



Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the UN

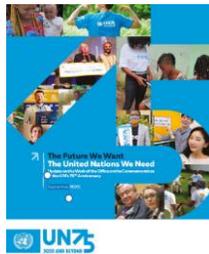


September marked the opening of the **75th UN General Assembly (UNGA 75)**. Absent were the sirens, the blocked streets and convoys signaling the arrival of heads of state and other dignitaries. Instead, the 75th UN General Assembly opened in a sobered spirit of socially distanced collaboration. The High Level meeting to commemorate the **75th Anniversary of the United Nations** was held virtually, followed by the General Debate over the course of the week. Each Head of State or Government spoke from his/her own capital, via a pre-recorded speech that was introduced by the country's permanent representative to the UN in NY. Thematic summits and high level events filled the days between 22nd and 30th September. The first **UNGA Declaration** ever to have been negotiated virtually, was adopted by consensus.

The declaration makes **12 strong commitments** and ends by saying “*What we agree today will affect the sustainability of our planet as well as the welfare of generations for decades to come. Through reinvigorated global action and by building on the progress achieved in the last 75 years, we are determined to ensure the future we want. To achieve this, we will mobilize resources, strengthen our efforts and show unprecedented political will and leadership. We will work together with partners to strengthen coordination and global governance for the common future of present and coming generations.... Therefore, we are not here to celebrate. We are here to take action. Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter, we are here to ensure the future we want and the United Nations we need*” ➡ [Watch the short video....](#) ➡ [and another one](#)

The UN at 75 : A million voices

In January 2020 the UN launched a global consultation to mark its **75th Anniversary year**. Since then, **more than 1 million people** have been directly involved, responding to surveys and taking part in dialogues concerning their hopes, fears and their priorities for global cooperation through the United Nations. In the context of the COVID crisis, the immediate priority expressed across all regions was improved access to basic services, notably healthcare, water, sanitation and education. The need for greater international solidarity to address poverty, inequality and boost employment was highlighted, with focus on the places hardest hit by the pandemic. Medium and long term priorities centered on the impact of climate change and our failure to stem the destruction of nature.



Even though many of the respondents were not very familiar with the UN, 87% of those surveyed believe that international cooperation is vital to addressing challenges faced today, and more crucial than ever in the time of COVID. Those who participated in dialogues called for a greater diversity of voices to be included, more accountability and transparency and stronger engagement with communities at the local level. Civil Society groups submitted joint statements with concrete recommendations for UN reform. ➡ [Read more](#)

Leaders' Pledge for Nature

World leaders of 76 countries, including the UK, Canada, and the entire European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 in a 10-point “**Leaders Pledge for Nature**” launched during the UNGA in NY. They call for 30% of the planet's land and ocean areas to be protected by 2030, putting the climate crisis at the heart of post-pandemic economic recovery plans. Included in the pledge are commitments to reduce deforestation, promote sustainable land and forest management, end unsustainable fishing practices, significantly reducing pollution, stop harmful subsidies, end environmental crime, and transition to sustainable food production.

➡ [Watch the short video](#) ➡ [Read more](#)

The SDG Moment

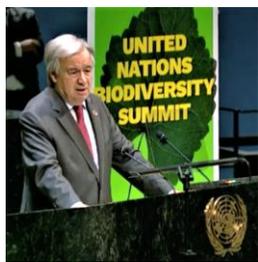
The **SDG Moment** is an annual event during the UN General Assembly that was mandated by Heads of State and Government in the political declaration made at the **SDG Summit** last year. Rather than providing a comprehensive report on implementation, its aim is to provide a snapshot of progress and an “annual SDG check-in” which can galvanize action.



On September 18th the **UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres**, convened the first-ever SDG Moment with a small High Level in-person event at the UN that was webcast and included virtual participation. “*This annual SDG Moment is an opportunity to demonstrate that, as one united family of nations, we have what it takes to eradicate poverty and hunger, tackle climate change, deliver gender equality and achieve all 17 global goals*”, he said. **The heads of UNDP, UN Women and UN Environment** presented a joint snapshot of progress on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This was complemented by an engaging 3 day programme of virtual engagement and sharing of good practices - the “**SDG Action Zone**”. ➡ [Read more....](#)



UN Summit on Biodiversity.



“Humanity is waging war on nature and we need to rebuild our relationship with it”, said António Guterres, UN Secretary-General in his opening remarks at the UN Biodiversity Summit held on 30 September. Noting that the war on nature has led to the emergence of deadly diseases such as HIV / AIDS, Ebola and COVID 19, he highlighted the fact that loss of Biodiversity cannot be viewed separately as an environmental issue. Rather, it spans economics, social justice, and human rights, often resulting in geopolitical tensions and conflicts. Noting that none of the 2020 Biodiversity targets set 10 years ago have been fully met, he commended the collaborative initiatives currently being launched and called on Member States to strengthen these efforts and send ‘strong signals of leadership’ to “bend the curve of biodiversity loss”. ➡ [Watch the video](#)

During the course of the one day summit, 48 Heads of State and government spoke, many making commitments to action. Two Leaders’ Dialogues were held and Heads of 4 UN Agencies took part in an interactive virtual “fireside chat” noting that the time for humanity to “pollute our way to wealth” has passed. In her closing remarks, Deputy Secretary, General Amina Mohammed noted that investing in nature is investing in a sustainable future and called for “vastly more ambition and action to rescue the planet’s fragile tapestry of life”. ➡ [Watch the video](#)



The Great Green Wall.

The **Great Green Wall** is an Africa-led movement of epic proportions that was initiated 13 years ago with the plan to grow an 8,000 km ‘wall of trees’ stretching through 11 countries across the entire width of Africa in the Sahel region. The aim was to restore land and provide a future for millions of people living where desertification is advancing most rapidly, - in the very dry region extending from Senegal to Djibouti where temperatures are rising 1.5 times faster than the global average. Over the last 50 years, landscape degradation, climate change and rapidly increasing populations have often been major drivers of conflict. The Great Green Wall aims to bring people together, restore degraded land and promote sustainable development. It’s no longer simply about planting trees. It also aims to unite Africa, sequester carbon and prevent forced migration.

➡ [Watch the Trailer of the film](#)

Fast facts on biodiversity loss.

- **Humanity’s dependence on biodiversity** is widely recognized and nature is critical for the delivery and success of **14 of the 17 SDGs**,
- **The rate of species extinction** is accelerating, with some one million species currently threatened or endangered,
- **Government financial support that is potentially harmful to the environment and threatens biodiversity** is estimated at about **\$500 billion a year** –roughly six times the total financial support from all sources to conserve and protect biodiversity.
- **Indigenous peoples** make up less than 5% of the total human population, yet they manage a quarter of the world’s land surface, with **close to 80% of our planet’s biodiversity**.
- **Nature-based solutions** can provide approximately **1/3 of the solutions needed** to achieve the climate mitigation targets of the Paris Agreement.

The **Laudato Tree initiative** is a youth-empowered movement, inspired by **Laudato Si** and supported by Pope Francis, to plant and protect 7 million trees as part of the **Great Green Wall**.

➡ [Read more](#) ➡ [Watch the video](#)



RSHM Briefs...

Season of Creation.....

Collaboration between the **RSHM JPIC Team** and the **RSHM communications group** brought renewed engagement during the **Season of Creation** from **1st September – 4th October**.

Activities were featured on the Institute webpage and RSHM social media channels as sisters and collaborators around the world gave special attention to the call from Pope Francis to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si in conjunction with others. **Veronica RSHM** was invited to give a short presentation on climate change, integral ecology and Laudato Si at the **Eastern American Area Missioning Day**



You are my sister

#YouAreMySister is a campaign launched by UISG to highlight the role of women religious around the world who are engaged in initiatives to fight COVID 19. We are happy that **Delva Piedade de Oliveira RSHM** from Brazil was featured in the first video clip produced. Delva is part of the inter-congregational initiative to reach out to the most remote area of the Amazon that has been heavily affected by coronavirus. ➡ [Watch the video](#)



Distribution

General Council Team; Area Leader, JPIC Animators; Global Network of RSHM Schools; UN Interest Group

Portuguese translation by Maria Luisa Pinho RSHM