



Process for selection of next Secretary General

As a symbol of the United Nations' ideals and a spokesperson for the interests of the world's peoples - particularly the poor and vulnerable - the **UN Secretary General** has a challenging role. He/she has to serve as a diplomat and an advocate while also holding the role of civil servant and Chief Executive Officer. During the 80 years of the UN existence, that role has been held exclusively by a man. As **Sec. General Antonio Guterres** draws nearer to the completion of his term on **31st December 2026**, strong calls for a woman to fill the roll have raised the stakes in this year's selection process, leading to the formation of a campaign "**1 for 8 billion**". This campaign aims to ensure a fair, open and transparent selection process which prioritises consideration of women for the role. By May 31st, only four candidates (three women and two men) had been nominated by at least one member state and remained in the process. Two-hour interactive dialogues with 4 of the prospective candidates have already been held, and other debates are planned. Later in the year, the **Security Council** will hold closed door meetings with candidates and straw votes will be taken. When agreement on one recommended candidate is reached, the name will be passed to the **UN General Assembly** for the final vote.  [Watch a short video.](#)



UN News photo

Africa High level Policy Dialogue on Water



UNESCO

On May 29th various UN agencies collaborated with the Africa Union to hold a high level policy dialogue on the theme "**Water and Sanitation for Life: Harnessing Water Resources for the Africa we Want**". As Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General, highlighted in her intervention, water is an issue of justice and equality; it needs to be part of the social contract of Governments. The lack of access to safe drinking water disproportionately affects women and girls who suffer the consequences of long hours spent fetching water on a daily basis, often at the expense of their schooling and their safety. Water needs to be recognized as a strategic asset for transformation, - one that requires planning and in which investments need to be made. Only in this way can states ensure that all sectors

of the economy and all groups in society have sustainable access to safe drinking water and a say in its management.

The need to recognize that water is essential to peace and security was highlighted by many speakers who stressed the importance of water cross boundary cooperation. As the **President of the General Assembly** noted in her opening words, a shared river or lake can be the shortest distance between two nations or it can be the longest where conflict impedes access. Climate change has brought urgency to issues of droughts, floods and food insecurity. Water is at the heart of all development challenges and is key to building communities that are resilient to climate shocks. Speakers highlighted the importance of the **UN Water Conference** to be held in the **United Arab Emirates** in December 2026.  Watch a [short video](#)

Did you know that:

- In Africa **only 40% of the population** have access to safely managed water and **only 30% to sanitation**.
- **90% of water** resources in Africa are **transboundary**, meaning that they cross national borders.
- The **investment gap** representing the amount needed to provide access to safe drinking water and sanitation **over the next fifteen years is \$1 trillion**.
- It is estimated that **every \$1.00 invested** in water can earn up to **\$7.00 in return**.
- **SDG 6** seeks to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. However, **none of the SDG 6** targets appear to be on track.



UNSPASH

BRIEFS

The 12th Symposium on the **Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs** was held in the **Church Center at the UN** on May 5th. Bringing together faith leaders, youth, Indigenous representatives, and civil society, the symposium explored how dignity, compassion, and equality can move beyond dialogue and into meaningful grassroots action and collaboration for the common good. A recurring message throughout the discussions highlighted the fact that strengthening multilateralism starts with people. It requires investing in relationships, inclusion, participation, and representation to ensure that no one is left behind. Together, we continue building a more compassionate and accountable global community, using our moral authority and taking a leap of faith together for a better world.



World Council of Churches

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Giving Voice to our Commitments.

During the months of April and May 2026 our **RSHM NGO** joined others in signing on to statements that called out situations of injustice and expressed our commitment as **Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary** to a world that promotes the dignity, rights and wellbeing of all, with special focus on women and children who are marginalized. Some of the following briefs indicate the contexts in which these statements were made.

★ Review Conference : Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty

One of these statements was a strong call to the **Review Conference** of the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** held in New York from 27 April to 22 May. Regrettably the parties to the Treaty failed to reach a consensus on the Outcome Document at this time of heightened international tension and armed conflict, leaving the world more exposed to emerging nuclear risks. Among the risks confronted by delegates were the destabilizing implications of **AI in nuclear command and control, ongoing wars** and the unresolved humanitarian and environmental legacy of nuclear testing. .



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★ Implementing the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

When the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** in the Hague issued their “Advisory Opinion” in July last year it was recognized that, although this was not legally binding, this landmark position would influence other decisions regarding the responsibilities of states in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change. On May 21st, just 10 months after the ICJ Advisory Opinion was issued, the **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** approved a resolution calling for accountable implementation of the provisions laid out in the **Opinion** issued by the **ICJ** and the fulfilment of the commitments made in the **Paris Agreement**.



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★ Santa Marta Conference

When COP 30 ended in the Brazilian Amazon last November the failure to reach consensus on key points led **Colombia and the Netherlands** to announce the creation of a “**Coalition of the Willing**” with a clear focus of working out a road map to move away from fossil fuels and ensure a just transition to more sustainable energy sources. Rather than waiting for all states to agree on concrete measures in the **UNFCCC** process, they offered to co-host a conference in **April 2026 in S. Marta, Colombia** to start the work on this roadmap. Reports from Santa Marta indicated clear steps being taken to continue

[the road map to Tuvalu in 2027.](#)



★ The International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)

This was held at the UN HQ in NY From 6th – 8th May. This is the second four-year review and evaluation of the progress of implementation of the **Global Compact on Migrants** which had been formally adopted following endorsement by 152 UN member states in a UNGA vote in 2018. Despite progress in some areas, the **outcome declaration of this year's review session** failed to deliver the strong commitment needed to attain the 23 Objectives laid out in the Compact eight years ago. Outside the ambit of the official sessions, engaged NGOs and advocacy groups organized information and action sessions. A rally for the human rights of migrants organized by the **NGO Committee on Migration** drew strong support from other groups and the attention of delegates leaving the UN premises.



Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
25th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – 20 April – 1 May.



RSHM Photos

*Special thanks to **Sr. Catherine Minhoto RSHM - Coordinator of the RSHM JPIC NGO Network** - who attended some of the sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues virtually and wrote a reflection for our Newsletter.*

“Ensuring Indigenous Peoples’ health, including in the context of conflict”.

I have always been interested in the beauty of indigenous culture, its song, dance, ceremony, tradition, and spirituality. So it was very important to me to take the opportunity to listen and reflect on information shared at the UN Forum on Indigenous Issues.

There were many convergent themes echoed by those who described Indigenous knowledge: it is land-based, collective, intergenerational and intrinsically related to identity and well-being. Tribal wisdom experienced the land, Mother Earth, as she who provided for her peoples, with water plants, fish, animals, trees, and whose medicinal components could promote health, nutrition and healing. These gifts of creation were seen as partners, friends, brothers and sisters, who sustained and supported human life. These resources were not to be seen as a commercial system, commodified or exploited, but to be respected, cultivated, and considered sacred. If we take care of the land, it will take care of us and there will be a more peaceful world, a healthy world.

Indigenous peoples see themselves as custodians of Earth, and they look to women as essential to physical, mental, and spiritual health of the entire community. Women are the seed keepers, women are the midwives of new generations, women are the guardians of ancestral wisdom that reflects their people’s cosmic ethos. During the sessions I attended, I was moved by the insight of multi-generations of indigenous women, affirming their knowledge, their dignity, and speaking with courage and conviction about self-determination, territorial sovereignty, and dislocation due to militarism, climate change, and the corporate capture of government.

I have to look at the experience of Native Americans in the United States today, whose territory and governance were violently destroyed by the generational trauma of North American Manifest Destiny. This brutal history continues as our indigenous peoples have been subjected to harassment, detention and racial profiling by ICE agents - “the cruel irony of indigenous peoples being treated as outsiders on their own homelands.” (Native American Caucus Members – Minnesota House of Representatives)

Will we, as a global community, listen to their words and be, like our indigenous sisters and brothers, artisans of care for one another, for those on the margins, and for our common home? (2025 Gen Chapter Statement)

Sr. Catherine Minhoto, RSHM

Distribution

Institute Leadership Team; Area Leaders, JPIC Animators;
Global Network of RSHM Schools; UN Interest Group