



World Environment Day

June 5th marked the **fiftieth anniversary of the celebration of World Environment Day** – established in 1973. It is the largest global platform for environmental public outreach and is celebrated by millions of people across the world. This year's theme **“Beat Plastic**



Pollution” encouraged the sharing of solutions in line with the global campaign to address one of the three deadly ‘strands’ of the triple planetary crisis. Not only does the production of plastic worsen air pollution, but its waste material intensifies flooding and starves wildlife. Plastic particles are now found in the air, in drinking water and in human blood. Their lifespan can reach more hundreds and even thousands of years.

Pressure continues to mount on governments to take steps towards reaching agreement on a plastics treaty. The second meeting of the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee** took place **31 May – 2nd June in Paris**. The meeting ended with an agreement to prepare a “zero draft” of the landmark document. This will be worked on in November in view of finalizing negotiations in 2024. This is an initial but important step towards a legally binding plastics treaty.

Did you know that

- *The world produces **more than 400 million tonnes of plastic every year**. Half of this is designed to be used only once and **only 10% of it is recycled**.*
- *It is estimated that each year **19-23 million tonnes of plastic end up in lakes, rivers and seas each year**. That is equivalent to the weight of **2,200 Eiffel Towers**.*
- ***More than 800 marine and coastal species are affected by plastic pollution through ingestion, entanglement, and other dangers**.*
- *Shifting to a **circular economy** could reduce the volume of plastics entering oceans by **over 80 % by 2040, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 %; and create 700,000 additional jobs***
- ***The shift to a circular economy approach to plastics would result in \$1.27 trillion in savings, considering costs and recycling revenues. A further \$3.25 trillion would be saved from costs due to harmful impact on health, air quality, climate and marine ecosystem***

The recently published UN Environment report on Plastics, **“Turn off the Tap”** challenges us to find new ways of ‘re-orienting and diversifying’ as well as re-using and re-cycling plastics. ➡ Watch the [short video](#) and ➡ [read more..](#)

The rights of Future Generations.



As the UN prepares to celebrate the **75th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights** the Office of the High Commissioner is hosting a series of roundtables to discuss contemporary issues pertaining to human rights. The first one held on June 26th focused on the relationship between **Human Rights and Future Generations**. Speakers from many UN agencies and Civil Society groups addressed the issue from the perspective of their agency/organization. *What does it mean to think and act in a way that takes into account the impact of the choices we make today on future generations not yet born?*

In the opening remarks the representative of the **Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)** stressed that human rights apply to both present and future generations. Global warming, environmental degradation, new technologies have already impacted human wellbeing in ways not envisioned in 1948 and they will affect generations to come. Decisions made and policies implemented today have long term effects and will shape the course of life on our planet for centuries. These are ethical choices leading us to recognize the need to safeguard intergenerational equity and justice. To ignore this is to break the promises made in 1948 and to threaten the future of life on our planet.

*“We have not yet managed to adopt a **circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them.**”*

Pope Francis, Laudato Si # 22

Some concrete recommendations that follow from the Secretary General’s consultation and policy paper **“Our Common Agenda”** including adopting a declaration that secures commitments to the interests of future generations while identifying, managing and monitoring global existential risks. Endorsing the appointment of a Special Envoy for Future generations and the establishment of a special Commission or Forum of the UN General Assembly was also mooted. ➡ [Read more....](#)

High Seas Treaty

“The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet, and today, you have pumped new life and hope to give the ocean a fighting chance,” (UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres) On June 19th, after nearly two decades of negotiations, 193 member states of the United Nations reached agreement and adopted a landmark international treaty to govern international waters. The high seas represent 60 % of the earth’s surface but up until the present moment, only 1.2% are protected which is far from the 30% by 2030 goal agreed in the **Kunming Montreal Biodiversity Framework** in Montreal last December. Hailed by conservationists as historic, this first-ever legally binding global agreement of its kind provides a vital framework for the protection of biodiversity in remote ecosystems that are vital to humanity as well as maintaining their integrity, and ensuring the responsible use of the high seas. The treaty will facilitate the designation of international ‘**Marine Protected Areas**’ (MPAs) in order to counter the degradation of ocean ecosystems that is caused by global warming and ocean acidification due to climate change as well as the accumulation of plastics, pollution and overfishing. These MPAs will be in addition to those already established in national waters. The treaty will open for signature in September and will come into force when ratified by 60 UN member states.



➔ [Read more....](#) ➔ Watch the [short video...](#) and ➔ [this one](#)

Counter-Terrorism training

The **UN Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)** was established in 2017 to coordinate multilateral efforts to work with Member States to prevent and combat terrorism by addressing conditions that are conducive to the spread of violent extremism. Its establishment was mandated by the adoption of a related **UN General Assembly resolution**. One important function of the UNOCT is to cooperate and coordinate efforts across national and regional borders to build the capacity of member states in this area by training law enforcement officers and those charged with border security and counter terrorism investigative work. Two years ago, a UN OCT office for training for the development and delivery of innovative training was established in **Rabat Morocco, to serve the African continent**. During the **Counter Terrorism week** held at the UN from June 19 – 23 this innovative experience was shared as a helpful ‘good practice’ that has already produced positive results with trainees coming from countries in West Africa. The Center is widening its scope to include other countries impacted by terrorist groups, among them, **Mozambique**.



➔ Watch [the short video.](#)

RSHM Briefs



★ The RSHM school in Fatima, **(SCM Fatima)** was awarded the **Digital Gold Seal as an Anti-Corruption School**, by **Redescolas All4Integrity**. This seal aims to distinguish the school for its commitment in training students in an anti-corruption culture while promoting values related to a participatory democracy and the development of an active and well-informed citizenship. The students developed projects under the theme **"Mission: Educating for Integrity"**. An inter-disciplinary approach was adopted, involving subjects such as Portuguese, Visual Education and Information and Communication Technologies.



➔ [Read more....](#)



★ The **RSHM Novitiate** harvested their first crop of maize and groundnuts on the farm recently acquired by the **Zambezi Region**. The 30 bags of maize, 50 kg bags each, will provide the staple food for the Novitiate for the coming year as well as supplying the needs of the new **St. Christopher’s Skills Center** in Choma. Some of the three 50 kg bags of groundnuts will be used to make a supply of peanut butter.



Distribution

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★ Several UN meetings in June brought together people from the inter-faith community. On June 6th the **Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN**, the **Episcopal Church**, the **Parliament of the World’s Religions**, the **Center for Earth Ethics**, and the **NGO Committee on Human Rights** hosted a pre-Parliament event in observance of **World Environment Day**. **Veronica RSHM** was one of 17 people participating in the **Visioning Roundtable** of Faith-based organizations, each of whom were asked to share a 3-minute faith perspective on **“the Right to a Healthy Environment”**.

