

***On the Occasion of 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17)
to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)***

Making Peace with Nature: Environmental Disputes – From Prevention to Resolution

Co-Organized by Arbitration and Mediation Center of Armenia, Center for Legislation Development Foundation and Asian Development Bank

9:30am – 4:00pm, Thursday, 22 October 2026, Double Tree Hotel, Yerevan, Armenia

As biodiversity loss accelerates and pressures on land, water, forests, and other natural resources intensify, disputes among governments, communities, and investors are becoming more frequent and complex. Effective dispute prevention and resolution are essential to protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable natural resource management, and supporting sustainable development.

This event brings together leading experts and practitioners to share practical tools, lessons, and experiences in preventing, managing, and resolving disputes in environmental, natural resource, and biodiversity contexts. Participants will explore good practices, deepen their understanding of different perspectives, and learn how collaborative approaches can help transform conflict into cooperation and contribute to making peace with nature.

Who should attend: Government policymakers; officials from environment and justice ministries; judges; legal practitioners; ADR specialists; environmental NGOs; community leaders; private sector stakeholders; and development partners committed to cooperative and sustainable solutions for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.

**Please register through this link to express your interest in attending and the organizers will be in touch to confirm your registration.*

Time	Program	Description
9:30 – 10:00am	Registration	
10:00 – 10:15am	Opening & Group Photo	Welcome remarks • Hayk Arakelyan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment of Armenia • Tigran Dadunts, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Justice, Armenia • Lyaziza Sabyrova, Country Director, Armenia Resident Mission, ADB

Time	Program	Description
10:15 – 10:30am	Keynote Speaker on Growing Environmental Risks and the Value of Early Dispute Prevention	Moderator: Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), ADB Keynote Speaker: Michael Brown, Director, Canada Practice and Senior Mediator Consensus Building Institute High-level speaker with insights and experience in early conflict management and dispute prevention in environment and natural sources-related issues sets the scene.
10:45 – 11:00am	Break	
11:00am – 12:00pm	Panel 1 – Conflict Prevention & Early Conflict Management	This panel shares good practices in conflict prevention and early conflict management in natural resources and biodiversity contexts. Panelists discuss and share tools such as community consultations, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and early warning systems to manage concerns before they escalate. As an example, ADB Office of Safeguards will present on the newly launched Management-Led Grievance Redress Service in relation to ADB-financed projects (anticipate, resolve and avoid escalation). Moderator: Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), ADB ADB Presenter: Beatrice Gomez, Director, Office of Safeguards, ADB Panelists: Artur Grigoryan, CEE-Bankwatch Network Genevieve O'Farrel, Senior Safeguards Specialist (Environment), ADB Nina Pindham, Environmental Lawyer, Cornerstone Barristers Narine Avetisyan, Principal Private Sector Development Officer, ADB Audience Q&A

Time	Program	Description
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch Break (lunch to be provided by organizers)	
1:00 – 1:30pm	Interactive Case Simulation – Mediating an Environmental Disputes	Keynote Speech: George Lim, Chairman, Singapore International Mediation Centre Moderator: Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), ADB Presentation of a hypothetical local environmental conflict scenario and simulation of a short mediation process to show how mediation works when disputes arise. Aims to illustrate mediation techniques (e.g, impartial facilitation, interest-based negotiation, tailored solutions) and highlights how mediated outcomes can reconcile development and conservation interests.
1:30 – 2:30pm	Panel 2 – Mediated Solutions to Environmental Conflicts - Lessons on Mediation in Environmental Disputes	This panel reflects on mediation as a tool for environmental dispute resolution in various contexts from cross-border water disputes, community-community conflicts and investor-state disputes. Discuss how formal mediation can be integrated into biodiversity and natural resource conflicts, what challenges mediators face, and how to maximize mediation success (e.g., leveraging technical expertise, building trust, ensuring enforceable outcomes). Moderator: Lilit Petrosyan, Secretary General and Director, Arbitration and Mediation Center of Armenia Panelists: Wee Meng Chuan, CEO, Singapore International Mediation Centre Natalya Adamyan, Lawyer, AMCA Mediator, Certified Mediator Trainer Bryce Williams, Legal Counsel, Permanent Court of Arbitration Judge Tenzin Leewan, Secretary General, Bhutan ADR Centre (virtual) Audience Q&A
2:30 – 2:45pm	Coffee/Tea Break	

Time	Program	Description
2:45 – 3:45pm	Panel 3 – International Arbitration in Support of Biodiversity Targets	This panel explores the capacity of international arbitration to contribute to an economy safeguarding biological diversity. International experts will explore the potential impact which commercial disputes and treaty-based disputes may have on the biodiversity crisis. Biodiversity issues have the potential of influencing a wide range of disputes. Government's environmental policies may rest at the core of treaty-based investor-state arbitration cases. In parallel, biodiversity clauses in international commercial contracts may come to be examined as part of the contract interpretation in an international commercial arbitration. What requirements does this new landscape create for international arbitration? In a discussion with experienced practitioners and other stakeholders, goals towards increased biodiversity protection will be addressed from a dispute resolution perspective. Topics include - How biodiversity-related disputes may influence the different actors on the arbitration scene, parties and their counsel, arbitral institutions and arbitrators. As science moves into the hearing room - how should lawyers respond? Potential conflicts between obligations under environmental treaties and international investment agreements, and possible ways forward. Moderator: Annette Magnusson, Principal, Climate Change Counsel; Investment Law and Policy Expert, Asian Development Bank (consultant) Panelists: • Professor Markus Gehring, Cambridge University • Professor Crenguta Leaua, The Swiss Institute for Alternative Thinking • Rafik Grigoryan, Founder and Managing Partner, Sigma Law Group, AMCA Arbitration Council member • Christoffer Coello Hedberg, Senior Associate, Kastell (virtual) Audience Q&A
3:45 – 4:00pm	Closing Reflections	• Christina Pak, Assistant General Counsel (Law and Policy Reform), ADB

Time	Program	Description
		• Michael Brown, Director, Canada Practice and Senior Mediator Consensus Building Institute