



Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The **twenty-second session** of the UN **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** took place at the UN Headquarters, New York, from **17-28 April 2023**, having as its focus the theme: *“Indigenous Peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health and climate change: a rights-based approach”*. This marked the first full in-person convening of the Forum since the COVID pandemic. One of the key issues discussed highlighted the fact that strategies developed to address the climate crisis often take place without consultation of indigenous peoples in the areas concerned, thereby usurping peoples’ rights and exploiting their resources. Mining for the minerals required for electric vehicles, such as nickel, lithium and cobalt, without the necessary participation of indigenous peoples whose lands and water sources are affected, risks introducing a new kind of ‘green colonialism’. As **Sec. Gen Antonio Guterres** remarked in the opening session *“Indigenous peoples hold many of the solutions to the climate crisis and are guardians of the world’s biodiversity. The so-called ‘green economy’ is not a new concept for indigenous peoples. It is a way of life – stretching back millennia. We have so much to learn from their wisdom, knowledge, leadership, experience and example”*. ➡ [Watch a video](#)



During the Forum, our NGO **Mining Working Group** had the chance of meeting with delegates from **REPAM** (ecclesial network of the 9 countries of the pan Amazonian region) and **CIMI** (the Brazilian organization of indigenous missionaries). This provided a valuable opportunity to listen to the powerful testimony brought by indigenous people from **Brazil, Peru, Guatemala and Ecuador** and to discuss ways in which the NGO Committee could follow up on the issues raised in their advocacy at the UN.



➡ Watch [the short video](#)

➡ [and another](#)

UN Forum on Forests.



UN FORUM ON FORESTS
18th session - UNFF18
8 - 12 MAY 2023

The management, conservation and sustainable development of the world’s forests is the central issue addressed by the **UN Forum on Forests**, which met at the UN HQ from 8 – 12 May 2023. With more than 1.6 billion people depending on forests for their subsistence, livelihood, employment and income, this precious planetary resource plays a critical role in tackling poverty and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, fighting desertification, land degradation and climate change.

But forests are at grave risk from illegal and unsustainable logging, forest fires, pollution, disease and degradation. The fast facts listed here alert us to the vital role forests play that is being threatened by unsustainable production and consumption practices. Revitalizing degraded forest is of critical importance to human well-being and the future of life on earth. What can we do?

➡ Learn about the [Interfaith Forest Initiative](#).

➡ [Read more...](#) ➡ Watch [the video](#)
➡ [Consult the guide for faith based actors](#)

Fast Facts on Forests

- **Tropical forests are home to 2/3 of the world’s biodiversity** even though they cover less than **10% of the planet**. A single hectare of tropical forest may contain more than **480 species of tree**.
- Tropical forests **hold more carbon** than humanity has emitted over the **past 30 years by burning coal, oil and natural gas**.
- More than **60% of anti-cancer drugs** originate from natural sources, including rainforest plants.
- **A single large tree** can capture and filter **36,500 gallons** of water per year.
- In the first quarter of 2023, the **rate of deforestation in the Amazon** was the second highest on record for that period, with **844 square kilometers** destroyed.
- Trees are important for creating sustainable cities. In urban areas, **they can cool the air by up to 8 degrees**, reducing air conditioning needs **by 30 %**.



The Goldman Environmental prize

Each year the **Goldman Environmental Prize** is awarded to grassroots environmental champions from around the world who have taken extraordinary actions to protect the planet. In April, **Alessandra Korap Munduruku** (Brazil) was one of 6 grassroots activists awarded the prestigious 2023 Goldman prize. Following the rollback of protections relating to environmental and indigenous rights under the Bolsonaro Government, she had organized community efforts to stop the powerful British mining company, **Anglo American**, from encroaching on indigenous lands including **178,000 hectares of Amazon rainforest**. Her engagement led to receiving death threats following her powerful testimony at the **2021 COP Climate Conference in Glasgow**.



→ [Watch the video](#)

JCoR Workshop in Brazil

JCoR – the **Justice Coalition of Religious** – is an initiative of women and men religious with direct representation at the UN HQ in NY who are working for global transformation of unjust structures. Current membership includes 22 UN accredited religious NGOs which comprise more than **200 religious congregations** present in more than 100 countries globally.



initiatives directly engaged with the excluded in Brasil.



The lively and informative 5-day workshop focused on strengthening advocacy at local, national and global level, using the **'See, Judge, Act'** framework and building on Catholic Social teaching and Pope Francis' vision of a church *"em saída"*, while directly identifying and addressing current pressing issues in Brazil. At the end of the workshop, regional groupings were developed to identify next steps that could be taken, building up from local level to national and global level through collaborative engagement with JCoR members at the UN. As one speaker noted

"We are here, reaffirming our faith and hope in human rights and working for people's dignity, for social and environmental justice". → [Read more.....](#) → [Watch a video](#)

Disaster Risk Reduction : The Sendai Framework

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) are disproportionately affected by climate change and natural disasters and beset by structural vulnerabilities. Having no direct access to the sea and being dependent on neighboring countries for trade and transport routes for commodities, they face higher transaction costs and require investment in and maintenance of extensive road and rail infrastructure. During the COVID pandemic LLDCs were particularly hit by transport back logs, delays and closed borders.



The mid-term review meeting of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – 2030)** was held at the UN HQ in mid-May. During the 5 day session, LLDCs highlighted the additional vulnerabilities they face to risks associated with accelerating climate change and the consequent problems relating to disasters such as floods, landslides, cyclones, and recurrent droughts. As was noted by the **Vice President of Zambia**, only 50% of LLDCs have multi-hazard early warning systems. The importance of cross-border cooperation, sharing of scientific information, technology, as well as financing and capacity building was highlighted and some good practices developed were shared. → [Watch the short video](#)

From **30th April – 5th May**, **Veronica RSHM** represented the **JCoR Members Board** at the workshop which was organized by JCoR Latin America, collaborating with the continental conference of Religious in Latin America (**CLAR**) and the **Conference of Religious of Brazil**. The workshop brought together 180 participants from almost all parts of Brazil. Although most of the participants were women and men religious, some lay collaborators and youth leaders involved in the struggle to promote justice and human rights at the local level were also included. The RSHM were well represented by **Srs. Geny Alves** and **Conceição Reis RSHM (Brazilian Area)** together with **Rita de Cassia (REAJE)** who coordinates the network of RSHM social projects and



Visit to CSCM schools in Brazil



While in Brazil, **Veronica RSHM** was invited by the leadership of the Brazilian Area to participate in a mutually enriching educational programme, visiting 3 of 4 RSCM schools in the Sagrado network (**Brasilia, Vitoria, and Rio de Janeiro**) as well as two of the social projects that form part of **REAJE**. Evidence of creative ways in which the schools are living the year of Jean Gailhac was widespread, tangible and inspiring. Interactive sessions with faculty, administrative staff and students provided valuable opportunities to share about RSHM engagement at the UN and engage in dialogue with staff and students about their JPIC related initiatives.

Visits to classrooms, labs and projects as well as discussion with the schools' leadership teams gave insight into school activities geared to the Sustainable Development Goals, with a special focus on the **Care for our Common Home**. Some of the creative initiatives developed by the schools include:



- Restarting the **soap-making project** in the chemistry lab in Brasilia, with used **cooking oil** collected from families.
- Establishing a **community garden** in the reclaimed land near the source of the stream in Lagoa, Belo Horizonte
- Working towards the goal of **“Lixo Zero”**, striving to raise awareness and engagement among the staff and students and stressing the importance of moving to a **circular economy**
- **Art initiatives** around the schools, giving new value to the re-use of cardboard, bottle tops and papier mâché;



- Creation and use of **musical instruments from recyclable materials**.
- Science classes in making **biodegradable plastic**
- Providing **night school classes for disadvantaged youth and working adults** and **after school activities for vulnerable children**
- Collaboration in solidarity projects with local NGOs in collecting used batteries and bottle tops for projects such as ‘papa pilha’ and ‘pata-na-tampa’ → [Read more....](#) → [See photos.....](#)



Distribution

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UN Interest Group

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