



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**.

News from the UN # 112

RSHM at the UN

July/August 2020

High Level Political Forum



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT : 7 – 17 July 2020

In July the **UN ECOSOC High Level Political Forum** was held in full virtual format. It is one of the first major intergovernmental meetings with universal participation and broad stakeholder engagement since the onset of the COVID 19 crisis. Over the course of the 11 day period, 18 official sessions were held, with 194 Side events, 9 Special Events and 10 Exhibitions. In her concluding remarks, the **President of ECOSOC Mona Juul**, said: we “cannot revert to the old normal...normal was part of the problem--

all of our discussions have underlined recovery as presenting a rare opportunity to shape the new normal”. **Voluntary national reviews (VNRs)** of progress on the SDGs were presented by **47 countries**, with 26 presenting for the first time, 20 for the second time, and 1 for the third time. Countries were given the option of livestreaming their presentation, sending pre-recorded presentations, or mixing these two options. During the 2020 High Level Political Forum two RSHM countries - **Zambia and Mozambique** - presented their Voluntary National Reviews for the first time.

➔ Watch the [short video](#)

The Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a process through which UN member states assess progress made in achieving the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind. The purpose is to present a snapshot of where the country stands in SDG implementation, with a view to help accelerate progress.



The SDG Goals Report..

Introducing the **2020 Sustainable Development report**, **Secretary General Antonio Guterres** noted that before the COVID-19 pandemic, progress toward achievement of the SDGs remained uneven and the world was not on track to meet the Goals by 2030. Some gains were visible, but the number of people suffering from food insecurity was on the rise, the natural environment continued to deteriorate at an alarming rate, and dramatic levels of inequality persisted in all regions. Change was still not happening at the speed or scale required.



With the advent of COVID 19 - the achievement of the SDG 2030 Agenda has become even more challenging, but ever more necessary with the unprecedented health, economic and social crisis threatening lives and livelihoods of millions. “At the start of this Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, I call for renewed ambition, mobilization, leadership and collective action, not just to beat COVID-19 but to recover better, together – winning the race against climate change, decisively tackling poverty and inequality, truly empowering all women and girls and creating more inclusive and equitable societies everywhere”

➔ [Read more ...](#)

“COVID 19 is a wake-up call from nature. Our lives depend on a healthy planet. Let’s seize the moment and change course toward more sustainable lifestyles.”

Some Implications of COVID 19 noted in the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020.



3 billion people worldwide lack basic **handwashing facilities** at home, the most effective method for COVID 19 prevention.



School closures kept **90% of all students** out of school, reversing years of progress on education



Remittances, an economic lifeline to many poor households in low and middle income countries, are projected to **fall by \$445 billion** in 2020.



Violence against women and girls has increased by **30%** in some countries since the COVID 19 lockdown measures were introduced.



COVID 19 may result in a **6% drop** in Greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. But this is still short of the **7.9% annual** deduction required to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees C.



71 million people are being pushed into **extreme poverty** in 2020.



Service cancellations will lead to **100% increase** in **deaths from Malaria** in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Wildlife trafficking disrupts ecosystems and contributes to the spread of infectious diseases.



60% of countries have **overcrowding in prisons**, risking the spread of COVID 19.



TEN years : Recognition of the human right to water.

2020 marks the tenth year since the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution 64/292, which explicitly recognized the **Human Rights to Water and Sanitation**. Several events during the HLPF celebrated this, highlighting the even greater urgency given to the issue by the centrality of access to water as a means of addressing and mitigating the global health pandemic. **“Wash your hands”** is not equally available to all! Sanitation and Water for all is a global partnership of member states, civil society, UN agencies and the private sector. Its aim is to coordinate high level action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively. ➡ Read the [call to action](#). ➡ Watch [the short video...](#)



75 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki



Seventy-five years have passed since **Hiroshima and Nagasaki** experienced the agony & devastation caused by atomic bombs dropped on them on **August 6th and 9th 1945**. The same fateful year saw the birth of the United Nations. In a video message for the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima, **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** noted that the birth of the UN is forever intertwined with the death rained down on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said that Hiroshima and its people have chosen not to be characterized by calamity, but instead by *“resilience, reconciliation and hope”*. He noted that the survivors, known as hibakusha, are *“unmatched advocates for nuclear*

disarmament” who have turned their tragedy into *“a rallying voice for the safety and well-being of all humanity”*. Although the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons remains elusive 75 years later, efforts to work towards the full ratification and entry into force of both the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty are ongoing. ➡ [Watch the video](#)

International Day of Indigenous Peoples



COVID-19 presents a serious threat to the health and survival of indigenous peoples, with mortality rates often double that of the general population. On August 10th a Commemoration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples was held virtually, focused on the theme **“Indigenous Peoples’ Resilience”**. As the panel of indigenous representatives from 5 continents highlighted, indigenous peoples continue to face numerous challenges that are exacerbated under COVID. Notable among these are the lack of potable drinking water, inadequate medical services, food insecurity, land grabbing and encroachment on their territories as well as stigma and discrimination. However, from the Arctic North to the rainforests of the Amazon and Central Africa, from remote Asian villages to the Namib desert, indigenous peoples are seeking their own solutions to curbing the pandemic, drawing on traditional knowledge

For RSHM Collaborators/ Extended Family

The RSHM JPIC NGO international team, after a series of zoom meetings, decided to give priority to **Care for the Earth** (our Common Home) for the next few months. **The Season of Creation, from 1st September to October 4th**, will be the focus, using material from the **Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)**. We are invited to work with parish groups, school groups and ecumenical groups and others. All of you who arrange an event or activity during this time are encouraged to register the event with GCCM, who will put it on their map – and then send photos, so they can show all that is happening throughout the world.

➡ [Learn more](#).

and practices and challenging discriminatory policies.

➡ Watch [the short video](#)

Amazoniza-Te Campaign.

The Amazon and its people are continually targeted for exploration without limits, something that puts the entire life of the territory at risk, with grave consequences for the planet as a whole. With the advance of the COVID 19, the situation has become even more alarming. Deforestation, fires, land grabbing and mining, have actually been intensified. On July 27th, the **Amazoniza-te Campaign** was launched by the **National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB)** in partnership with **REPAM** and other ecclesial and civil society organizations. It is designed to raise awareness among the Brazilian population and heighten international public awareness about the danger to which life in the Amazon, its territories, its populations, is being exposed. The campaign focuses on three areas: a) the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities to contamination b) acceleration of the destruction of the Biome and c). systematic violation of environmental protection legislation with a move to deregulation. As Bishop Erwin Krautler noted...the **“Amazoniza-te Campaign”** is an invitation, a call and an opportunity to live solidarity with the forest and with the peoples of the region, and to mobilize people in the care and defense of life. ➡ [Read more](#)



Distribution

Institute Leadership Team; Provincials/ Regionals, JPIC Animators;
Global Network of RSHM Schools; UN Interest Group
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