



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary

NGO with special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2013 and with the Department of Public Information since 2006.

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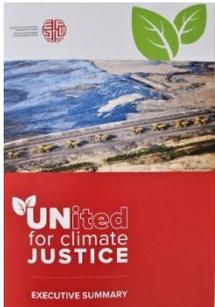
RSHM at the UN

September 2019

For the last two weeks of September, the UN Headquarters in New York was the scene of tight security as Heads of State and Government converged on the UN HQ for the Opening of the 74th General Assembly. Included in the programme were 4 major summits, highlighting the particular importance of **Climate Action**, the first **4 year review** of progress of the **Sustainable Development Goals**, the **Financing** needed to achieve them and the **Plan for Universal Health Care**. In this issue we share some of our RSHM NGO experience of events related to the issue of CLIMATE CHANGE; many of which were held away from the police barricades and high security area.



“United for Climate Justice”



This was the theme of a 2 day meeting coordinated and run by the **European Foundation of Progressive studies** during the UNGA and climate Week in New York. **Mary Robinson, Chair of the Elders** advisory group to the UN, was the keynote speaker, highlighting the key challenge of **climate justice**, and the need for drastic and urgent policy changes to address “**triple injustice**” of climate change.

The climate crisis is having the strongest impact on countries that are least responsible for climate change, poor and vulnerable communities are disproportionately impacted and a legacy of risks and hardships is being left for young people and future generations. Five guiding proposals relating to climate justice were advanced and a declaration was submitted to the UN Climate Summit on 23rd September. Among them was a call to engage young people directly in decision making processes through establishing green youth councils.

➔ Watch [the short video](#)

“**Climate Change is the greatest global intergenerational, gender and social injustice of our time**”. This strong statement sums up the findings of a recent study by **Plan International** which analyzed the disproportional impact that climate change has on children, especially on girls.

Climate change magnifies inequalities. For example, girls’ education is often the first thing families sacrifice when facing economic hardship, associated with extreme weather events such as drought, cyclones or flood conditions. Child marriage is often seen as a coping response to economic hardship, sometimes chosen by desperate parents as a way of protecting their daughters from other sources of harm but thereby putting millions of girls at risk of sexual or physical abuse, early pregnancy and maternal death.



The **Climate Action Summit** was an initiative of the UN Secretary General, **Antonio Guterres**, was held on **23rd September**. **65 heads of state and governments** attended it, as well as leaders of sub-national governments, representatives of NGOs and selected businesses. In his introductory remarks, Antonio Guterres called on states to declare a climate emergency and highlighted the urgent need to **reduce carbon emissions by 45% before 2030**. In her address to the Summit, 16 yr old climate activist, **Greta Thunberg**, said that “governments are failing us”. She noted “the world is waking up, and change is coming whether you like it or not.” In a video message, Pope Francis called on humanity to cultivate honesty, responsibility, and courage in response to climate change.

➔ [Read more...](#)

Some facts on Climate change.

- **The last four years were the four hottest years on record**
- **Winter temperatures in the Arctic have risen by 3°C since 1990 and Arctic summer sea-ice extent has declined at a rate of approximately 12% per decade during 1979-2018.**
- **Carbon dioxide emissions reached a record high in 2018.**
- **184 countries have so far submitted their Nationally determined Contributions to meet the 2015 Climate Agreement commitments.**
- **As water availability deteriorates and sea levels rise it is estimated that, by 2050, there will be an additional 143 million climate migrants; 80% of them being women and girls.**

Climate Summit: some positive outcomes

- **77 countries** pledged to achieve **net-zero emissions by 2050** and **70** pledged to increase their **2015 Paris commitments next year**,
- **87 major companies** - with annual direct emissions equivalent to 73 coal-fired power plants - committed to **setting climate targets** across their operations.
- A total of **2000 cities** committed to placing **climate risk** at the **centre of their decision-making, planning and investments** → [Watch the video](#)



- Some of the world's largest pension funds and insurers, responsible for directing more than **\$2 trillion in investments**, have joined together to form the **Asset Owner Alliance**,
- A coalition of **environmental conservation agencies** and advocates launched the **Global Campaign for Nature**. They called on policy makers to commit to the **goal of protecting at least 30% of the planet by 2030** in its **natural state**, thereby addressing the twin crises of climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity.



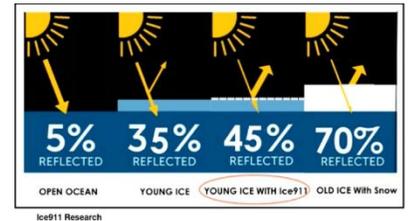
People's Climate Action



Over the period **20 – 27 September** an estimated **7.6 million** people **took to the streets in a strike for climate action**. This youth-led initiative represented the largest climate mobilization in history, and represented a strong call to member states. Our **RSHM NGO** was represented in the **250,000 people who marched on 20th September in Manhattan**.

Climate Restoration.

Just prior to Climate week, the **Foundation for Climate Restoration** hosted the first **Climate Restoration Forum**, emphasizing the necessity for Civil Society, the UN, the scientific community, technology, artists, and the private sector to join forces in the fight to restore our Climate to pre-industrialization levels by 2050. The CEO of the organization, Rick Parnell, emphasized that we must highlight viable solutions that are ready now to use in this capacity. This was further emphasized by presentations by Dr. Leslie Field from **ICE 911**, the organization has created a material to mitigate the loss of the earth's heat shield and Greg Kats of **Blue Planet**, a company that is currently producing carbon **NEGATIVE** concrete! Also on the panel were also a number of leaders of the climate movement from **Marchon**, **Create2030**, as well as the founder of **#Futurecoalition** who gave a powerful appeal to the audience to join into their local **#ClimateStrike** on September 20th! → [Read more](#)



RSHM News Briefs



welcome **Dejah Bradshaw** (left), a Senior at Marymount Manhattan College, who comes from Philadelphia and who started her **internship with our RSHM NGO** in early September. She is majoring in **International Studies, Politics and Human Rights** and has a special interest in internally displaced persons and climate, a topic on which she plans to write her thesis.



While UN GA 74 was taking place in New York, two important JPIC/NGO related meetings were taking place in Rome, Italy. **Talitha Kum**, the global **anti-trafficking network of Religious women** from 48 countries held its **10th Anniversary** commemoration and General Assembly 21 – 27 September. 86 representatives from 48 countries participated. **Mary Genino RSHM** attend the opening day. → [Read more...](#)

Distribution:
General Council Team; Provincials/ Regionals
JPIC Animators; Global Network of RSHM Schools;
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Our Institute **JPIC Coordinator, Mary Jo McElroy RSHM**, participated in the **JPIC & Mining Seminar** which was held in Rome from 25 – 27 September. She joined 35 JPIC participants from other religious congregations and related Catholic organisations from 14 countries around the world.

→ [Read their statement](#)

Prepared by Veronica Brand RSHM & Dejah Bradshaw