

## Statement of IIDMA under Agenda item 4

Ms. and Mr. Chairs, distinguished delegates,

I am Ana Barreira, Director of International Institute for Law and the Environment (IIDMA) and also representative of Common Home of Humanity. Humankind we are at a crucial time: scientists are not only warning us on the dramatic consequences that an increase above 1.5 °C will have on present and future generations but also they have called upon our attention that we are entering a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene and that we have transgressed some planetary boundaries. The Holocene is the only state of the Earth System that with certainty is able to support our complex contemporary society. Law provides answers to human challenges addressing them. However, until now Law has disregarded the foundation of our all forms of life: the Earth System comprised of the functioning interaction of the planet's physical, chemical and biological processes.

The most critical challenge for humanity is to create institutions and governance systems that respect the biophysical reality and manage our behaviour towards the Earth System.

This first substantive meeting of the WG for a Global Pact for the Environment represents a unique opportunity to give a step further giving a response to this gap of international environmental law. It is a crucial moment for us to take a qualitative and structural leap forward in environmental law and to introduce into the legal system the latest scientific developments regarding knowledge of the Earth System. For this, I call upon all distinguished delegates not to miss this opportunity and recognize the Earth System as an intangible common heritage of mankind. During this meeting my colleague Paulo Maghallaes and I will make statements providing guidelines on how this could be achieved.

If we do not protect our Earth System not only our way of living but also life itself are under risk. As it is well known the ecological interdependence of our planet is a fact and law must provide responses to this. Resistance to accept the reality of how our Earth System works is not the solution. Without protecting the functioning of the Earth System the very same objectives of SDGs and MEAs will be not achieved. Cooperation at different governance levels is required. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how societies functioned in the XXth century is a thing of the past. We respectfully call upon delegates to be responsible and think in a comprehensive manner during these present negotiations. Negotiating a new Treaty which does not reflect the reality of how our Planet Earth functions and that is not ambitious and robust will weaken the credibility of the whole process.