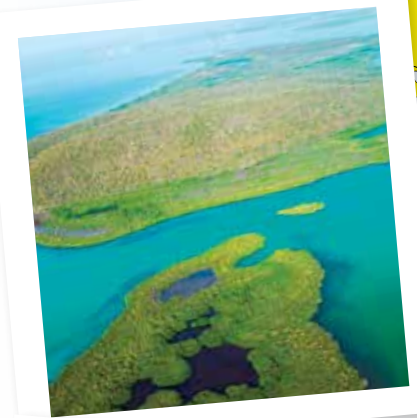
A steel corporation in **South Africa** illegally dumped hazardous waste, threatening community health. In January, the **Centre for Environmental Rights** celebrated a major victory affirming the right to access information from the steel company and other corporations, to protect constitutional rights. The South African Supreme Court of Appeal stated "[C]orporations operating within our borders, whether local or international, must be left in no doubt that, in relation to the environment in circumstances such as those under discussion, there is no room for secrecy and that constitutional values will be enforced."

The **Habi Center for Environmental Rights** in **Egypt** celebrated victory for the community of Arab Abu Saa'id. Residents faced accusations of "thuggery" for holding a peaceful sit-in at the Helwan Fertilizer Company, to protest harmful ammonia emissions. In November, an Egyptian court cleared residents of the charges.

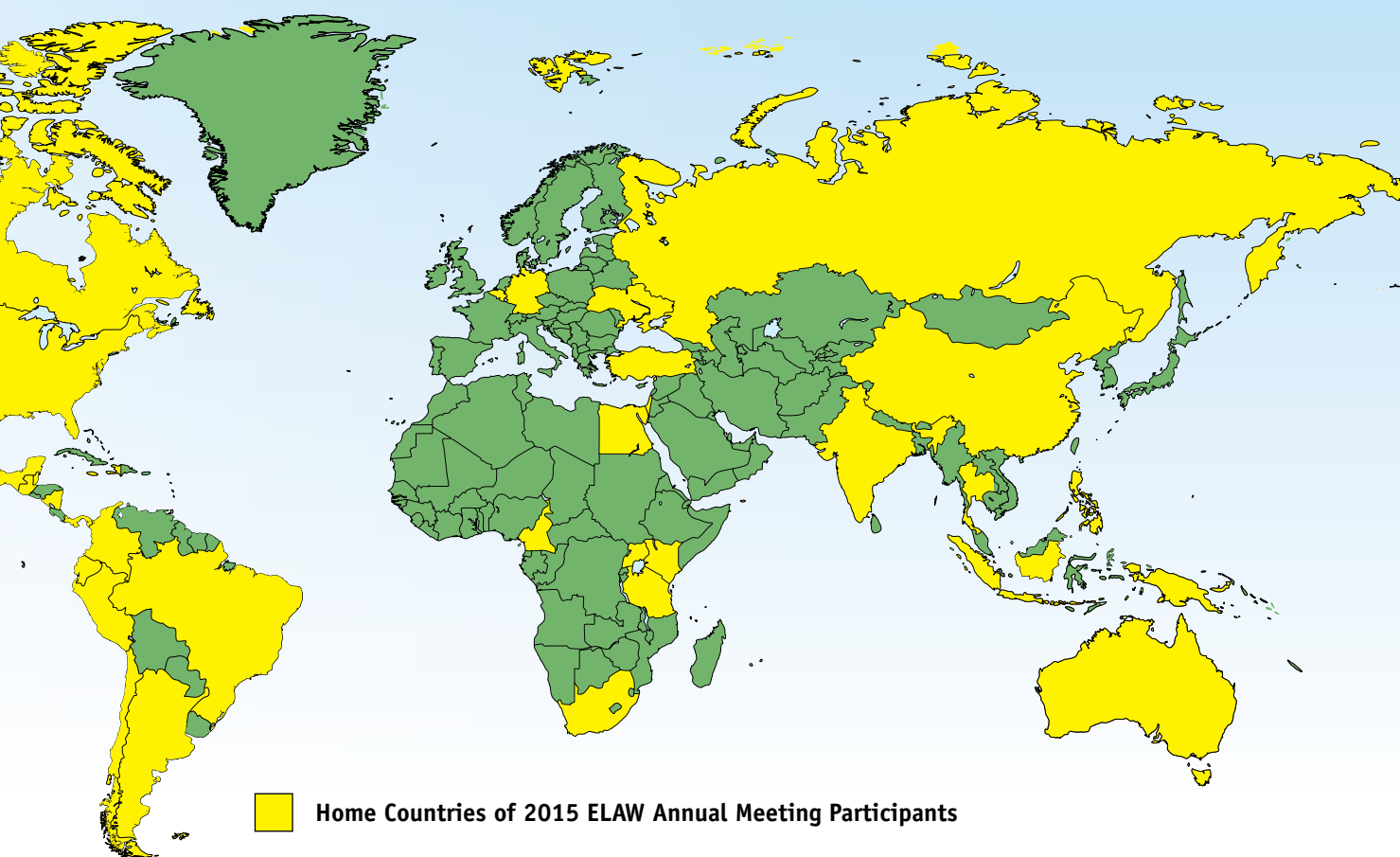
In November, **India's** National Green Tribunal blocked plans for a huge coal-fired power plant in the coastal city of Cuddalore, in Tamil Nadu. Developers were asked to submit a Cumulative Environmental Impact Assessment (CEIA), taking into account the large number of polluting industries already in the area and the close proximity of an important mangrove forest. The developers' CEIA failed to mention how emissions of nitrogen oxides from the power plant would create a photochemical smog when combined with pollution from existing industries and volatile organic compounds from a proposed refinery. ELAW partner **Ritwick Dutta** argued the case.

The **Jamaica Environment Trust** is working to protect the Goat Islands from plans to destroy this fragile ecosystem to make way for a massive transshipment center.

ELAW partner Alejandra Serrano and her colleagues at the **Mexican Environmental Law Center** (CEMDA) celebrated success protecting the Riviera Maya from plans for a massive trade center south of Cancun (Dragon Mart) to showcase Chinese products. "The communities said enough is enough with out-sized development on the coast," says Alejandra.



2015 ELAW Annual International Meeting / March 1-5



In **Uganda**, Greenwatch filed a case on behalf of four children, and all children born and unborn, to demand action to protect the climate (see page two).

In **Tanzania**, partners at the Association for Law and Advocacy for Pastoralists (ALAPA) are working to protect the land rights of Maasai communities threatened by foreign interests seeking land for trophy hunting.

In **Kenya**, partners at the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG) are working to ensure that citizens can participate in decisions about natural resources, and that oil and mineral discoveries result in equitable sharing of benefits.

In **Ecuador**, ELAW Staff Scientist Meche Lu collaborated with partners at ECOLEX to hold workshops for residents in remote communities concerned about proposed large-scale mining. Mining operations are proposed for Ecuador's sub-tropical Andes in fragile ecosystems such as the Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve, home to the endangered spectacled bear and jaguar.

In **Panama**, the proposed Puerto Verde (ironically meaning "Green Port") would have devastated indigenous communities, and destroyed mangroves, corals, and seagrasses. ELAW worked with partners at the Environmental Advocacy Center (CIAM) to review the project's environmental and social impact assessment and share those findings with Panama's national environmental agency (ANAM). In December, the Puerto Verde's developers withdrew their proposal.



ELAW Fellow

Oksana Imetkhenova Ulan-Ude, Russia

Oksana Imetkhenova traveled to Eugene from Ulan-Ude in Russia's Buryatia Republic. This remote area of East Siberia is home to the Buryat people, whose traditional yak husbandry is threatened by changing land use.

Oksana is a teacher at the Department of Ecology, Health and Safety at the East Siberia State University of Technology and Management, where she also studies law. She collaborates with ELAW partner Sergey Shaphaev at the Buryat Regional Organization for Lake Baikal to help protect the world's oldest and largest lake, and the surrounding forests.

Oksana is working one-on-one with ELAW Staff Attorneys and Staff Scientists on topics such as how to protect endangered species, protection for traditional land use, and the science of forest succession.

Oksana is also participating in the 10-week Intensive English Program at the University of Oregon's American English Institute (AEI), made possible by an AEI Director's Distinction Scholarship and generous support from the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

Oksana
Imetkhenova



ELAW @ELAWUS Tweets From Around the World

ELAW partners around the world are making news, and ELAW is tweeting it.

Follow us on Twitter for news about inspired victories and challenges protecting communities and the environment through law around the world.



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Jean Andre Victor brings hope to **#Haiti** <http://www.elaw.org/node/8412>



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#Australia Great Barrier Reef threatened by global warming from **#coal** burning. ELAW partners @EDONSW file challenge. <http://goo.gl/txQi0A>



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Damming Lake Turkana could leave thousands without water, provoke tribal conflict <http://goo.gl/TmPAEA> **#Kenya** @IkaL_Angelie



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ELAW partners @GreenwatchUg take legal action against **#Uganda** Wildlife Authority approval to export pangolin scales <http://goo.gl/C5bLDQ>



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ELAW partner Nity Jayaraman: **#India** forced to cover untested **#nuclear** technologies & expensive electricity <http://goo.gl/roJ8dC>



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ELAW partner Sergy Shaphaev weighs in on Lake Baikal water dilemma **#Russia** <http://sputniknews.com/environment/20150124/1017302020.html>

News from ELAW

Welcome Ashley & Killian

ELAW is pleased to welcome Ashley White and Killian Doherty to the ELAW team.



Ashley is Director of Philanthropy and China Program. She received her LL.M. from Ocean University of China in Environmental & Natural Resources Protection Law, holds a B.A. from St. Lawrence University, and graduated from Willamette University College of Law with certificates in International & Comparative Law, and in Sustainable Environmental, Energy & Resources Law. Ashley is a former ELAW legal intern and speaks Mandarin.



Killian is Law Associate. He provides assistance to environmental and human rights advocates around the world. Killian holds a M.A. in Development Management & Policy from Georgetown University and a J.D., with certificates in Natural Resources Law and International Law, from the University of Oregon School of Law. He has studied, worked, and lived in Latin America, and speaks Spanish and Portuguese. Killian is a former ELAW legal intern, and joined ELAW in 2014.

ELAW Partners named to Bangladesh High Court and Mexico Climate Commission

Iqbal Kabir from Bangladesh has collaborated with ELAW for more than 10 years as staff attorney at the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association. In February, he was named to the Bangladesh High Court.



Raquel Gutierrez Najera from Mexico was named to a national commission to evaluate public policies on climate change (Coordinación de Evaluación de la Política Nacional de Cambio Climático). Raquel has collaborated with ELAW for many years.



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Support an ELAW Fellow!

ELAW Fellowships help grassroots advocates become more effective. Reading, writing, and speaking English makes it possible for ELAW partners to access critical legal and scientific resources and collaborate with partners around the world to help communities speak out for clean air, clean water, and a healthy planet.

The University of Oregon’s American English Institute provides ELAW with one Director’s Distinction Scholarship every term, valued at approximately \$3,500.

Many ELAW partners around the world are eager to improve their English through a a 10-week ELAW Fellowship. If you would like to support an ELAW Fellow, please contact Ashley White, Director of Philanthropy and China Program, at ashley@elaw.org.

Oksana on her first day of classes at the American English Institute.



THINK GLOBALLY. ACT GLOBALLY.

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Become an Environmental Hero by making a donation to ELAW.

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