



Annual Impact Report 2024

**A just and
sustainable
future
is possible.**

Our Mission

Since 1989, CIEL has used the **power of law** to protect the environment, promote human rights, and ensure a **just and sustainable** society.

Our Values

Equity and justice require an intersectional approach. We know that only by addressing the root causes of overlapping systems of oppression can we hope to achieve our vision.

People already have and hold power. We work to **expand that power** through more inclusive participation, increased transparency, and access to remedy — the pillars of environmental democracy.

Accountability is essential for justice and equity. By holding States and corporations accountable, we counterbalance the harmful concentration of power that drives human rights violations and environmental harms.

Every person deserves **compassion, empathy, and respect.** This understanding undergirds our work internally within our own team, externally in our work with partners, and our dedication to human rights for all.

Collaboration and partnership are how we win. Our commitment to deep relationships means that we follow the leadership of people who are on the front lines and directly impacted as we co-power our work toward mutual goals.

A thriving planet requires **transformative change.** We support emerging movements and campaigns to develop coordinated strategies, so that we challenge the system, not just individual issues.

Transformation demands **courageous integrity.** We are not afraid to use bold strategies that target powerful actors and the systems that enable them in order to build and maintain trust with communities and partners around the world.

Hope is essential; we know a just and sustainable future is possible.

Table of Contents

1	President's Letter	3	CIEL Strategic Plan 2024–2027
5	Making Plastics Polluters Pay	7	Advancing a Plastics Treaty
9	Building Legal Momentum for Climate Accountability	11	Escazú: A Milestone for Environmental Defenders
13	Justice for Communities Harmed by Development	14	Loss and Damage Fund
15	Historic Win over Corporate Extortion	17	Mapping CIEL's Impact
19	Uprooting the Fossil Economy	21	Exposing the Dangers of Carbon Capture Schemes
22	Preventing Dangerous Geoengineering	23	Accelerating the End of Fossil Fuels
25	Right to a Healthy Environment Wins UN Award	27	Impact Spotlight
29	Looking Forward	31	Our Staff
33	CIEL Made & Shaped the News in 2024	34	Our Interns and Board
34	Our Finances	35	Our Donors



President's Letter

Carroll Muffet
President & CEO, 2010–2024

What you hold in your hands — real or metaphorical — is my fourteenth and final Annual Report as CIEL's President as I embark on a new role in the philanthropic community.

It is a time capsule. One that attempts the near-impossible task of distilling an entire year of constant, tireless, passionate work by the whole CIEL team — and the countless communities, partners, and movements they work with and for — into a few short, wholly inadequate pages. It's a work not only of history and synthesis but of prediction, in which we try to capture not only the victories and losses that mattered most this last year but the seeds we have planted or carefully cultivated that will be harvested next year, or the year after that, or even — as with the long journey to winning the Right to a Healthy Environment — decades from now. It's also a work of gratitude, in which we try to recognize those who made the work possible, sustainable, and, more often than not, joyous.

Over the last 14 years of helping chart CIEL's way forward, I've leaned on these reports again and again (34 years worth of them now) to help me understand just how far we've come, how we got here, and who was with us along the way. If you are reading this now, I hope you see yourself — and our work together — reflected here.

We have so much to celebrate and to mark. From the landmark advisory opinion processes before the world's highest courts, which made this a watershed year for climate litigation. To the ongoing and accelerating negotiations of a Global Plastics Treaty — where we've continued to win major breakthroughs even as this report is being written. To the unending and still unfinished struggle to bring true accountability and remedy to the World Bank and international financial institutions. To the still-growing and rapidly evolving work to accelerate the transition from

fossil fuels and the wider fossil economy and confront the false solutions that threaten human rights, biodiversity, and the global climate alike under the cynical guise of storing, offsetting, or simply masking the ever-rising emissions from burning oil, gas, and coal.

But we can also take a moment to celebrate CIEL itself as it prepares to embark on its 35th year and welcome new leadership. That new leader will join an organization that is the strongest it's ever been. From fewer than 20 people in 2010, CIEL starts the new year — and the next phase of its journey — with a team of more than 60 across the United States, in Geneva, and in a small but growing number of countries around the world. That team is guided by a committed, humble, and deeply supportive board that is drawn from experts across disciplines and across countries. And it is supported by a powerful and growing community of partners, collaborators, funders, and individual donors.

People like you. Like all of us. That recognition that we are — at heart — a community, not just an organization, has always been our secret strength. And the thread that ties three decades of moments into a single, powerful, ever-unfolding, and truly important story. And the history we are all building together every day.

It has been a **joy** and an **honor** traveling with you this far. I look forward to the **next phase** of our journey.



CIEL Strategic Plan 2024–2027

The world faces the interconnected crises of climate change, toxic pollution, and biodiversity loss, worsened by social injustices and harmful economic systems rooted in fossil fuels, extractivism, and exploitation. CIEL envisions a world where laws reflect the interconnection between humans and the environment, respect the limits of the planet, protect the dignity and equality of each person, and encourage all of Earth’s inhabitants to live in balance with each other. Our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan outlines six key Areas of Impact. The time to act is now.

Area 1:
Halt and Reverse Fossil Fuel Expansion and Build a Path Toward Phaseout

Area 2:
Uproot the Fossil Economy and Lay Foundations for Just and Sustainable Alternatives

Area 3:
Bolster Power and Resources of Global South and Frontline Partners

Area 4:
Increase Accountability for State, Corporate, and Financial Institutions

Area 5:
Advance Holistic Legal Frameworks and Decolonize the Law

Area 6:
Strengthen CIEL’s Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Justice

Area

1



Even using the oil and gas supply that currently exists would push us far beyond climate limits. To avert catastrophic climate change, we must halt and reverse any expansion of fossil fuel production and infrastructure (particularly in frontier regions and offshore, where oil and gas are expanding the fastest).

CIEL aims to urgently stop oil and gas expansion and accelerate a managed decline by redirecting the financial lifelines that promote continued fossil fuel production and use, exposing how new fossil fuel projects are financially risky, politically unacceptable, and legally impermissible, and winning legal and policy changes that enable and accelerate fossil fuel phaseout.

Area

2



With building pressure to transition away from fossil fuels for energy and transport, the oil and gas industry is increasingly banking its future on ever-expanding production of the petrochemical building blocks of plastics and agrochemicals (i.e., fertilizers and pesticides) while propagating false solutions like carbon capture, carbon removal, and other geoengineering schemes to justify emissions as usual.

CIEL seeks to close off fossil fuel industry escape hatches and protect environmental health by securing an ambitious global plastics treaty, stopping petrochemical expansion (including pesticides and fertilizers), and debunking and defunding false solutions and geoengineering schemes that perpetuate the fossil economy and entrench environmental injustice. We do this while developing a strategy to ensure the renewable energy transition does not replicate harm as another extractive sector.

Area

3



Environmental injustice is inextricably linked to, and compounded by, entrenched systems of racism, gender injustice, oppression, and colonialism that focus and magnify harms on marginalized and vulnerable people while limiting their ability to affect decisions that impact them. Inclusion and participation by these populations are essential to create effective environmental policies. Yet spaces for civil society, frontline communities, and Indigenous Peoples to actively participate in decision-making are under attack globally, from intimidation of individual defenders to violent repression and the wholesale suspension of civil liberties.

CIEL seeks to center, support, and increase resources for frontline and Global South leadership in the movements of which we are a part. We do this by fostering deep relationships, following and amplifying the leadership of people and Peoples who are on the front lines and the fence lines, and working with philanthropy to channel resources to those who are directly impacted by the triple planetary crises. We also aim to recapture and expand space for civil society in global decision-making to advance environmental democracy.

Area

4



Corporate, State, and financial actors continue to pollute because the costs of doing so are too low, allowing them to evade accountability, including through deception, greenwashing, and loopholes. Even when used correctly and fully implemented, existing mechanisms to hold them accountable often fail to deliver redress and remedies that are effective, timely, and just.

CIEL aims to raise the financial, legal, and reputational stakes for all actors who enable pollution by making it harder, riskier, and more costly to pollute. This entails increasing transparency and disclosing the pollution and holding polluters accountable when they lie or cause harm. It also means expanding the understanding of justice to include holistic remedy and reparations and removing the corporate get-out-of-jail-free card of investor-State arbitration.

Area

5



The law needs both evolutionary and revolutionary change to better meet the evolving challenges we face. While our existing system includes powerful and still untapped legal tools to address those challenges, it is increasingly inadequate to address interwoven and accelerating threats facing humanity, biodiversity, and our shared global environment. Both international law and the domestic laws governing large parts of the world reflect a legacy of colonialism. Too often, those legal systems ignore or undermine the legal traditions of Indigenous Peoples, ignore the fundamental ways in which humanity is interconnected with and dependent on the natural world, and disregard or discount our intergenerational duties to safeguard our biosphere for future generations.

CIEL works to build a more integrated, holistic legal system that better responds to the global challenges we face and the intersecting values we seek to uphold. To do this, we will operationalize the right to a healthy environment, to give it not just meaning but real-world impact; support the work led by Indigenous Peoples to secure fuller recognition and respect for their rights, sovereignty, land tenure, and law; mainstream the rights of future generations as they relate to State and corporate conduct with intergenerational impacts; and advance the rights of nature as a critical element of a holistic system that recognizes humanity as a part of nature — not apart from it.

Area

6



CIEL’s strategic plan articulates ambitious, system-changing goals to protect people and the planet. To achieve these goals, the organization must be fit for purpose, effectively planning and using our resources and evaluating and learning from our victories and missteps, all while cultivating a work environment that supports our staff and lives up to our values.

CIEL commits to invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to build a people-centered and joyous workplace. This requires that we invest in the processes and systems to deliver what the world needs from CIEL sustainably and effectively; and strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and a culture of learning to be accountable to our partners, funders, and the movement.

Making Plastics Polluters Pay

From desolate mountaintops to the depths of the ocean, from the air we breathe to the soil where we grow our food, every region, ecosystem, and strata of the biosphere — including our bodies — is impacted by plastic and its toxic pollution. With plastic production projected to triple over the next 40 years, the impacts of plastic pollution will only compound.



Plastic pollution is overwhelming the resources and economies of cities and countries as it clogs waterways, litters public spaces, pollutes environments, and threatens public health.

In June, CIEL launched a major new report, *Making Plastic Polluters Pay: How Cities and States Can Recoup the Rising Costs of Plastic Pollution*. It equips US state and local governments with tools to hold plastic producers accountable for the damages they cause and turn the tide on the plastics crisis.

Our report provided detailed legal analysis and actionable insights for state governments on how to use nuisance, product liability, and consumer protection laws to seek remedy and accountability from polluters. It comes as the state of New York and the city of Baltimore have filed claims against plastic manufacturers — the start of a broader movement of similar cases to make plastic polluters pay for their harms.

For decades, the plastics industry has profited as it has pushed its plastic products on the public. It has spent millions to cover up the harms of its products and perpetuate the idea that consumers bear responsibility for the plastics crisis.

CIEL's investigative research exposes the real culprit of the plastics crisis: the corporate actors who produce and market plastic. Our new legal guide builds on years of research exposing the plastics industry's repeated campaigns to derail regulations while selling the public solutions they know are doomed to fail.

From the 1980s to the current day, the plastic industry has heralded both mechanical and "advanced" recycling (incinerating plastic) as a solution for plastic waste despite problems with technical and economic feasibility. The plastic industry has demonstrated repeated failures to produce "recycled" plastic at scale. Our guide holds plastic polluters accountable for their pollution and exposes the myths they spread to keep plastic production and profit high.

Our report forms part of a concerted effort to **work hand in hand with movement partners** to ensure government attorneys have the **tools** and **public support** needed to hold plastic polluters accountable and secure victories for the environment and communities across the United States.



Advancing a Plastics Treaty

Plastics are a part of every aspect of our lives — from the products we use every day to single-use plastic items polluting our ecosystems.

But from the petrochemicals and chemicals that make up plastics to the micro- and nanoplastics that are in our waterways, food, and bodies, the trail of toxic pollution threatens human rights, the climate, ecosystems, and public health.

Global problems of this scale require global solutions. Following years of advocacy and action from CIEL alongside civil society and rightsholder organizations from around the world, UN Members have been negotiating a global treaty to end plastic pollution since 2022. Together, we have the knowledge and expertise to advance a treaty that tackles the root causes of plastic pollution.

With less than six months left to negotiate the treaty, the clock is ticking. From Uruguay to France, Kenya to Canada, CIEL has been at every negotiating session, ensuring that countries and decision-makers don't bow to the fossil fuel industry's corporate interests and don't sacrifice an ambitious treaty for a quick political win. Between negotiations, we've published cutting-edge reports and analyses used by decision-makers and partners, educated stakeholders on the dangers of unchecked plastic pollution and production, and shaped discussions on treaty terms both inside and outside the negotiation rooms. And we've ensured that communities on the front-lines and at the fence lines of plastics plants are at these negotiations and speaking directly with decision-makers.



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A meaningful treaty must start with ending plastic production at the source, not just managing plastic waste. Industries — including the fossil fuel and chemical lobby — have a vested interest in ensuring that the world keeps producing more plastics. At the fourth negotiating session, our breaking analysis, featured in outlets like Reuters, the *Guardian*, and the *New York Times*, exposed the disproportionate influence of chemical industry lobbyists inside the negotiating rooms, leading to widespread calls for conflict-of-interest policies that would “kick polluters out” of negotiation spaces.

From the beginning, civil society and rightsholders have faced numerous challenges, from the limited participation of civil society groups like CIEL to relentless delay tactics. But we're not backing down. Our coalition of hundreds of civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, children and youth, and women's groups are united and exercising our voices however we can, including in the press, public demonstrations and marches, and in the halls of power.

We must end the age of plastic — the world can't wait.



Building Legal Momentum for Climate Accountability

The winds of change are blowing. In April 2024, with the gavel's final bang, Europe's highest human rights court made history, becoming the first international tribunal to conclude that States have a duty under human rights law to take decisive action to combat climate change. This win represents a major step on the path to climate accountability.



Small Island States



In May 2024, responding to a request by a group of small island states, the world court for the oceans, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), issued a historic advisory Opinion on climate change, clarifying that States must protect the oceans from greenhouse gas emissions. CIEL and partners submitted amicus briefs to inform the court's analysis and supported States, civil society, and the press to distill the implications of the Opinion when it was delivered in Hamburg.

The opinion by ITLOS marks the first time an international court has recognized that the fates of our shared global spaces — the oceans and the atmosphere — are intertwined and endangered by the climate crisis.

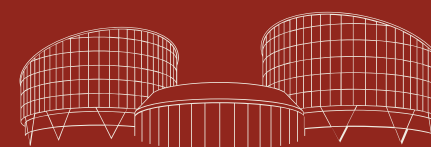
Americas



The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has been asked to clarify States' human rights obligations in the climate emergency. CIEL and partners submitted written arguments, urging the Court to reinforce the duty to protect rights from the causes and consequences of climate change.

In April and May 2024, CIEL and partners addressed the Inter-American Court at public hearings held in Barbados and Brazil, raising critical issues such as the rights of environmental defenders and the need for robust regulation of corporate polluters like the fossil fuel industry. Following the hearings, we helped launch a declaration signed by over 400 civil society and Indigenous groups, calling on the Court to set strong standards for climate action in its Opinion.

Europe



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

In a groundbreaking ruling in Verein Klimaseniorinnen Schweiz v. Switzerland that is already influencing climate action and climate litigation worldwide, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) determined that Switzerland violated its obligations under international human rights law by failing to take sufficient action to mitigate climate change. CIEL filed an amicus brief and cheered alongside the courageous Swiss senior women and their legal team as the Court delivered the historic ruling.

This landmark judgment in the Swiss case leaves no doubt: the climate crisis is a human rights crisis, and States have human rights obligations to act urgently, effectively, and in line with science to prevent further harm from climate change.

International



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is poised to deliver a climate opinion after public hearings in December 2024. The final climate advisory from the world's highest court could have far-reaching implications, as its authority extends to all sources of international law and all UN Member States. CIEL published legal arguments and, with a coalition of partners, has been supporting States' legal teams and mobilizing civil society to advocate for a strong opinion that confirms States must do more to halt the drivers of climate change, protect people and the planet from its impacts, and remedy mounting harms.

After years of behind-the-scenes efforts to inform court deliberations, **we are now seeing the results.** These groundbreaking legal developments will influence future court cases, shape narratives, and strengthen movements. Most importantly, they reinforce the critical role of courts and the power of international law as a tool to demand the **ambitious climate action** this moment requires, and secure **climate accountability, remedy, and justice.**

Escazú: A Milestone for Environmental Defenders

Latin America is the deadliest region in the world for environmental and human rights defenders, where they face growing risks of arrest, legal action, surveillance, physical attacks, and even death for protecting their rights and environment.



© Lily Plaza

Since 2012, countries across Latin America and the Caribbean have been working toward the Escazú Agreement, the first legally binding regional treaty that upholds environmental democracy — the right to information, participation, and justice. CIEL has been supporting the development, adoption, and implementation of this agreement for years. It is the first and only such agreement that contains specific provisions to protect environmental defenders.

This year, Parties to the Escazú Agreement convened in Santiago, Chile to discuss implementation of the agreement. There, they adopted a Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters — a historic first and huge win for frontline defenders.

The Action Plan is the product of a two-year public consultation process in which CIEL participated with regional and international partners. Together, we emphasized the urgent need to protect defenders in the region, arguing that those who defend human rights and the planet are grounded in a close relationship with the land and deep knowledge of the territories and the livelihoods linked to them.

The Action Plan is a critical step to making the principles of the Escazú Agreement a reality, with the goal of preventing deaths and attacks against defenders.

CIEL was instrumental in leveraging progress around the Escazú Agreement during hearings at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as it considered an advisory opinion on the climate emergency and human rights. CIEL and partners launched a Declaration (#EscazúEnLaCorteIDH) emphasizing the historic opportunity before the Inter-American Court, garnering support from hundreds of organizations and individuals who urged the Court to adopt the standards of the Escazú Agreement to guarantee access rights and protect the work of human rights defenders in the context of the climate emergency.

Just weeks later, at the second round of Inter-American Court hearings, we personally delivered the Declaration to the judges, ensuring they heard directly from the people who would be most affected by their opinion.



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Weeks later, we celebrated a **unanimous decision** by Colombia's Constitutional Court **declaring the constitutionality** of the Escazú Agreement, affirming its **entry into force** in the most dangerous country for environmental human rights defenders.

Justice for Communities Harmed by Development

International development projects — including dams, transmission lines, and mining — promise economic growth. Too frequently, these projects cause unforeseen harm to the very communities they claim to help.

Eighty years after the founding of the World Bank Group, the institution is finally poised to ensure justice for communities that are harmed by its development projects. This year, the Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) is expected to release its first-ever policy on remedy and responsible exit, a significant step after decades of advocacy by CIEL, civil society partners, and affected communities.

The policy is a landmark opportunity for the World Bank to align its actions with its responsibilities

under international law and its own development mandate by ensuring that when harm is caused, the Bank will contribute to remedy.

A draft of this framework released in 2023 failed to recognize this responsibility or commit the Bank's resources and internal differences led to months of delay. Despite these setbacks, CIEL coordinated a coalition of civil society advocates to closely engage with the IFC and push for a stronger policy.

This year, CIEL met one-on-one with World Bank President Ajay Banga, urging him to prioritize remedy for the communities most impacted by the Bank's policies, and we are optimistic that our advocacy will be heeded. While President Banga has focused on expanding the Bank's funding, we emphasized the urgent need to ensure accountability and justice.

The final policy could be just weeks away, with all eyes on the Bank's Board as it makes its decision. CIEL remains committed to advocating for a remedy that **guarantees justice** for those harmed by development projects, and **we will not accept anything less.**

Loss and Damage Fund

As the climate crisis worsens, frontline communities have a right to reparations and remedy.

The creation of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27 was a historic win for frontline communities impacted by prolonged climate inaction. Designed to provide financial assistance to developing nations, including those in the Global South and their communities, which are most affected by the climate crisis, the Fund holds the promise of delivering true justice — but only if it's implemented effectively.

Drawing on decades of experience advocating for financial institutions to promote human rights and deliver meaningful remedy for harms to which they contribute, CIEL is working to ensure the Fund delivers justice — including through access to information, effective participation, and remedy policies that uphold human rights.

We are demanding explicit endorsement of the principles of inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency, access to information, empowerment, collaboration, and accountability. Our advocacy aims to enable effective participation at all stages — from designing the policies and assessing community-level needs to implementation and decision-making.

Our efforts aim to support the Fund to live up to its potential and deliver much-needed finance directly to the communities most impacted by the climate crisis.



Historic Win over Corporate Extortion



EXIT ECT

The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) is an international agreement originally created with a focus on growing fossil fuel energy cooperation after the Cold War.

This treaty promotes, protects, and locks in environmentally harmful investments, such as fossil fuel investments, and blocks climate mitigation obligations and measures. In addition, by including the investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) as a way to solve disputes between investors and States, the Energy Charter Treaty allows corporations, such as fossil fuel investors, to sue States for millions — even billions — of dollars when they act to protect the climate.

For five years, CIEL and other organizations across Europe have worked tirelessly to educate European decision-makers about the dangers of the ECT. Together, we proved how the treaty prevents effective climate action and is fundamentally incompatible with EU law and international climate obligations, leading to unprecedented decisions by European States and the United Kingdom to withdraw from the ECT.

This historic win in Europe is a milestone in the fight against international trade and investment deals that include ISDS and limit climate action. It

demonstrates to States that they have the power, if not also the obligation, to address this issue and ultimately withdraw from agreements that include ISDS. Failure to do so means that States could be squeezed from both sides: sued by communities for their climate inaction with ever greater frequency and sued by investors when they do act to phase out the drivers of the climate crisis and accelerate the energy transition.

This year we also developed a comprehensive and robust legal toolkit to provide legal pathways to States to address some of those fundamental issues.

In the next year, our toolkit, along with our experts, will **empower States and decision-makers** who are still in the binds of ISDS investment agreements and contracts to find legal options to defang ISDS.

Case study: Roșia Montană Supporting Community Engagement in ISDS Arbitration

In the rolling hills of Romania, the Roșia Montană Mining Landscape serves as a testament to ancient history, housing the most significant, extensive, and technically diverse underground Ancient Roman gold mining complex in the world, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. But for over two decades, this site has been under threat from a modern challenge: the proposed Gabriel Resources' development of Europe's largest open-pit gold and silver mine.

Since 1999, the community of Roșia Montană has advocated tirelessly to protect their homeland. When Romania suspended Gabriel Resources' environmental permits in 2015, the company sued the country for \$4 billion under ISDS. CIEL supported local communities' efforts to intervene in the secretive tribunal through the submission of an amicus brief with partners.

In March, the World Bank tribunal that hears trade-related disputes between companies and governments rejected Gabriel Resources' damage claim against Romania and ordered the company to reimburse Romania for the cost of arbitration. While this decision is a victory for the people of Roșia Montană, it comes at a high price. Since this mining project was announced, the community has suffered deeply — its social fabric has frayed, and many residents abandoned the area in anticipation of forced relocation.

This case is yet another example of the flaws of the ISDS system, which allowed Gabriel Resources to sue Romania in the first place simply for attempting to fulfill its obligations to protect the environment and the Roșia Montană community. For decades, extractive companies have used ISDS arbitration to their advantage, based on provisions in trade and investment agreements. And now, fossil fuel companies are following suit, creating a chilling effect on government officials who wish to phase out fossil fuels.



Mapping CIEL's Impact



California
Worked to expose the intersections of fossil fuels, the insurance industry, and the increasing costs of living.

Great Lakes Region; Anishinaabe territory
Helped secure recommendations from the United Nations to stop Enbridge's Line 5 oil pipeline running through sacred Anishinaabe territory.

Gulf Coast
Partnered with local advocates to build grassroots power for community meetings, educate journalists and local officials on the risks of CCS, and submit public comments to challenge carbon pipelines and injection wells.

Panama
Supported Indigenous Ngäbe, Buglé, and Campesino partners to secure their right to free, prior, and informed consent for the Line IV transmission line.

Chile, Colombia
Collaborated with partners to create the Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters within the Escazu Agreement.

Ottawa, Canada
Coordinated thousands of people, including frontline and fenceline communities and Indigenous Peoples, marching outside the Plastics Treaty negotiations.

Strasbourg, France
Filed amicus briefs in two climate-change-related cases before the European Court of Human Rights, including a case against Switzerland for violating human rights by failing to take adequate action to stop climate change.

Barbados, Brazil
Engaged in Advisory Opinion processes at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to inform the legal understanding of States' human rights obligations in the climate crisis.



The Hague, Netherlands
Supported States with legal arguments and mobilized civil society groups to urge the International Court of Justice to address the climate emergency.

Philippines
Provided technical expertise to support the campaign against LNG import terminals, including carbon capture's relationship to LNG buildout and connecting local activists with data experts.

Tanzania, Uganda
Worked with local and international partners to stop the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, the world's longest crude oil pipeline.

Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal
Supported local resistance to offshore oil and gas projects by highlighting the environmental impacts of increased drilling on nearby communities.

Australia, Northern Territory
Provided research and technical assistance in support of a campaign challenging the proposed use of offshore CCS to justify expanded production and use of fossil fuels.

Uprooting the Fossil Economy



The fossil fuel industry’s toxic tendrils ensnare businesses, public policy, and supply chains worldwide in a web that keeps the world dependent on fossil fuels. For years, CIEL, along with partners, has worked to identify and address the myriad shapes and forms that fossil fuels take that undergird the “fossil economy.”

Only by uprooting the fossil economy that drives the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and toxic pollution can we transition to an equitable and healthy future for all.

Identification: The fossil economy is all around us —from the extraction, transport, and combustion of coal, oil, and gas to the production and use of petrochemicals, plastics, and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides (agrochemicals) to the treatment of toxic waste. CIEL has been instrumental in fostering and supporting the creation of an integrated global movement that recognizes the intersecting risks posed by the toxic reach of the fossil economy. Our research and communications campaigns are connecting the dots between fossil fuel feedstocks in plastics and fertilizers and their impacts on human rights, ecosystems, and the climate crisis.

Partnerships: CIEL is leading efforts to mobilize a global effort to address the full scope of the fossil economy. Our goal is to gain a broader understanding of how ongoing efforts intersect with those of partner organizations and use our collective knowledge to organize effectively for a fossil-free future on a global scale.

Movement building: In 2023, we organized a first-of-its-kind gathering focused on agrochemicals. This meeting brought together experts from

various fields — climate, fossil fuels, chemicals, agriculture, and food systems — to develop strategies that address both the supply and demand sides of petrochemicals and sever their connection with our food system. Building on the success of this first gathering, CIEL campaigners organized a second, larger event: Uprooting the Fossil Economy Gathering to connect and build synergies between movements and experts working to fight fossil fuel expansion and its supply chain. The gathering marks the beginning of a strategic effort to identify the building blocks of a fossil-free economy rooted in equity and justice.

Integrated strategies: Together with partners, we facilitated a “big tent” umbrella framework for civil society and rights holders engaged in ending the fossil economy. This forum allowed participants to identify current threats and opportunities on both the supply and demand sides of fossil fuels, deepen our understanding of the system we are working to uproot, and discuss — and challenge — solutions and transition strategies within each area of expertise.

CIEL is now working to fill specific research and knowledge gaps; facilitate connections and education to develop cross-movement strategies; craft legal analyses, arguments, and campaigns; and raise media awareness about the links between agrochemicals and fossil fuels.

At a time of surging oil and gas demand — against the backdrop of escalating climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises — **the urgency of transitioning away from fossil fuels** and fossil feedstocks has **never been more critical.**

Exposing the Dangers of Carbon Capture Schemes

As our window to prevent catastrophic climate impacts narrows, dangerous technological proposals like carbon capture and storage (CCS) and direct air capture (DAC) are gaining momentum.

Pulling carbon pollution out of the air or filtering it out of the smokestack and injecting it underground might sound plausible, but it's never worked at scale. The fossil fuel industry's investment in pushing forward these harmful myths that we can filter out carbon pollution is deepening our reliance on fossil fuels, not phasing them out.

Oil and gas companies are promoting CCS and DAC to prolong our dependence on fossil fuels and maintain their grip on the energy market.

CIEL and our partners have spearheaded an internationally coordinated effort to debunk and deprioritize these false solutions. We made substantial progress this year as mainstream media coverage of CCS shifted from broad support to heavily critical after the climate talks in Dubai (COP28), with articles calling the technology controversial, unrealistic, and a loophole for continued fossil fuel expansion by the fossil fuel industry.

This shift was particularly noticeable in key fossil fuel media markets — especially Australia, Europe, and the US. And it has led to tangible policy shifts within the International Energy Agency and even several governments (from Canada and the US to the Alliance of Small Island States and Colombia).

Three of CIEL's breaking analyses contributed to this important change in public opinion and policy. First, we exposed the shocking presence of at least 475 pro-CCS lobbyists at COP28 — triple the number of official US delegates. Second, our brief, *Direct Air Capture: Big Oil's Latest Smoke-screen*, exposed how DAC props up the fossil fuel industry on the public's dime and COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber's problematic ties to oil giant Oxy. Third, our report, *Deep Trouble: The Risk of Offshore Carbon Capture and Storage*, laid out the threats posed by fossil fuel industry plans

to store carbon dioxide beneath the ocean floor, highlighting how offshore CCS entrenches fossil fuel dependence and endangers coastal communities and marine environments.

In the United States, CIEL is supporting local efforts to block CCS buildout in the Gulf South, where the industry plans to build primarily in close proximity to Black communities, which would exacerbate existing environmental racism.

In Louisiana, industry-captured state agencies are facing much more public resistance to CCS than anticipated. CIEL continues to support local and grassroots efforts to share analysis, research, and legal strategies to resist carbon pipelines and injection wells in their communities.

This year, we partnered with local advocates to build grassroots power for community meetings, educate journalists and local officials on the risks of CCS, and submit public comments to challenge carbon pipelines and injection wells, including co-mobilizing the submission of over 40,000 comments to the Environmental Protection Agency to challenge state permitting authority for carbon storage injection wells.

And it's working: no carbon storage injection wells are currently operating in Louisiana.



Preventing Dangerous Geoengineering

Spraying aerosols into the sky. Altering cloud reflectivity and colors. Dumping minerals into the ocean. These risky geoengineering methods seek to deliberately manipulate Earth's systems in an attempt to mitigate the climate crisis.

As the climate crisis — and its impacts — accelerate, the search for solutions grows more desperate. Unfortunately, vested interests are seizing on that desperation to promote speculative geoengineering technologies as “quick technofixes” and delay proven solutions like phasing out fossil fuels and investing in renewable energy at scale.

Geoengineering technologies, such as solar and marine interventions, cannot be tested for their intended impact without real-world deployment — turning the Earth itself into a risky, potentially catastrophic experiment. What's more, there is no precedent in human history to suggest that the deployment of these technologies could ever be governed fairly or safely.

International

- At the Sixth United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6) — the world's highest decision-making body for the environment — CIEL engaged with climate-vulnerable States to stop a resolution from undermining an existing UN moratorium on solar geoengineering. In a major win for our planet, we stopped the global acceptance of these risky technologies.
- We exposed lobbying efforts by geoengineering proponents at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), organized a briefing for delegates at COP28, and warned of the risk of its annual “Oceans Dialogue” becoming an entry point for marine geoengineering.

Local

- This year, in St. Ives Bay, local residents stopped the startup Planetary Technologies from testing marine geoengineering technologies in one of the UK's most beautiful coastal environments. CIEL helped to amplify the community's resistance and to connect community leaders with international forums to raise their case and with funders to help sustain their fight.
- In San Francisco, CIEL and partners quickly created a rapid and coordinated response to halt a proposed marine cloud brightening experiment, helping to secure a unanimous rejection by the local city council.
- Harvard's flagship SCoPEX solar radiation modification geoengineering experiment was canceled in April, following years of Indigenous-led resistance supported by CIEL.

Through legal arguments, communications campaigns, and policy advocacy, CIEL is **changing the narrative** and **educating decision-makers** about the dangers of geoengineering. **Real solutions** to the climate crisis demand all of our time and resources, and **we cannot waste them on dangerous distractions.**

Accelerating the End of Fossil Fuels

From the lush forests and dry savannahs of Senegal to sacred Indigenous wild rice fields in the Midwest United States, fossil fuel exploration and production cast a polluting shadow over communities, ecosystems, and ancestral territories.

But the tide is turning. People-powered movements for a fossil-free future are gaining unstoppable momentum.

This year, CIEL worked alongside diverse coalitions and frontline communities to hold companies and governments accountable for climate harms and push for a global phaseout of fossil fuels driving the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

On the global stage, at COP28 in Dubai, CIEL played a crucial role in putting the central cause of the climate crisis — fossil fuels — at the center of the international climate negotiations. The massive political momentum we built with movement partners led the majority of the world’s countries to publicly support fossil fuel phaseout.

This momentum strengthened calls for a fast, full, fair, and funded fossil fuel phaseout — with growing interest in complementary avenues for implementation, such as the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, which now counts endorsements from 13 States, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pope, and other influential voices.



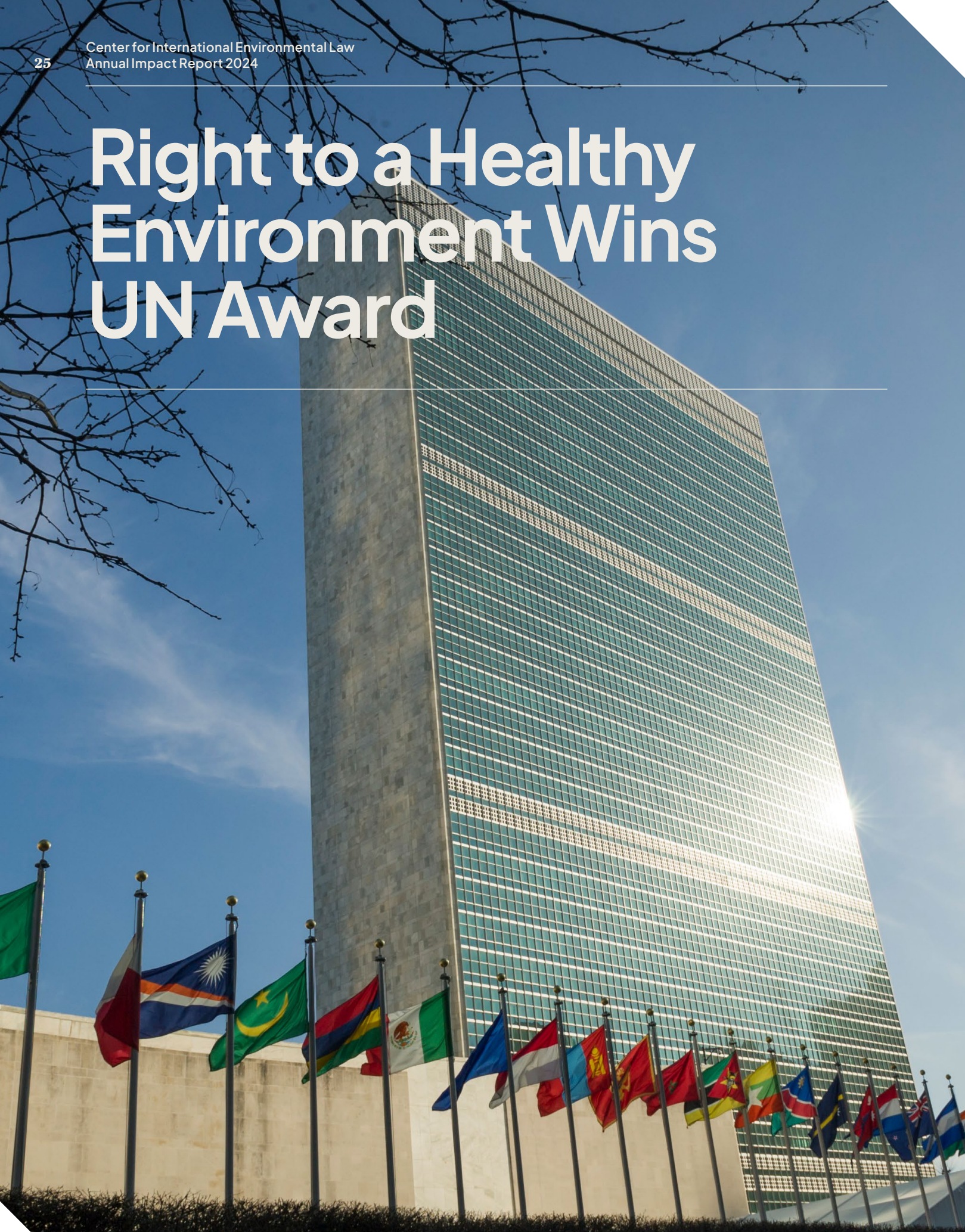
Phaseout momentum builds upon a wave that CIEL helped strengthen, including by mobilizing some 75,000 people in the streets of New York City at the UN Climate Ambition Summit. United under the call to #EndFossilFuels, the vibrant crowd sent a powerful and clear message to world leaders: addressing climate change requires ending reliance on fossil fuels and immediately halting the expansion of oil, gas, and coal.

In addition to wins in the courts and the court of public opinion, we are also changing the financial calculus to drive investments away from climate-destructive industries. This included pushing to strengthen the long-awaited climate disclosure rule issued by the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), which, while weaker than hoped, marks an important step toward holding corporations and financiers accountable for their climate impacts and risks.

All of this campaigning is grounded in our support for communities on the front lines fighting oil and gas expansion. In Senegal and the Caribbean, CIEL supported growing local resistance to offshore oil and gas projects, highlighting concerns about the impacts on already-stressed fisheries and fishing-dependent coastal populations to international human rights bodies. In the Great Lakes region in North America and the Great Rift Valley in East Africa, CIEL is using legal tools and communication strategies to amplify local opposition to oil pipelines that would facilitate fossil fuel expansion and entrench dependence on dirty energy, imperiling communities, ecosystems, and the climate.

Whether in the halls of the United Nations or in the homes of community organizers, **the momentum to end the era of fossil fuels is palpable.**

Right to a Healthy Environment Wins UN Award



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In December 2023, on the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CIEL joined a diverse, people-powered, global coalition in making history at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Global Coalition of Civil Society, Indigenous Peoples, Social Movements, and Local Communities, of which CIEL is a leading member, was awarded the prestigious UN Human Rights Prize for the successful campaign securing the universal recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

The prize — the UN’s highest human rights honor — is the culmination of decades of movement building, legal advocacy, and policy diplomacy that CIEL has fostered and supported. The historic recognition of the coalition highlights the crucial role and power of collective organizing in shaping international policy and underscores the paramount importance of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. We are putting the formal recognition of this right to work: it is already informing legal precedent and advancing accountability around the globe while supporting people, communities, and movements demanding their rights to a safe climate and a livable future.

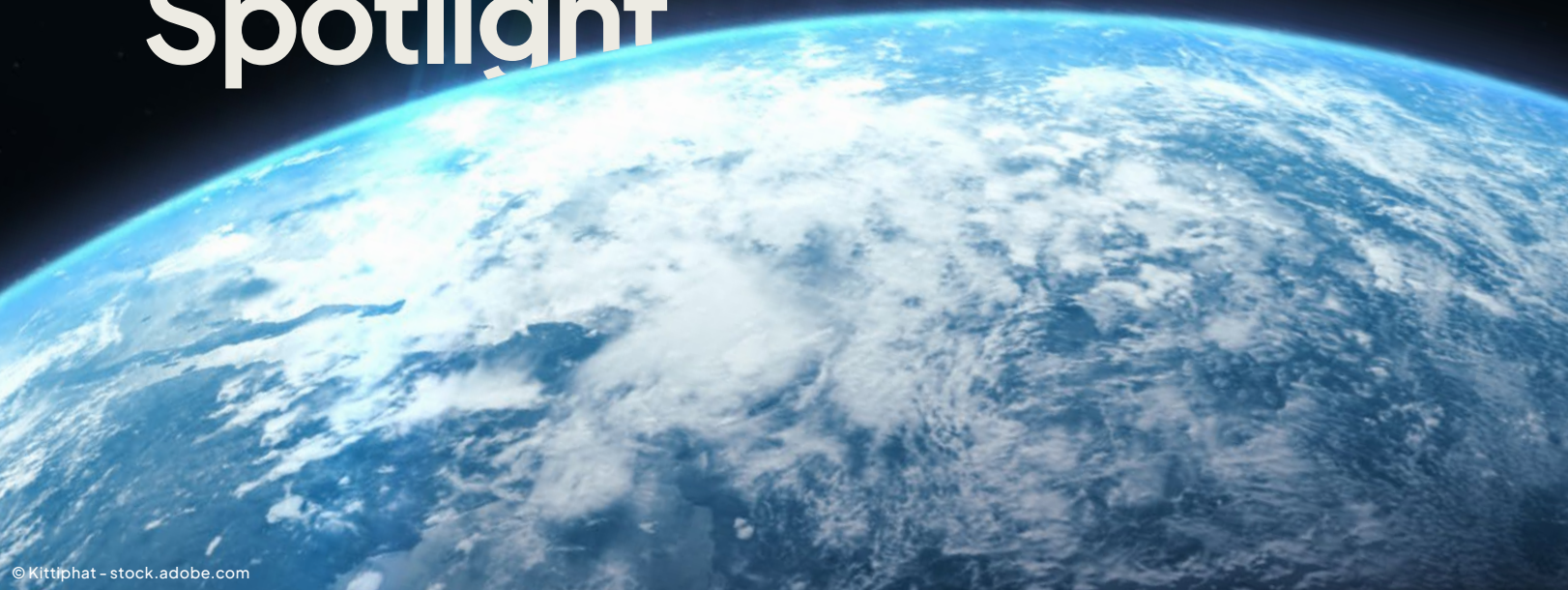
In Europe, we are working to convert the right to a healthy environment into law at the Council of Europe — the only regional human rights framework that has yet to recognize this right legally.



With partners, we mobilized **400+ civil society organizations** to urge the Council of Europe to recognize this **vital right**.



Impact Spotlight



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Science-Policy Panel for Toxic Threats

Since 2022, governments have come together to discuss how a new Science-Policy Panel on chemicals, waste, and pollution will function. CIEL has worked alongside partners to advocate for policies that are inclusive of Indigenous Peoples' voices and independent scientists and to safeguard the process from undue influence by industries with vested interests. We need to see independent — not industry-manipulated, manufactured, and funded — science guide future policies.

Rapid Response to Petrochemical Dangers

Did you know that, on average, the US experiences a petrochemical-related incident every four days? In 2023 alone, there were 96 such incidents, many releasing additional toxic, dangerous, and carcinogenic chemicals into communities already experiencing elevated air and water pollution from permitted daily industrial emissions.

CIEL is tracking and highlighting these incidents, exposing the persistent and growing threats that petrochemical production poses to communities, climate, health, and human rights. This year, we elevated the stories of more than 50 petrochemical-related fires, explosions, leaks, and accidents. Our rapid response team is creating tools to support movement partners and impacted communities, mobilizing timely background research, identifying trends, naming corporate actors, and amplifying demands for corporate and governmental accountability.

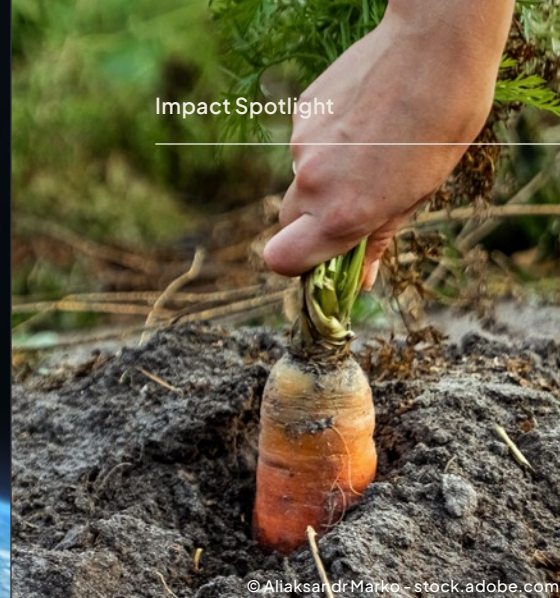
A New Global Chemical Framework

In 2023, after years of negotiations, States adopted the new Global Framework on Chemicals, marking a significant step toward a toxic-free planet. This framework will guide the management of chemicals across their lifecycle through 2035. CIEL, involved in these discussions since 2015, will continue shaping progress to ensure it improves human health, human rights, and environmental protection.



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Impact Spotlight



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Ending a Toxic Alliance

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) officially ended its controversial partnership with the pesticide lobby group CropLife International. CIEL, alongside farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and advocates, pushed for years, sending letters and organizing protests to demand that FAO sever ties with the harmful pesticide industry. This victory marks a milestone toward a healthier future for communities and the environment.

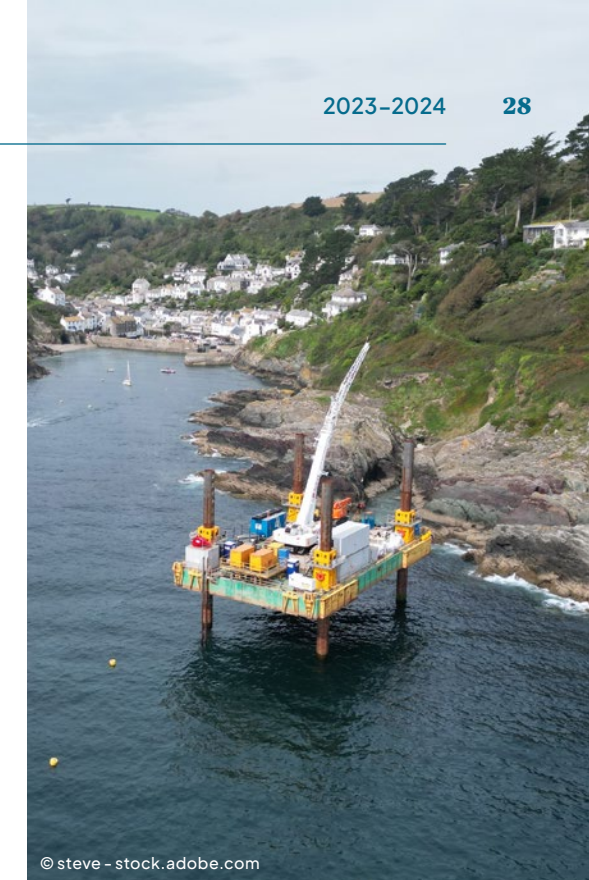


Indigenous Resistance to Line 5

CIEL and partners' advocacy intensified pressure on Enbridge, as well as the US and Canadian governments, to shut down the aging Line 5 oil pipeline, which threatens the Great Lakes and Indigenous communities. CIEL helped secure recommendations from the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and increased scrutiny from UN bodies, spotlighting the pipeline's harmful impacts on Indigenous Peoples' lives, livelihoods, and cultures.

Offshore Oil and Gas

As fossil fuel companies face mounting resistance from frontline communities on land, they are increasingly turning offshore, with over 30 percent of new oil and gas projects now occurring at sea. But community opposition doesn't end at the shoreline. CIEL is strengthening the global movement against offshore oil and gas activity, producing new research on its risks, and mobilizing diverse stakeholders in this fight. Through submissions from fisherfolk and affected communities, we secured a strong recommendation from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food regarding the damage of offshore oil and gas activity on coastal lives and livelihoods.



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Panama Campaign Updates

Despite violent repression from the government, our Indigenous Ngäbe, Buglé, and Campesino partners in Panama have remained steadfast in opposing the proposed electrical transmission line that threatens their ancestral lands, livelihoods, and community. This year, supported by CIEL, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) agreed to protect the community's right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) regarding development projects in their territory.



Climate Risk & Insurance

In US states such as California, Florida, and North Carolina, homeowners face a growing insurance crisis, with rising premiums and increasing rates of uninsurability. CIEL is making it clear: this is not just an insurance crisis. It's part of the broader climate crisis, and if left unchecked, it could quickly escalate into housing and financial crises. CIEL, alongside the Insure Our Future Campaign and other partners, is challenging insurance industry practices that both contribute to and profit from climate risk to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels.



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Looking Forward

Even as we celebrate the critical victories of 2024, CIEL enters its 35th year amidst an accelerating climate crisis, catastrophic biodiversity loss, and an increasingly toxic cocktail of daily pollution. CIEL's work has never been more vital or more urgent to halt the converging triple planetary crises that threaten the well-being and survival of millions of people around the world.



In this extremely challenging time, CIEL is working for systemic change — from the front lines and the fence lines to the halls of power — to advance the “law of tomorrow.” With your support, CIEL is making unprecedented progress toward building new and more holistic legal frameworks that better reflect the equal rights and the interconnectedness of present and future generations and the natural systems of which we are all a part.

Guided by our new strategic plan, the year ahead will see CIEL deepen its work to hasten fossil fuel phase-out and uproot the wider fossil-based economy to enable a just and renewable transition. Achieving this requires that we stop oil and gas expansion into our oceans, turn off the tap on endless plastic and petrochemical production, confront and challenge dangerous technofixes that perpetuate fossil fuel profits at the expense of people and the planet, and ensure that the transition to renewable energy does not replicate the extractive model of the past.

With your help, CIEL's powerful team of lawyers, campaigners, and communicators are working to bolster the power and resources of partners in the Global South and on the front lines — from East Africa to the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands to Central Europe. In a world of accelerating climate injustice, defending environmental democracy and direct access for civil society and Indigenous Peoples to participate in decision-making spaces and increasing accountability for State and corporate actors that violate human rights and exceed planetary boundaries has never been more important.

We undertake this ambitious work at the same time that we will welcome new leadership in the year ahead. Carroll's extraordinary tenure at CIEL has transformed the organization over the last 14 years, building an incredible team and leaving a legacy of accomplishments and partnerships. Supported by our Board of Trustees and led by our brilliant Leadership Team, the organization is the strongest and most resilient it has ever been, and we are already leveraging this transition into the next, best chapter of CIEL as together we defend the right to a healthy planet.

We accomplish none of this work alone. To our movement partners, our funder partners, and you — **thank you for your support for this essential work. We couldn't do it without you.**

Onwards,
Amanda Kistler
Acting President



Our Staff



Climate and Energy

Nikki Reisch, Director
 Bruna de Almeida Campos, Senior Campaigner, Offshore Oil & Gas
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 Sébastien Duyck, Senior Attorney; Human Rights & Climate Campaign Manager
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 Rachel Radvany, Campaigner
 Dharmesh Shah, Consulting Senior Campaigner, Plastics Treaty



Fossil Economy

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 Mary Church, Geoengineering Campaign Manager
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 Dustin White, Senior Campaigner, Plastics and Petrochemicals
 Jade Woods, Louisiana CCS Campaigner



Senior Leadership

Elana Baurer, General Counsel
 Amanda Kistler, Vice President
 Carroll Muffett, President & CEO
 Michelle Williams, Chief Financial Officer



Finance & Administration

Ade Adesanya, Accountant
 Cameron Aishton, Administrator
 Joston Benton, Staff Accountant
 Lama Dauvan, Office Manager, Geneva
 Bren Kutch, Director, Talent, Equity, and Culture
 Katharina Maier, Senior Executive Assistant

CIEL Made & Shaped the News in 2024

1,970+

unique stories in print, online, and broadcast media reference CIEL

6,830+

republished articles featuring CIEL

664+

staff interviews and background conversations with journalists

Mentions or quotes in the following outlets

Coverage in 25+ languages including



Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin and Yue), French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish,

and many more



“ We’re in the midst of a population-scale human experiment on the impacts of multigenerational toxic exposures. Plastics are at the epicenter of that.

Carroll Muffet - The Guardian

Compliance with the Paris Agreement alone is not enough. Pledges and promises at annual climate conferences do not satisfy States’ legal duties to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce, and control the greenhouse gas emissions polluting the marine environment.

Nikki Reisch - Scientific American

Geoengineering technologies come with enormous uncertainties and create novel risks for ecosystems and people.

Lili Fuhr - BBC World Service

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Yvette Arellano

Our Finances

Statement of Financial Position for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2024 (Preliminary, Unaudited)

Assets		FY 2024
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	2,412,976
Contributions Receivable	\$	4,520,006
Contracts Receivable	\$	69,162
Miscellaneous Receivables	\$	31,520
Prepaid Expenses & Deposits	\$	76,175
Right of Use Assets, Op. Leases	\$	17,912
Property and Equipment, net	\$	80,297
Security Deposits	\$	90,447
Long-Term Investments	\$	1,739,112
Other Assets	\$	
Total Assets	\$	9,037,607
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$	483,380
Accrued Payroll and Benefits	\$	146,915
Operating Lease Liabilities	\$	18,194
Deferred Contract Revenue	\$	188,232
Other Liabilities	\$	600
Total Liabilities	\$	837,321
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$	2,460,086
With Management Restrictions	\$	247,557
With Donor Restrictions	\$	5,492,643
Total Net Assets	\$	8,200,286
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	9,037,607

CIEL’s audited financial statements and IRS Form 990s are available on our website (ciel.org) or upon request. Auditors/Certified Public Accountants: GRF CPAs & Advisors, 4550 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 800, North Bethesda, Maryland, 20814, USA.

Statement of Activities for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2024 (Preliminary, Unaudited)

Revenue		FY 2024
Foundation Grants	\$	3,466,800
International Government		
Grants and Contracts	\$	5,960,900
Other Grants & Contracts	\$	278,990
Salaries, In-Kind	\$	7,697
Contributions	\$	195,014
Interest Income	\$	119,078
Miscellaneous Income	\$	12,176
Total Revenue	\$	10,040,655
Expenses		
Salaries, Payroll Taxes, and Fringe Benefits	\$	2,406,258
Salaries, In-Kind	\$	7,697
Intern Stipends	\$	156,137
Consultants	\$	311,914
Subgrants	\$	230,500
Miscellaneous Services	\$	346,147
Office Rental	\$	251,897
Insurance	\$	9,668
Equipment Purchases & Depreciation	\$	8,435
Software & Supplies	\$	21,904
Telephone, Fax & Internet	\$	23,515
Postage, Couriers & Overnight	\$	285
Photocopying, Printing & Publications	\$	31,927
Dues & Memberships	\$	8,545
Travel	\$	576,303
Meetings & Conferences	\$	79,493
Staff Training & Development	\$	21,974
Other Miscellaneous	\$	4,183
Total Expenses	\$	8,882,921
Balance of Revenue Over Expenses	\$	1,157,734

Institutional Donors

11th Hour Project / Schmidt Family Foundation
Anonymous
ARIA Foundation
Armature Philanthropy / Amalgamated Charitable Foundation
Bayfrayung Fund
Better Natures Foundation
Better Tomorrow Fund / Maine Community Foundation
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Carroll Petrie Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
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Delta Dawn Fund
Energy Transition Fund
European Environmental Health Initiative
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Flotilla Foundation
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Goldman Environmental Prize
Gwydion Fund for Wild Nature
Hampshire Foundation/Montpelier Foundation
Janelia Foundation
JPB Foundation

KR Foundation
Laudes Foundation
Leaves of Grass Fund
Luxembourg Ministry of the Environment
Marisla Foundation
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Oak Foundation
Open Society Foundation
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Plastic Solutions Fund
Sequoia Climate Foundation
Sugar Forest Foundation
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Tortuga Foundation
United Nations Environment Programme
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Zegar Family Foundation

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Tharp • Monica Vanbenthuyzen • Watering Pond Foundation • Gary Welter and Harriett Shephard
• Winky Foundation • Glenn Wiser

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From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!



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