



The month of May brought many reminders of our **global interconnectedness** and the increasing importance of our shared responsibility to address the climate crisis and recovery from COVID 19 in a coherent and integrated way. **“Everything is interconnected”** said Pope Francis. In this issue of News from the UN we look at some ways in which we can be part of the solution, whether it be through influencing global policy change or implementing initiatives at the local level.

We are part of the solution



Saturday **22 May** marked the **International Day for Biological Diversity** commemorating the day on which the **Convention on Biological Diversity** was adopted in 1992. Protecting the planet’s biodiversity means protecting its forests, since they are home to **68% of mammal species, 80% of amphibian species and 75% of bird species**. Although forests are essential to the life of most living beings, they are under threat from deforestation and degradation of forests. *Deforestation negatively impacts biodiversity, people, and the planet*

and it also threatens the achievement of the SDGs, In his message for the International Day, **UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** called on the global community to “stem the tide” on deforestation. He noted that reversing biodiversity loss can improve human health, realize sustainable development and also address the climate emergency.

➔ [Watch the short video....](#) ➔ [And another one...](#)

IEA Report – Energy mix

Despite significant progress over the last decade in improving access to electricity and increasing the use of renewable energy, the world is still short of achieving the goal of affordable, reliable sustainable modern energy for all by 2030. As secretary General Antonio Guterres noted in his progress report on the SDGs this month, **“clean and sustainable energy should be at the heart of the COVID-19 response and the fight against climate change”**. A recent report produced by the International Energy Agency highlighted the impact that the COVID 19 pandemic had on global trends in energy and emissions during 2020. **Fossil Fuel consumption** declined by as much as **8.6% (oil) 4% (coal)** while renewable energy – largely wind and solar - remained largely the same.



The good news is that last year low carbon fuels and technologies increased their share of the global energy mix to more than 20%.

Fast Facts on Biodiversity

- There are more living individual organisms in a **tablespoon of soil** than there are people on the earth.
- We are losing species at a rate **1,000 times greater** than at any other time in recorded human history
- An estimated **420 million hectares of forest** – the area of India and Portugal combined – have been lost to deforestation in the last 30 years.
- Agricultural expansion accounts for about **73% of tropical deforestation**,
- **80 % of people** living in **rural areas** in developing countries rely on traditional **plant-based medicines** for basic healthcare.
- In the oceans, **2/3 of marine life** is under threat from overfishing and other pressures.

➔ [Watch a short video about SDG 7](#)

Climate change as a driver of migration

Climate change and environmental degradation are recognized as being important drivers of migration. The **2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** committed UN member states to ensure that “desperation and deteriorating environments do not compel [people] to seek a livelihood elsewhere through irregular migration.” Governments also committed themselves to addressing adverse drivers of migration as well as enhancing the availability of regular migration pathways for those affected by sudden and slow-onset disasters, climate change and environmental degradation.

In a recent webinar in May, representatives from the **Civil Society Action Group** in different regions of the world shared their perspectives on climate change as one of the main drivers of migration, noting initiatives being taken to



address it. Although climate change is not the only factor influencing the decision to migrate, climate related issues such as floods, prolonged drought, desertification, and increasingly frequent extreme weather

events often exacerbate pre-existing social and economic inequalities, contributing to the “push” to migrate.

➔ [Watch the short video.....](#)

SDGs in Action: Recycling Waste



The **Dzivarasekwa Community Waste Transfer Centre** in **Harare, Zimbabwe** is a place in which members of the local community can come with their waste materials and instantly get paid by recycling companies. The programme, which is providing an additional source of income and livelihood to the community, is also serving to raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection. At the same time, it is helping to reduce the amount of waste produced by the community. The concept of ‘circular economy’ is increasingly important as we face the mounting reality of polluting waste materials.

Laudato Si Week

Laudato Si Week was held from **16 – 24 May**, celebrating the sixth anniversary of the encyclical’s publication in 2015 and bringing to a close the Anniversary year declared by Pope Francis. Widely cited by Christians and non-Christians alike, the encyclical offers us much food for reflection and prayer, action and advocacy. *Laudato Si*, Caring for our Common Home, speaks to the urgent need to join our efforts for economic, social, and environmental justice. On May 25th, the Vatican closed the week with the **launch of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform**. Serving as a hub for action and interaction, the Platform aims to empower all people of good will to take “decisive action, here and now” to address the ecological crisis by a seven year journey towards sustainability in the spirit of Pope Francis’ encyclical.



➡ [Watch a brief video](#)

➡ [Visit the Laudato Si Action Platform.](#)

RSHM Briefs

★ **Laudato Si Week** was celebrated throughout the Institute, with **JPIC Animators** taking a key role in inviting sisters and collaborators to participate. A series of webinars was promoted, organized jointly by the **Dicastery on Integral Development, the JPIC Commission of US and UISG and the Catholic Global Climate Movement.**



Animators were encouraged to share about the initiatives and activities undertaken in their local areas by reporting on some of the activities carried out. *Watch the Institute Webpage and social media accounts for more details,*

➡ [Read more..](#)

★ Among the responses received was the inspiring story of **Sr. Rita Pessoa’s RSHM’s** recent outreach to rural communities in the area surrounding **Mairi, Bahia, Brazil.** Drawing on her training in **Radiesthesia**, she has helped numerous rural communities to identify the people gifted with sensitivity to the movement of underground water, teaching them how to identify appropriate locations for planting fruit trees close to these underground water veins. This is helping local communities in this arid terrain of Bahia to increase their fruit harvest, improve local food sources and contribute to the family income through the sale of fruit to the community food pulp factory.



➡ [Watch the video](#)

★ **RSCM Colegio - N. S. do Rosario in Porto** has made a commitment as an entire Educational Community (*faculty, students and their parents*) to participating in **Amnesty International’s annual Letter writing Marathon.** The participation has had a very positive effect on helping to bring pressure to bear in specific cases of violation of human rights that are reported by Amnesty. Signatures and online messages reach their destinations and help to put pressure on those responsible for resolving the lives of many human rights activists. At the same time, the project helps to promote awareness and action for human rights throughout the school community.



★ **In Brazil, May 18th marks the National Day to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.** Mobilization had to take a different form this year because of COVID restrictions. The team from “**Projeto Vida**”, the **RSHM social project in Carapina, Espirito Santo**, came together to produce informative materials for display in public places. They also disseminate good practices of prevention. The aim was to raise awareness and mobilize the community in the means of prevention, addressing the risks to which young people are exposed, and the ways of reporting and addressing the crime. The supportive role of family and community in reducing vulnerability was highlighted.



Distribution
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