LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
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From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change, and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to newsletter@ief.org Please share the Leaves newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

IEF Webinars

By IEF Member Khela Baskett, IEF webinar coordinator

9th IEF Webinar
Discussion: The Recent IPCC Report – What Are Its Practical and Spiritual Implications?
August 28th, 2021 10am PDT, 1pm EDT, 5pm GMT, 19:00 CEST, 10:30 IST

***Register here*:** https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAkdOCgqzgqH93POLcGuTBXGhyblzAXJlDZ
***Description*:**
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has started to release its Sixth Assessment Report with the results of Working Group I on the Physical Science Base. The reports of other working groups will come out over the next year.

The report confirmed its previous conclusion that the human causes of climate change are indisputable, that climate change is happening now and affecting all parts of the world in multiple ways, and that it will get much worse if we do not take urgent action to reduce all emissions of greenhouse gases immediately.

Join us this month to discuss the findings of the Working Group I report. To prepare for the discussion, please read the short summary of the report *Where is Climate Change Taking Us?,* which includes the report's headline statements. It is printed below and is also available on the IEF website here.

Arthur Dahl's commentary about the report *There Is No Doubt Left – We Must Act Now* can further stimulate our thoughts for the discussion. It is also printed below and the original is on the website of the Global Governance Forum here.

IEF webinar discussions are not recorded. Recordings of Past Webinar Lectures: https://tinyurl.com/7p09o73q

Words to Remember

Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men.

Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Members Corner

Our long-time IEF member Nancy McIntyre from North Carolina, USA, passed away.

IEF Member Iko Congo
IEF member Iko Congo, now working for McKinsey & Co., has just been profiled by his firm. In the interesting article you can learn about his professional journey, his experiences serving at the Baha'i World Centre in Israel, and his passion for diversity and for helping people.

You can read the article here which includes a beautiful picture of Iko and links to two brief video clips.

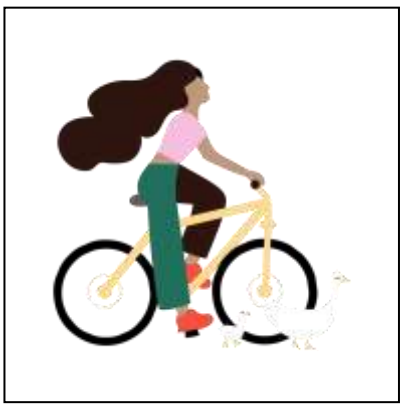
Outstanding Webinars with Participation of IEF Members

Interfaith Initiatives to Achieve the Agenda 2030 Environmental Goals
On Wednesday, July 14th, the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20), together with eleven partner organizations, held the fifth installment of its "Ahead of the 2021 Italy G20 Summit" webinar series: "Interfaith Initiatives to Achieve the Agenda 2030 Environmental Goals." Panelists included Mr. Arthur Dahl, President of the International Environment Forum; Ms. Karenna Gore, Executive Director of the Center for Earth Ethics at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City; and Ms. Astrid Shomaker, Director for Global Sustainable Development and Directorate General for Environment at the European Commission. Dr. Pasquale Annicchino of the Bruno Kessler Foundation moderated the discussion.

The recording of this webinar is available on the "Ahead of the 2021 Italy G20 Summit" Facebook page here.

Unity Building with BIC Representative Daniel Perell
Daniel Perell, representative of the Baha'i International Community and IEF member, was invited to speak at the July meeting of the Commons Cluster of the UN Major Group whose unifying motto is "UNited World Rooted in Nature". He was asked to specifically share his approach to unity-building. He explained that it is very difficult in these spaces to achieve unity because all the people attending UN meetings are always speaking on behalf of a member state or an NGO and are advocating some type of position, but he pointed out that it is quite possible to create unity on the micro-level, between individuals. His following explanations about how the BIC is applying unity-building in the work with the United Nations were warmly received.

The recording of this 3 July, 2021 webinar is available here.



Wilmette Institute Course Sustainable Development and Human Prosperity

The Wilmette Institute will offer its yearly course on Sustainable Development from **September 16, 2021—November 3, 2021.**

Our headlong pursuit of economic development since World War II to respond to the needs of a rapidly expanding world population has created great wealth and lifted many out of poverty, but also pillaged the planet's natural resources, polluted the environment and overshot planetary boundaries, while increasing

inequality and leaving half the world population struggling to meet basic needs. The UN has called for a fundamental transformation towards sustainable development to assure that future generations can also meet their own needs. The Bahá'í teachings shed useful light on what this alternative should look like and how we might get there. We shall explore the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN. How do these translate into things we can do ourselves and in our local communities to live more sustainably? Combining science and spirituality can help us to work with both our head and our heart to build a more just and sustainable world.

Faculty: Laurent Mesbah, Arthur Dahl, Christine Muller, Rebecca Teclemariam-Mesbah
For more information and to register, go here.

Interfaith and Baha'i Activities in Connection with COP26

Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow are working in partnership to deliver an interfaith prayer and meditation vigil for COP26 on the afternoon of Sunday 31 October on Glasgow's main square (TBC). Prayers will be led by senior religious leaders from a broad diversity of traditions and the "Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration for COP26" will be read by a range of its signatories. The declaration was crafted by the Scottish Religious Leaders' Forum and Lambeth Palace and signed by senior religious leaders from diverse faith communities across the UK. The vigil will also launch Scottish Interfaith Week which this year will be on the theme "Together for our Planet," and will take place during the COP. The vigil will be live-streamed online and shared by partners across the globe, so that people all over the world can make their presence felt at Glasgow. Everyone will be invited to pray for the COP26 negotiators to have the courage and wisdom to work together and make the commitments necessary to safeguard the future of humanity and all life on our planet.

The Glasgow Baha'i Task Force for COP26 is planning several activities in collaboration with interfaith groups as well as for the Baha'i community, among them "Prayers for the Planet" events.

We will keep you informed as more information will be coming in.

Where is Climate Change Taking Us?

IPCC 6th Assessment Report
The Physical Science Base
released 9 August 2021

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has started to release its Sixth Assessment Report with the results of Working Group I on the Physical Science Base. The reports of other working groups will come out over the next year.

A press conference on 9 August 2021 for the launching of the report confirmed its main conclusion that the human causes of climate change are indisputable, it is happening now and affecting all parts of the world in multiple ways, and it will get much worse if we do not take urgent action to reduce all emissions of greenhouse gases immediately.

Have we lost hope? The answer is no and yes. Some changes will continue for thousands of years, but if we take extreme action immediately, some effects can be slowed and eventually reversed. The next decade is critical; 2050 is too late. We must raise ambition at COP26.

What is new in the report?
Climate science has advanced greatly since the last report in 2013, demonstrating unequivocally that human activities are causing the extreme events we are now experiencing. The range of uncertainty about climate sensitivity has narrowed. Past warming has been masked by aerosol cooling from pollution, and natural carbon sinks absorbing half of the greenhouse gases we have released, but this will decrease. We have already experienced 1.1°C of warming in the last forty years, unprecedented for the last 2,000 years. The atmospheric CO2 concentration is the highest in 2 million years. Sea level rise is the fastest in 3,000 years. Arctic sea ice is the lowest in a thousand

years, and glacier melting highest in 2,000 years. The consequences with global warming are extreme heat, heavy rainfall and drought affecting nature and agriculture. There is more fire weather, and oceans are warming, acidifying and losing oxygen. Further warming is coming. Keeping below 1.5°C will be beyond reach in the near term, but if we eliminate global net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 we could get a gradual decline by 2100 to within 0.1°C of the target. If not, we shall pass critical thresholds for agriculture and human health and change will get larger.

The better science allows more accurate projections of future climate change under various scenarios, from extreme action bringing warming down to 1.5°C, to business as usual with runaway global heating. One third of the report is devoted to regional information, making possible regional projections of the consequences from climate change adequate to guide regional planning of critical infrastructure for climate extremes.

The Working Group that prepared the 4,000 page report included 63% new authors from 66 countries, 28% women, who reviewed 14,000 peer-reviewed scientific papers and addressed 78,000 comments. This guarantees that it represents the best science presently available, and can be relied upon for policy-making. Launched on the UN Day for Indigenous Peoples, the IPCC respects indigenous knowledge and traditional agricultural practices that are often better adapted to a changing climate.

The report provides three levels of information: a summary for policy-makers, a technical summary of 60 pages, and the chapters of the full report intended for specialists. One innovation is the **Interactive Atlas** at https://interactive-atlas.ipcc.ch which allows anyone to explore and map what climate change might be like in any specific locality or country.

In summary, there is no going back from some changes like melting ice sheets, deep-ocean warming and acidification, which will continue for thousands of years, but strong and sustained reductions in CO2 emissions can make a difference. There is a linear relationship, with every tonne of CO2 adding to warming, requiring zero net emissions at a global scale. Controlling other greenhouse gases like methane will also help. The report shows that it is still possible to limit warming in a few decades if we act now.

Headline Statements from the Summary for Policymakers

9 August 2021 (subject to final copy-editing)

A. The Current State of the Climate

A.1 It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.

A.2 The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole and the present state of many aspects of the climate system are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years.

A.3 Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. Evidence of observed changes in extremes such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones, and, in particular, their attribution to human influence, has strengthened since the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5).

A.4 Improved knowledge of climate processes, paleoclimate evidence and the response of the climate system to increasing radiative forcing gives a best estimate of equilibrium climate sensitivity of 3°C, with a narrower range compared to AR5.

B. Possible Climate Futures

B.1 Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.

B.2 Many changes in the climate system become larger in direct relation to increasing global warming. They include increases in the frequency and intensity of hot extremes, marine heatwaves, and heavy precipitation, agricultural and ecological droughts in some regions, and proportion of intense tropical cyclones, as well as reductions in Arctic sea ice, snow cover and permafrost.

B.3 Continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, global monsoon precipitation and the severity of wet and dry events.

B.4 Under scenarios with increasing CO2 emissions, the ocean and land carbon sinks are projected to be less effective at slowing the accumulation of CO2 in the atmosphere.

B.5 Many changes due to past and future greenhouse gas emissions are irreversible for centuries to millennia, especially changes in the ocean, ice sheets and global sea level.

C. Climate Information for Risk Assessment and Regional Adaptation

C.1 Natural drivers and internal variability will modulate human-caused changes, especially at regional scales and in the near term, with little effect on centennial global warming. These modulations are important to consider in planning for the full range of possible changes.

C.2 With further global warming, every region is projected to increasingly experience concurrent and multiple changes in climatic impact-drivers. Changes in several climatic impact-drivers would be more widespread at 2°C compared to 1.5°C global warming and even more widespread and/or pronounced for higher warming levels.

C.3 Low-likelihood outcomes, such as ice sheet collapse, abrupt ocean circulation changes, some compound extreme events and warming substantially larger than the assessed very likely range of future warming cannot be ruled out and are part of risk assessment.

D. Limiting Future Climate Change

D.1 From a physical science perspective, limiting human-induced global warming to a specific level requires limiting cumulative CO2 emissions, reaching at least net zero CO2 emissions, along with strong reductions in other greenhouse gas emissions. Strong, rapid and sustained reductions in CH4 emissions would also limit the warming effect resulting from declining aerosol pollution and would improve air quality.

D.2 Scenarios with low or very low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (SSP1-1.9 and SSP1- 2.6) lead within years to discernible effects on greenhouse gas and aerosol concentrations, and air quality, relative to high and very high GHG emissions scenarios (SSP3-7.0 or SSP5-8.5). Under these contrasting scenarios, discernible differences in trends of global surface temperature would begin to emerge from natural variability within around 20 years, and over longer time periods for many other climatic impact-drivers (high confidence).
Source: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/

There Is No Doubt Left – We Must Act Now

By Arthur Lyon Dahl

The climate is changing and affecting all parts of the world in multiple ways, and it will get much worse if we do not take urgent action now.

On 9 August 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the first part of its Sixth Assessment Report with the results of Working Group I on the Physical Science Base. For those who have been ignoring the evidence, there is no more room for doubt. The report confirms in no uncertain terms that the human causes of climate change are indisputable, the climate is changing now and affecting all parts of the world in multiple ways, and it will get much worse if we do not take urgent action to reduce all emissions of greenhouse gases immediately. The news is filled with disasters linked to climate change, with extreme heat, floods, droughts and wildfires, proving that it is already here and this is just the beginning.

The Working Group that prepared the 4,000 page report included 63% new authors from 66 countries and 28% women, who reviewed 14,000 peer-reviewed scientific papers and addressed 78,000 comments. Its conclusions were approved by governments with the highest participation ever. This guarantees that it represents the best global science presently available, and can be relied upon for policy-making.

What is new in the latest IPCC report? Climate science has advanced greatly since the last report in 2013, demonstrating unequivocally that human activities are causing the extreme events we are now experiencing. The range of uncertainty about climate sensitivity has narrowed. Some past warming has been masked by aerosol cooling from

pollution, and by natural carbon sinks absorbing half of the greenhouse gases we have released, but this will decrease. We have already experienced 1.1°C of warming in the last forty years, unprecedented for the last 2,000 years. The atmospheric CO2 concentration is the highest in 2 million years. Sea level rise is the fastest in 3,000 years. Arctic sea ice is the lowest in a thousand years, and glacier melting highest in 2,000 years. The consequences with global warming are extreme heat, heavy rainfall and drought affecting nature and agriculture. There is more fire weather, and oceans are warming, acidifying and losing oxygen. The report warns that further warming is coming. Keeping below 1.5°C will be beyond reach in the near term, but if we eliminate and then reverse global net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, we could get a gradual decline in global temperature by 2100 to within 0.1°C of the target. If not, we shall pass critical thresholds for agriculture and human health, and climate change will accelerate with catastrophic effects. One IPCC innovation is the Interactive Atlas which allows anyone to explore and map what climate change might be like in any specific locality or country.

This represents an ethical challenge for all of us, and for our institutions of governance and collective entities like multinational corporations. In the light of the scientific evidence, conscious failure to act now means becoming responsible for the consequences in terms of human health impacts and suffering, mass migration, enormous financial costs of destroyed infrastructure, agricultural failures, drowned cities and coastal areas, and even island nations losing their entire national territory and sovereignty.

This message is nothing new. As an environmental scientist, I have been following the issue for more than half a century and I helped decades ago to design the global environmental observing systems. The warnings have always been there. Yet we have ignored them, looking for every excuse possible to continue business as usual, placing national interests and short-term profits for the rich and powerful over the suffering of the poor now and the fate of future generations. Incremental change is not enough, always too little, too late. We are witnessing the failure of our economic and governance systems to deal with such complex global challenges with the urgency necessary.

This does not mean that we must give up any hope. While some global changes will continue for thousands of years, the report states that, if we take extreme action immediately, some effects can be slowed and eventually reversed. The next decade is critical; 2050 is too late. We must raise ambition at COP26, the climate change conference in Glasgow in November, and then move quickly to reform the international system and ensure collective international action.

The report is an example of the science that is needed to provide a better foundation for global governance. Effective decision-making needs to be based as far as possible on facts, on a true reading of our reality, rather than on ideologies, the defense of vested interests, or the influence of powerful lobbies. The better science provided in the report allows more accurate projections of future climate change under various scenarios, from extreme action bringing warming down to 1.5°C, to business as usual with runaway global heating. One third of the report is devoted to regional information, making possible regional projections of the consequences from climate change. This can guide regional planning of critical infrastructure to allow for climate extremes. Governments now have the tools to plan better to protect their populations from the risks now and to come.

But national action is not enough in a globalized economy and society. Everyone needs to act together, but too many countries are run by autocrats or kleptocrats, or are in denial, protecting vested interests and ignoring the public good, all hiding behind national sovereignty. The IPCC report is another strong argument for effective global governance, with the capacity for binding global legislation on greenhouse emissions and the ability to enforce it on all countries.

The report, as the distillation of the best science, still leaves room for some optimism. While there is no going back from some changes like melting ice sheets, deep-ocean warming and acidification, which will continue for thousands of years, strong and sustained reductions in CO2 emissions by everyone can make a difference. There is a linear relationship, with every tonne of CO2 adding to warming, requiring zero net emissions at a global scale. Controlling other greenhouse gases like methane will also help. The report shows that it is still possible to limit warming in a few decades if we act now. Our challenge is to launch the

transformation in global governance necessary to ensure that everyone acts together in the global public good. The alternative is too frightening to contemplate, as the report makes clear.

Source: Global Governance Forum

Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals

A new and interactive database will be launched on September 2, 2021 in partnership with the Faith for Earth Initiative of United Nations Environment Programme, Parliament of the World's Religions, and United Religions Initiative.

This resource, titled "Faith Action on the UN Sustainable Development Goals," will be hosted on the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology website. It tracks religious activities taking place within the scope of environmentally-focused Sustainable Development Goals.

The launch will take place during a virtual webinar hosted via Zoom on September 2 at 11am EST. Speakers include David Hales, Iyad Abu Moghli, William E. Swing, and Mary Evelyn Tucker. You can register here.

Source: The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

Interfaith Indicators to Respond to COP26

Blog by Arthur Lyon Dahl on the
G20 Interfaith Forum website, 16 July 2021

Climate change is widely recognized, including by faith traditions and interfaith groups, as an existential threat to human wellbeing at a planetary scale. At the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in November 2021, States are expected to ratchet up their Voluntary National Commitments to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, with the goal of keeping global heating well below 2°C and preferably approaching 1.5°C, which scientists say may keep damage from climate change to a manageable level.

Damage already occurring from extreme weather events, droughts, floods and sea level rise mostly impacts the poor who have little resilience, while it is our dependence on fossil fuel energy, and the excessive consumption and extravagant lifestyles of the affluent that are the primary causes. This raises issues of climate justice where faith traditions have much to say about respect for nature, solidarity, generosity, human dignity, and simplicity in material needs.

Unfortunately general appeals to ethical behaviour and climate justice are not easily translated into behaviour change, especially for those in affluent countries and cities inundated by the marketing pressures of a materialistic consumer society.

A Need for Indicators

We use indicators like body temperature to signal our state of health, and calorie intake to judge if we have a reasonable diet. At the national level, an indicator like GDP is unfortunately the most common measure of an economy, even though it has no correlation with human wellbeing.

Given the urgency of a rapid response to the climate emergency—requiring a fundamental transformation in our energy systems, transportation, industries, food production, human habitats and all other factors of modern civilization—we need indicators of climate justice that will signal to everyone, rich and poor, urban and rural,

North and South, East and West, of all faiths and no faith, what they need to change to move towards climate neutrality. These indicators will also help them measure their progress so that everyone can join in the necessary effort to reduce present suffering and to preserve a habitable planet for future generations.

Linking Climate Justice to Spiritual Values
Since faith communities can probably reach out to the largest percentage of the world population, indicators that would link actions for climate justice to core spiritual values and ethical principles could have special impact. Interfaith groups could collaborate on developing a set of indicators such as engaging for climate justice, actions to ensure a better world for youth, living a simple life, building community solidarity and resilience, gardening or planting trees, adopting a plant-based diet, discussing climate change with friends and family, and showing solidarity with the poor at home or abroad.

One can imagine educational campaigns around relevant indicators such as: “Mohammed dressed simply and ate low on the food chain. Use these indicators to follow His example,” “The Pope, in Laudato Si’, calls for ‘moderation and the capacity to be happy with little’. Here are some indicators to see if you are living a Christian lifestyle,” “Bahá’u’lláh said we should ‘be content with little, and freed from all inordinate desire’. These indicators measure if you are following a spiritual path.”

A Time for Implementation
The adoption by countries of more ambitious goals at COP26 is critical, but so is implementing them, which will require broad public support and cooperation.

Faith communities and interfaith organizations can do their part by identifying relevant indicators that add a spiritual motivation to the educational efforts of others, and thus contribute to the fundamental transformation in the economy and society necessary to respond to the climate crisis now threatening us around the world.

Source: G20 Interfaith Forum

World Conservation Congresses in September

Among the major environmental events postponed from last year and being held in the coming months, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) will be holding its World Conservation Congress in Marseille, France, on 3-11 September, to drive action on nature-based recovery, climate change and biodiversity post-2020. This is where IUCN’s 1400+ government, civil society and indigenous peoples’ Member organizations vote on major issues, set priorities, and drive conservation and sustainable development action, to guide humanity’s relationship with our planet for decades ahead. IUCN’s unique and inclusive membership gives the Congress a powerful mandate as it is not solely government or non-government, but both together.

The Congress over 8 days includes a Forum on 4-7 September with over 600 sessions addressing the economic, social, scientific and technical aspects of issues ranging from wildlife to oceans, protected areas to sustainable business, and climate change to human rights; a Members’ Assembly, 8-10 September, which is IUCN’s highest decision-making body; as well as an exhibition 4-9 September; with both on-site and virtual participation. The Congress will cover seven themes: landscapes, freshwater, oceans, climate change, rights and governance, economic and financial systems, and knowledge, innovation and technology. More information and registration is available at https://iucncongress2020.org.

However, nature conservation, as with most other areas of human endeavour, needs to come to terms with an often troubled past. The colonial and racist heritage of Western civilization meant that many early parks and protected areas were on land seized from indigenous peoples, who were excluded from their traditional lands and sacred sites. It is only recently that the indigenous spiritual heritage of oneness with nature, and their long-evolved deep understanding and sustainable use of the lands and nature for which they were responsible, are acknowledged as more effective at conservation of nature than Western practices, with, by some estimates, up to eighty percent of remaining terrestrial biodiversity on land under

indigenous ownership and responsibility. Even today, governments can use the excuse of biodiversity conservation to take control of land and dispossess indigenous and local people with ulterior motives.

One reflection of this risk is the organization of an alternative meeting, “Our land, our nature”, the first major international congress to decolonize conservation, in Marseille on 2-3 September, to offer a counter-narrative to the IUCN Congress. It will explain why some indigenous and local people oppose both “30x30” – the push by government, industry and big conservation NGOs to turn 30 per cent of the globe into “Protected Areas” – and the “Nature-Based Solutions” which put a price on the value of nature. They believe that these plans will lead to even more human rights violations, and to the biggest land grab in history, at the expense of tribal, indigenous and other local peoples. They propose an alternative vision of conservation that already works – where indigenous peoples are in control of their own lands. This alternative approach values human diversity and protects and enhances biodiversity. It is anti-racist, anti-colonialist, and rooted in real social and climate justice. For this alternative congress, more information and registration is at www.ourlandournature.org.

From a Baha’i perspective, we are always looking to ascertain truth and justice, and in addition try to find ways to unity and collaboration. It is important that the voices of indigenous people are heard and that they are part of the decision-making of how 30x30 is implemented in their area. Indigenous people have much knowledge and experience in how to live sustainably; therefore their participation in decision-making is vitally important. Moreover, it is their human right to be able to continue to live in the areas they call their home and to maintain their culture.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has long been open to the perspectives of indigenous peoples. It will be holding its 15th Conference of the Parties in China in October, to address the biodiversity crisis and adopt a Global Biodiversity Framework in the same way that the climate change conference COP26 in November will be critical to act quickly on climate change.

In this perspective, 30x30 is an excellent initiative to protect the biodiversity of the Earth. The High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for Nature and People aims for a “global agreement to protect at least 30% of the planet’s land and at least 30% of the planet's ocean by 2030 at the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15.” In the announcement of the launching of their campaign which is supported by 50 governments, the HAC wrote:

“Indigenous peoples and local communities are protectors of the most biodiverse sites in the world. To effectively and equitably meet this increased target, Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) should be engaged as partners in the design and management of these conserved areas, ensuring free, prior and informed consent and alignment with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The HAC for Nature and People has created a task force to address indigenous people and local communities' concerns and promote indigenous wisdom in the CBD negotiations. This task force has initiated a dialogue with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity.”

It is understandable that many indigenous people lack trust based on their past experiences. Yet it is clear that the Earth's biodiversity is existentially threatened and that we must come together in united action if we want to protect it. Humanity cannot afford to lose time quarreling, but must come together to find just solutions for the common threats we are facing. This requires building trust between indigenous peoples and environmental organizations. We hope that both congresses will promote meaningful dialogues and not hardening divisions.

Environmental News in Brief

Amazon's Forests Greatly Threatened and Becoming Contributors to Climate Change

An 11 August report by Tim Radford in Climate News Network summarizes the great threats to the Amazon Rainforest in his article **Amazonia’s forests leak carbon they once stored**:
https://climatenewsnetwork.net/amazonias-forests-leak-carbon-they-once-stored/

You can find more information about the Amazon on the website of **Amazon Conservation**: https://www.amazonconservation.org/

For **Real-Time Fire Monitoring of Amazon fires**, go here.

Secretary-General Calls Food System Major Driver of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Biodiversity Loss, Citing 'War on Nature', in Message to Pre-Summit

UN Secretary-General António Guterres' video message to the Food Systems Pre-Summit in Rome:

I am pleased to send greetings to this important meeting to prepare for the Food Systems Summit.

We are at a pivotal moment. We are seriously off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Poverty, income inequality and the high cost of food continue to keep healthy diets out of the reach of some 3 billion people.

Climate change and conflict are both consequences and drivers of this catastrophe. Up to 811 million people faced hunger in 2020 — as many as 161 million more than in 2019, not least due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic, which still assails us, has highlighted the links between inequality, poverty, food, disease and our planet. Our war against nature includes a food system that generates one third of all greenhouse gas emissions. And the same food system is responsible for up to 80 per cent of biodiversity loss.

Yet, there is hope. Since my initial call for this Summit, you have responded with energy, ideas and a willingness to forge new partnerships. At this Pre-Summit, we can define the scope of our collective ambition and strengthen our efforts to achieve all 17 SDGs by transforming our food systems.

I thank you for your work so far in making this both a "People's Summit" and a "Solutions Summit". Your leadership will help set a tone for the Decade of Action and an equitable and sustainable recovery from COVID-19. I look forward to welcoming you to New York in September.

Source: United Nations Press Release 26 July 2021

Available Now: HLPF for Sustainable Development Special Edition

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) launched a new initiative to support the UN's Decade of Action – the global effort to mobilize governments, businesses, and civil society to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

"The overriding message from High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2021 is the need for urgent action and concrete solutions. To this end, SDSN is pleased to release the first issue of SDG Action, themed exclusively around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their implications for cross-cutting topics such as health, society, cities, finance, climate and energy, and natural resources. The publication explores the various dimensions of the SDGs to create a holistic view of the challenges and present practical solutions. Authors include Amina J. Mohammed, Teresa Ribera, Jeffrey Sachs, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Johan Rockström, and Maimunah Mohd Sharif. Their pieces address the economic, social, and environmental objectives, and identify the contributions needed from stakeholders, including government, business, academia, and civil society."

You can read the publication here.
Sources: SDG Action Website and Email

U.N. Body Releases Draft Plan to Put Biodiversity on Path to Recovery by 2050

“The Global conservation framework includes targets that value, conserve, restore, and protect our planet, and meet people’s needs through sustainable use

“In an attempt to put humanity on a path toward 'living in harmony with nature' and help biodiversity recover worldwide, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on July 12 shared the first official draft of its Global Biodiversity Framework. The draft framework is the culmination of several months of negotiations among CBD member governments and other stakeholders and considers more than 2,000 comments from the science community, policy leaders, Indigenous peoples, and civil society.

“The plan seeks to deliver transformative action to achieve this vision and, recognizing that there is no single approach to achieve this, lists four long-term goals to be reached by 2050 and a series of milestones with a 2030 deadline.”

To read the whole article, go here.
Source: Pew Charitable Trust, *U.N. Body Releases Draft Plan to Put Biodiversity on Path to Recovery by 2050*

UN Ocean Decade: An Ocean Knowledge Revolution in Action

By Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin

The ocean covers 71% of the planet’s surface. It feeds us, protects us and absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat generated by global warming. It is an inestimable source of economic, social and cultural wealth – 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. Yet, according to predictions, tropical coral reefs may disappear by the turn of the century, and by 2050 there could be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Despite the importance of the ocean to human health and well-being, ocean research remains poorly funded: it only receives a tiny fraction – an average of less than 2% – of national research budgets.

To read the whole article, go here.
Source: IISD / SDG Knowledge Hub

The Climate Reality Project Announces Leadership Trainings in October

You see our climate changing and injustice growing across the planet. You want to make a difference.
Join the Climate Reality Leadership Corps of activists and learn how by attending a free online training led by Al Gore and a team of world-renowned scientists, activists, innovators, and more.

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