



**UN Climate Conference - COP 28**



Two weeks of intense negotiations at COP 28 - the **UN Climate conference in Dubai, ended on December 14<sup>th</sup>**, following the first Global stocktake on progress towards the meeting the goals of the **2015 Paris Agreement**.

The adoption of an outcome document was welcomed with mixed reactions of relief, skepticism and disappointment. With its commitment calling on countries to “*contribute to global efforts to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner*” it represented the first time ever that explicit language acknowledging the need to transition away from the fossil fuels, - the ‘elephant in the room’ - was formally adopted at a Climate Conference. “*The era of fossil fuels must end, and it must end with justice and equity.*” said the **Secretary General, Antonio Guterres**. While this, together with the establishment of the “**Loss and Damage Fund**” represented a significant breakthrough, the UN Secretary General was quick to stress that much more is needed to deliver climate justice to those on the frontlines of the crisis. “*Many vulnerable countries are drowning in debt and at risk of drowning in rising seas. It is time for a surge in finance, including for adaptation, loss and damage and reform of the international financial architecture.*”

➡ [Read about it](#) ➡ [Watch the video....](#)

**Climate Governance Commission - Online Report Launch.**

As the world faces a “*deepening planetary emergency*” and continues “*on a reckless path toward catastrophic climate change,*” a report was launched by the Climate Governance Commission two days before COP 28 opened in Dubai. Co-chaired by former President of Ireland and Chair of The Elders, **Mary Robinson**; President of the 73rd UN General Assembly **María Fernanda Espinosa**; and Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research **Dr. Johan Rockström**, the Commission’s report was entitled “**Governing our Planetary Emergency**”. It presents 10 proposals to be achieved in the next 1 – 3 years and five medium term proposals for the next 3 – 5 years. **Among the short term proposals are the need for**



- urgent improvements in climate COPs with focus on delivery and action
- the declaration of a “planetary emergency” by the UN General Assembly;
- agreement among the “Big Four” emitting nations (China, the U.S., India, and the EU), and
- renewed efforts to bridge the great climate finance divide. ➡ [Read more .....](#)



**Did you know that....?**

- **158 million women & girls** may fall into poverty due to climate change **by 2050** and as many as **236 million could face food insecurity**.
- Today, **53 out of 191 countries** and areas globally, home to 37.2% of the world’s female population, face a high or very high exposure to droughts.
- When disaster strikes, **women and children are 14 times** more likely than men to die.
- An alarming **800,000+ women** perish annually due to **water-related issues**.
- Only **55 national climate action plans** make a specific reference to **gender equality** & only **23** recognize women as agents of change.

**Stop Ecocide**

*How can we use criminal law to protect nature?* Over many decades, mass destruction and damage to ecosystems by corporations has led directly to the climate crisis and mass extinctions. At present, there are **4 core international crimes**: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. These crimes are dealt with by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The **Stop Ecocide campaign** calls for **mass environmental destruction**, known as **ecocide**, to be recognized as an international crime, thus placing damaging and destroying ecosystems alongside genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. At a panel event held at the UN on December 11<sup>th</sup>, it was argued that recognizing ecocide as an international crime would have three key benefits. It would create a moral imperative to respect the living world; it would deter, prevent and sanction the worst harms to nature such as the deforestation of the Amazon or actions that contribute to climate change. It would strongly reinforce existing laws and multilateral agreements, goals and established rights frameworks.



➡ [Read about the campaign](#) ➡ [Sign the petition](#)

## Human Rights at 75

Seventy five years after the adoption by 50 founding member states of the fledgling United Nations, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) remains the leading international benchmark and guidepost for achieving freedom, equality, and justice for all people. Its 30 articles address rights and benefits due to all people. Regrettably, they still remain outside the reach of many people in our world. The 75th anniversary was seen as an opportunity to rejuvenate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, demonstrate how it can meet the needs of our time and advance pathways leading to fulfilment of its promise of freedom, equality and justice for all. A two-day high level event held at the UN in Geneva on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> marked the culmination of the year-long programme of commemoration, campaign and dialogue. Among these initiatives was the “**Pledging Tree**” which graphically embodied the specific pledges made by more than 150 Member states and some 135 UN entities and NGOs to take concrete, time-based actions to improve human rights. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr. Volker Turk, noted “*The pledges we have received illustrate the hunger for us to do better on human rights..*”



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

## Human Rights Prize...

The **UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights** is an honorary award given to individuals and organizations in recognition of outstanding achievement in human rights. The annual award was established by the **UN General Assembly** in 1966 and first awarded two years later, on the twentieth anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Selected from among 400 nominations, the 2023 Prize was presented to six awardees on 10<sup>th</sup> December. These included two Human rights organizations (from *Belarus and Jordan*), two individual human rights defenders (from *the DRC and Uruguay*) as well as the **Global Coalition** of CSOs, indigenous Peoples social movements and local communities who successfully advocated for the UN General Assembly recognition of the right to a clean healthy and sustainable environment. **RSHM** were numbered among the 1,300 organizations from 75 countries, members of the coalition.



➔ Watch the [short video....](#)

## RSHM Briefs

☀ On 13<sup>th</sup> November, **Sr. Veronica RSHM**, NGO representative, visited the **Colégio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in Porto, Portugal**. In several in-person and online sessions with representatives of the students in Lisbon and Fatima as well as Porto, she had a chance to speak to the students about our NGO ministry and answered numerous questions and curiosities. Sustainable development, human rights, digital technologies and innovation were some of the issues tackled on the day. Meeting with **Eco-delegates** from each class and the organizers of **Model UN**, she had a chance to learn about the exciting eco-projects in which our Eco-schools are engaged in Portugal.



☀ As a follow up to the **Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) workshop in Zambia** last year, JCoR continues its efforts to implement the action plan that emerged from their workshop last year. In early November a group of JCoR members brought a pickup truck full of trees to be planted to **St. Joseph's School, Chivuna** as part of an environmental care education and tree planting initiative. Thanks to **Sr. Deborah RSHM's** active organization, some valuable information sessions were held with the girls and the event was covered by Chikuni Radio Station.



### Distribution

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*Portuguese translation by M. Luisa Pinho RSHM*