

The Global Ecological Integrity Group held its 19th meeting at St. Charles University, in Prague, Czech Republic, on July 11-16, 2011. This was a particularly significant conference, because the topic "Human Rights and Duties: Supporting Biological Integrity for Public Health", is and has been one of the major themes our group has studied and discussed during the existence of GEIG. However, it is only the second time that this theme has been the main focus of a meeting since 1998, when Colin Soskolne facilitated a conference, which included many of the founding members of the group, in December, in Roma, Italy at the offices of the World Health Organization, with the kind collaboration of Dr. Roberto Bertollini, its Director (http://www.colinsoskolne.com/documents/WHO-1999_Discussion_Document.pdf).

For this reason, the 20th anniversary collection of our work, arising from this conference, will share that focus. This year's meeting was much larger and much more diverse, as you can see from the attached Report, kindly provided by Don Brown. In this brief presentation, I will simply highlight some of the themes that emerged. I will also remind you that the collection which will publish many of the papers here presented, will come out in June 2012, for our 20th anniversary, from Taylor and Francis (Earthscan), UK.

The Keynote talk was provided by Sheila Abed (Director of Environmental Program at IUCN), as she traced possible conflicts and similarities between human rights law and the protection of Indigenous Peoples. The thread of Indigenous Peoples rights was also stressed by Brad Morse and Valentina Vadi, while the current difficulties present in human rights regimes were also discussed by Kathleen Mahoney and Laura Westra. Several papers stressed the need for reform in global governance and legal regimes, especially those by Klaus Bosselmann, Ulrich Grober, Michael Schroeter, Prue Taylor, Louis Kotze, Sheila Collins, Geoff Garver and Katy Kintzele.

Climate change was discussed by Donald Brown, Konrad Ott, Patricia Qullack, Ottavio Quirico and Antonio D'Aloia; while water issues were addressed by Joe Dellapenna, Owen McIntyre, Ruth Irwin and Anel du Plessis. Public health and ecological integrity were the focus of chapters by Paul Carrick, Alex Lausach, Colin Soskolne, J. Sejek, Jack Manno, William Onziwu, Don Spady, John Quinn, Vladimir Bencko, Thomas Zeleny and many others.

Several other very interesting papers provided a novel focus for our group; these included traditional medicine (Christina Rautenbach); women's health issues (Yulia Lyamzina); migrant health problems (Helena Hnilicova); biodiversity (Carijn Beumer); agricultural issues (Franz-Theo Gottwald), and fisheries (Mimi Lam).

The wide variety of presentations and the interdisciplinarity of this meeting, indeed represented the best of the GEIG conferences, and we are very grateful to those who hosted us magnificently, as well as those who participated. Especial thanks are due to Vladimir Bancko and, when health problems did not allow him to continue, to John Quinn, who could not have been a better, more organized or kinder host!!

Laura Westra and Colin Soskolne (for the Steering Committee).