



*Manual On Environmental Health  
Indicators and Benchmarks:  
Human Rights Perspectives*

Science and Human Rights Program,  
American Association for the  
Advancement of Science

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**Manual**  
**On**  
**Environmental Health Indicators and**  
**Benchmarks:**  
**Human Rights Perspectives**

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## Foreword

Four years ago, the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) began a project to explore the intrinsic connections between environmental protection and the realization of many of the economic, social, and cultural rights enumerated in international human rights conventions and treaties. The central premise of this initiative is that it is not possible to promote human rights without at the same time working to improve implementation of environmental and public health standards and guidelines. By fostering a wider understanding of economic, social and cultural rights to include environmental protection, the project seeks to provide a broader and more meaningful basis for collaboration among organizations in the human rights, environmental and public health communities. In the past few years the project has developed a number of resources that can be accessed on the AAAS Environmental and Human Rights Resources website: <http://shr.aaas.org/hrenv>.

*The Manual on Environmental Health Indicators and Benchmarks: Human Rights Perspectives* is the most recent such resource developed by the Science and Human Rights Program. The Manual, which was drafted in close cooperation with the Global Children's Health and Environment Fund and the National Council for Science and the Environment, is a pioneering effort in a variety of ways. It draws together the fields of the environment and human health as seen from a human rights point of view. It also offers a new approach to developing human rights related indicators and benchmarks. Based primarily on a human rights perspective, the Manual provides a compilation of environmental health indicators and benchmarks to determine the state of human health in urban and rural communities around the world. Above all, the Manual provides a means through which community-based organizations, especially those located in developing countries, can begin to assess the extent of human health risks posed by a degraded environment in their community.

Like many other innovative and pioneering initiatives, the drafting of the Manual benefited from the inputs of many individuals. The Science and Human Rights Program would like especially to recognize the contribution of Dr. Karim Ahmed and his research assistants, Anya Ferring and Lina Ibarra Ruiz, who together served as authors of this document. The Manual would never have been completed without Dr. Ahmed's broad expertise in environmental sciences, his overall direction of and dedication to the project, a willingness to apply his stock of knowledge to a new subject area, and to become a human rights advocate in the process.

The Science and Human Rights Program is appreciative of the generous support provided by the Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund that has enabled us to undertake the project to develop and promote the multiple connections between human rights and environmental protection. We would like particularly to note the assistance and encouragement provided by Helena Byrkarz at the foundation. Finally, appreciation is also extended to several peer reviewers of the Manual, whose comments helped to strengthen the manual, to Sarah Olmstead for her editorial work, and to Richard Huggard for the design and layout work for the manual.

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Director  
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