



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM**  
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**From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters**

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change, and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to [newsletter@ief.org](mailto:newsletter@ief.org) Please share the Leaves newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

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**IEF 26th Annual Conference – Recordings and Reports Available**

For an overview and short reports, go here: <https://www.iefworld.org/index.php/conf26>

**Wednesday 1 June**

**Global Environmental Governance: Ethical Foundations & Practical Proposals**

*in person event at the Swedish Parliament organized by the Baha'i International Community.*



Click here to watch the recording of this event: <https://www.bahai.se/stockholm50>

For a detailed webinar report with pictures, go here: [https://www.iefworld.org/conf26\\_BIC](https://www.iefworld.org/conf26_BIC)

**Friday 3 June**  
**Global Systems Accounting beyond Economics**



*The panelists presented a new approach to non-financial global systems accounting covering the environment (carbon, biodiversity, pollution), human well-being (minimum living standard, food, health) and social accounting (work and service, knowledge and education, and spiritual capital).*

[Click here to watch the video recording.](#)

For a detailed webinar report with speaker biographies and pictures, go here: <https://www.iefworld.org/conf26-1>

**Saturday 4 June**  
**Empowering Local Sustainable Communities**

*The panelists discussed how local sustainable communities can be empowered with a culture of learning, adapting science for everyone, reading the local reality, and consulting to achieve resilience, regeneration, climate mitigation and adaptation, with panelists presenting case studies from around the world.*

[Click here to watch the video recording.](#)

For a detailed webinar report with speaker biographies and pictures, go here:

<https://iefworld.org/conf26-2>



**Sunday 5 June**  
**Intergenerational Perspectives on Visions for the Future**

*This event brought together a participant from the original 1972 Conference reflecting on his aspirations at that time and what we have learned since, alongside youth expressing their hopes and vision for the future and articulating their ongoing efforts to lay a foundation for that future locally and globally.*

[Click here to watch the video recording.](#)

For a detailed webinar report with speaker biographies and pictures, go here: <https://iefworld.org/conf26-3>

Pictures and Artwork by  
 Sayali Dubash  
 Matteen Kashef  
 Kiara Eshani  
 Desta Mesbah  
 Elsa Deshmukh

relating to their presentation today  
**June 5, 2022**  
 as part of  
 the 26th Annual Conference  
 of the International Environment Forum

Please, share the links to the recordings and conference reports widely! The main Conference website includes short reports and all the links: <https://www.iefworld.org/index.php/conf26>

## Responses to the IEF 26th Annual Conference

The IEF 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at the beginning of June was followed with much interest by people from around the world. Participants came from 32 countries:

Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Croatia, Georgia, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Israel, Kenya, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

The first panel on **Global Systems Accounting beyond Economics** attracted the largest audience and, so far, shows the most frequent viewing of the recording, currently at 219.

The feedback for the panel on **Empowering Local Sustainable Communities** was glowing. An attendee from China wrote:

“I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations made in this webinar. I was very pleased to see and hear of the different events that were mentioned. The Circular Economy, the Uganda presentation, and the ideas from the Ukraine gave me an encouraging perspective of what is going on out in the world and what can be accomplished in this day and age.

“However, I must say that our Canadian friend made my day if not my year or more. Why? Well, his is the kind of work that I wanted to do with my agroforestry background, and I have not heard of any accomplishments in this field. I am old and retired. I did my field work in the 80s and 90s attaining quite a state of disillusionment. So, I retreated to tend to family and edit environmental papers for some institutions and individuals.

So, when Neil Whatley mentioned that he was a farmer, worked from Canada, worked with the

project in Costa Rica, and gave his insights, I was ecstatic. His approach, encouragement of locals, patience, foresight, and ability to weave outside resources/ideas into a local system that would be acceptable to the local people was a memorable moment for me.

Thanks for the uplifting moments, Neil.”

An IEF member from the USA responded in a similar manner: “That was one of the best webinars I’ve attended! Thanks so much. The different perspectives and experiences of each were so valuable and complimentary to what we are all trying to do in our community building and cultural transformation work.”

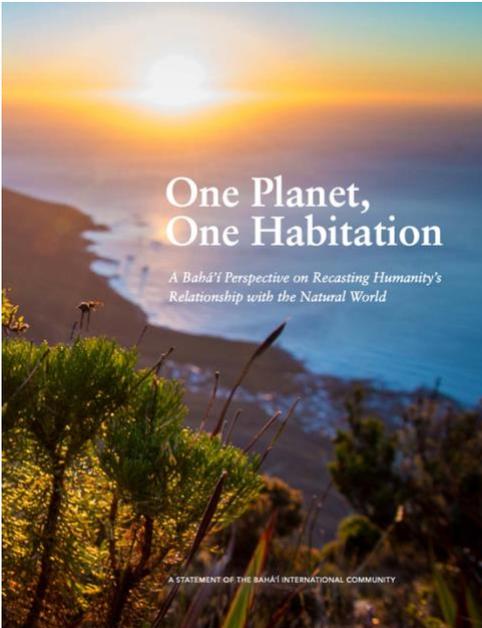
The participant from China sent another email expressing his appreciation for the panel **Intergenerational Perspectives on Visions for the Future**:

“I wanted to let you all know that I was very happy to see and hear the participants in this webinar. The diverse programs that were presented were well chosen and the participants hopefully are off to a future environmental occupation and, if not, hopefully continued interest in the environment. What impressed me (being retired) the most was the potential for the youth, and even junior youth, to see that their compatriots can and are making some headway into this area of endeavor. So, in your activities, keep the environment and IEF in your minds and even prayers.

“I see elderly IEF people who have a great deal of expertise and experiences, but do not have the energy of the Youth and Junior Youth. I think we are in a stage where this energy can be harnessed so the young ones can gain experience quickly and implement it in new places. The youth are the workhorses—not of the future, but of the present. And if youth can reach other youth, this is progress on progress. Remember the future is not too far away. It could be tomorrow—then again it could be later today. Keep up the good work future-ites.”

# One Planet, One Habitation A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World

Statement of the Bahá'í International Community



At Stockholm on 1 June 2022, at an event in the Swedish Parliament in association with the UN Stockholm+50 International Meeting, the Bahá'í International Community launched a new statement **One Planet, One Habitation - A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World**.

For the text version, go here: [https://www.iefworld.org/2022bic\\_OPOH](https://www.iefworld.org/2022bic_OPOH)

If you want to read the statement online, you will enjoy the beautiful edition with pictures here: [https://www.iefworld.org/fl/BIC\\_OPOH.pdf](https://www.iefworld.org/fl/BIC_OPOH.pdf)

This is the **introduction** to the comprehensive 16-page statement:

*This span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation.  
It behooveth you to abandon vainglory which causeth alienation  
and to set your hearts on whatever will ensure harmony.*  
— Bahá'u'lláh

1. The natural world, in all its wonder and majesty, offers profound insight into the essence of interdependence. From the biosphere as a whole to the smallest microorganism, it demonstrates how dependent any one life-form is on numerous others—and how imbalances in one system reverberate across an interconnected whole.

2. Intimately embedded in this greater system, and deeply reliant upon it, humanity faces a paradox growing more consequential by the day. On the one hand, the human race has never held more power to shape the physical world on planetary scales—a development some have termed the anthropocene. This is a testament to our collective ingenuity and creativity, as well as the boundless potential before us. On the other, that very power, when untempered by thoughtful consideration and directed by priorities heedless of the present and future common good, gives rise to consequences not only worldwide in scope but potentially irreversible.

3. As the grave effects of surpassing planetary limits become increasingly apparent, from climate change to biodiversity loss to environmental degradation and pollution, humanity is being compelled to develop more mature, collaborative, and constructive relationships between its peoples and with the natural environment.

4. Thinking on environmental issues has progressed markedly since the landmark United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972. The advances achieved over the past half-century, whether scientific, legal, or institutional, stand as a reason for confidence and a source of hope for the future. Yet, today, increases in understanding must be translated into action far more rapidly and on much wider scales. Sweeping changes in the organization and operation of human affairs have become an existential imperative, necessary and unavoidable. The question before the nations and leaders of the world is whether the needed action will be taken as a matter of conscious choice and prevention, or whether it will be prompted by the destruction and suffering wrought by escalating environmental breakdown.

To continue reading, go here: [https://www.iefworld.org/2022bic\\_OPOH](https://www.iefworld.org/2022bic_OPOH)

# UN Stockholm+50 International Meeting

## A Healthy Planet for the Prosperity of All – Our Responsibility, Our Opportunity

2-3 June 2022

The International Environment Forum was accredited to the United Nations Stockholm+50 International Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, on 2-3 June 2022, and organized or partnered in several associated events as its **26th IEF International Conference** (see [separate report](#)). Several IEF members were present in Stockholm and had roles in various events and the International Meeting itself. The day before the meeting, 1 June, the IEF was a partner in a **Bahá'í International Community** event at the Swedish Parliament (see [separate report](#)), and helped to organize and participated in an Interfaith Council of Sweden prayer circle for the success of the meeting in a square near the Parliament (see [separate report](#)).

IEF President Arthur Dahl wrote a report that combined a summary of the main outcomes of Stockholm+50, and specific reports on some of the events in which IEF members had a specific role. You can read this report here: <https://www.iefworld.org/index.php/Stockholm50>

### Stockholm+50 side event with UN agencies

2 June 2022

At the Stockholm+50 International Meeting, the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) organised a side event on 2 June 2022 featuring heads of UN agencies and conventions on "Accelerating integrated action for a healthy planet and prosperity for all - a dialogue with UN Heads of Agencies" to look at cross-agency collaboration in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and convention actions on the ground.

Twelve heads of agencies and convention secretariats made short presentations.

IEF President Arthur Dahl was then invited to comment, based on his participation for the Bahá'í International Community in the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, and his half-century career in intergovernmental organizations including coordination across the UN system. He suggested three essential needs for UN system integration:

1. UNEP has always had a catalytic and coordinating role, but the need now was to accept orchestration across the system, based on a holistic scientific assessment combining natural and social sciences to identify tipping points and to define strategies forward, and then to determine the role of each part of the UN system in implementation.

2. The UN needs the capacity, perhaps in the UN Environment Assembly, to adopt global legislation

on actions necessary to stay within planetary limits, binding on governments and non-state actors alike, including multinational corporations and billionaires.

3. Once there is such a legislative capacity, it would be possible to replace the cumbersome process of negotiating and implementing many multilateral environmental agreements with coherent global legislation and enforcement, building on all the progress and lessons learned, but able to respond more rapidly to changing environmental situations and crises.

The EMG had prepared two UN system inputs to Stockholm+50. The first was the official UN report based on wide consultation: [Delivering on the vision of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) with [The Summary for Policymakers](#). The International Environment Forum is acknowledged as one of the five non-UN agency contributors to the report.

The other paper gives the visions of heads of UN agencies: [The Impact of the Stockholm Conference on the UN System: Reflections of 50 Years of Environmental Action](#). These are available on the EMG Stockholm+50 website: <https://unemg.org/stockholm+50/>.

## Reflections on Stockholm+50

Arthur Lyon Dahl

13 June 2022

The UN Stockholm+50 International Meeting on 2-3 June was a remarkable exercise in alternative diplomacy. Since the UN General Assembly decided that it should not have an outcome negotiated and agreed by consensus, and it was open not only to high-level State representatives making two minute contributions in plenary, but also Leadership Dialogues with extensive advance multistakeholder preparation, an Action Lab and other formats, supported by some forty side events at the meeting location in Stockholm and many associated events around the world listed and linked in the official calendar, it represented a massive and creative brainstorming around the triple environmental crisis of climate change, biodiversity and pollution, and the challenges of setting a new course with concrete actions towards sustainability despite the pandemic, war and emerging famine.

For someone like me, who participated already in the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, and who has devoted a half-century to building regional and global environmental governance, Stockholm+50 showed that such efforts are not lost, even if still insufficient. Our [International Environment Forum](#) did what it could through associated events to support the common effort.

Through careful planning and a widespread spirit of good will, the meeting produced both a compilation of many [outcome documents and reports](#), and a concise [ten-point summary of major ways forward](#). This will provide useful input to the more formal convention negotiations in the months ahead and the Summit of the Future in 2023. It showed what could be accomplished when everyone works together in a positive spirit, and beyond the talking, it shared many examples of action already happening on the ground, and hopefully built a determination to work actively for the fundamental and rapid transformation in all aspect of society, including the economy, necessary to avoid the tipping points toward existential risks already emerging with increasing catastrophes around the world.

At the same time, unfortunately, the forces of disintegration driven by greed, selfishness, pride, lust and violence continue unabated. Between despots, autocrats, multinational corporations driven only by profit, and billionaires, all above the law (where it exists at all), the control of the destiny of humanity is still largely in their hands, and events like Stockholm+50 are irrelevant. This increasing fracture between extremes, playing out in many countries, demonstrates the fundamental governance failures that occur when the human system has globalized but our management of that complex human and natural planetary system has not kept up. We face the urgent choice either to create better governance through an act of consultative will, the premises of which were evident in Stockholm+50, or to suffer increasing crises until the survivors are forced to act, as we saw, for example, in the catastrophes that led to the United Nations.

A central aim of government is, or should be, to provide for the common good beyond what individuals can do for themselves, and to protect the generality of the population from evil-doers and criminals. Security is fundamental to governance, and today human security can only be obtained through global governance, as recent events have demonstrated only too well. Stockholm+50 provides the first important push since the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change to reverse our negative direction of travel. Everyone of good will should unite in their efforts to transition rapidly to a better world, withdrawing all support from the materialistic economy, consumer culture and war machines that are leading us to destruction. It will often be necessary to start at the community level, and to empower the youth to lay the foundations for a renewed global society with room for all the wonderful human and natural diversity with which our shared planet is endowed. This will be the real path to human security and sustainability for all.

### Building effective multilateralism for the environment

**IEF board members Sylvia Karlsson-Vinhuyzen and Arthur Dahl were invited by the Climate Governance Commission to prepare a policy brief on Building effective multilateralism for the**

environment for the **UN Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism**.

The policy brief is available on the [IEF website](#) and can be downloaded as a [PDF Document](#).

The policy brief is based on their earlier report for the Climate Governance Commission [Towards a Global Environment Agency: Effective Governance for Shared Ecological Risks](#).

## **Stockholm+50 Interfaith Statement** **Faith Values and Reach - Contribution to Environmental Policy**

Prepared by UNEP Faith for Earth,  
Endorsed by the International Environment Forum

*“A point has been reached in history when we must shape our actions throughout the world with a more prudent care for their environmental consequences. Through ignorance or indifference we can do massive and irreversible harm to the earthly environment on which our life and well-being depend. Conversely, through fuller knowledge and wiser action, we can achieve for ourselves and our posterity a better life in an environment more in keeping with human needs and hopes.”*

*(excerpt from Preamble Paragraph 6 of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration)*

### **Preamble**

We, the representatives of various faith-based organizations, Indigenous cultures and wisdoms from around the world participating in the Stockholm+50, committed to caring for ecological justice and for protecting our one Earth, hereby make the following statement to the governments, UN entities, civil society, and all stakeholders of the “Stockholm+50” processes.

### **Introduction**

The world is facing a triple ‘pandemic’ of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Those hardest hit are those who have caused the least damage. We have less than three years for our carbon emissions to start dropping from the peak, and yet emissions continue to rise. We have already exceeded several thresholds critical to a stable and functioning planetary system, and we are currently on a pathway to overshooting dangerous tipping points, with irreversible consequences for all life.

Rainforests - the ‘lungs of earth’ – are ironically becoming a carbon emitter. Melting permafrost is already releasing enormous quantities of methane. Devastating heat waves, floods, and droughts impact many parts of the world. Climate-related disease outbreak and pest infestations are decimating communities’ resilience. Across the globe, conflict and war are fuelling increased competition for fossil fuel extraction and exploration.

The root causes of the triple planetary crises are deeply fueled by structural greed and apathy that

underpin our current economic systems. Amassing of obscene wealth by corporations and select individuals is directly related to global environmental problems and solutions, which is morally and ethically unacceptable.

Without addressing these underlying causes, we are on a collision course to disaster.

### **Recognition**

Inspired by the values and principles of our various belief systems including faith, values and ethics, we recognise that:

1. Fossil fuel-based, extractive economies are accelerating climate change and loss of biodiversity;
2. Poor and marginalized people, especially women, children, older persons, Indigenous people and those with disabilities are most impacted by climate change;
3. We have abused nature and Indigenous peoples and have been complicit with colonial extractive practices. We need to change our relationship and learn to co-exist in a harmonious and symbiotic manner with earth and its ecosystems. The environment and the human family are interdependent;
4. We humans have failed in our responsibility as ‘earth keepers’ to protect the planet;
5. We must challenge the values, such as individualism and greed shaping our patterns of consumption and production;
6. We must rediscover the moral and spiritual roots of human beings, and rights and dignity of all beings;

7. We must strive to move from human superiority to human humility, from ego-centric to eco-centric and from being separate to nature, to interconnectedness;
8. We must urgently move from unbridled industrial growth to sustainable well-being.

### **Affirmation**

We affirm that:

1. Faith and Indigenous leaders and actors have the potential to play an essential role in shaping global environmental governance and policy making. The traditions that we represent have unique capacities to convince, convene and contribute meaningful, moral, economic, spiritual and social substance to public deliberations;
2. More than 84% of people believe in a religion or a spiritual belief and religious leaders can be found in every part of the world, from the most distant desert village to the densest informal settlement. Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) bring reach and values to the environmental movement;
3. FBOs are strong institutions and are actors of local development and have demonstrated relevance to development around the world, for instance in health and education;
4. The 1972 Stockholm Declaration recognized and referred to the necessity of spiritual growth of humans towards living in harmony with nature;
5. Women and girls in all their diversity are unequally impacted by climate change, but should have equal opportunities, meaningful participation, leadership and influence in climate solutions and access to climate finance;
6. All persons irrespective of their abilities, physical or otherwise, are recognised as equal, and have a vital role to play to respond to climate challenges, and contribute to a better tomorrow.

### **Call to action:**

We therefore call governments, UN entities, civil society, as well as our own constituencies to act on the following demands/action points:

1. Recognize the role of faith, ethics, spiritual and cultural values in environmental governance through adopting a resolution to that effect by the United Nations Environment Assembly and provide the required platform and programme for engaging faith actors in policy dialogue;
2. Implement the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a key step towards achieving sustainable development, poverty

eradication, inclusivity and gender equality, while respecting rights of nature;

3. Adopt a new development paradigm that integrates moral, spiritual and indigenous shared values;
4. Move from a neoliberal and “anthropocentric” worldview to an interconnected worldview;
5. Support a just transition from fossil-based extractive economy towards life-affirming “economy of life” and sustainable living, as promoted by the faith communities;
6. Adopt and implement an Ecocide law\* and promote the Faith for Ecocide Law initiative by FBOs;
7. Ensure the human right to nutritious food and safe water and sanitation, including clean air for all in a healthy environment;
8. Implement the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a key step towards achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, inclusivity and gender equality;
9. Amplify the voice of women and girls in all their diversity as important stakeholders of climate solutions and climate finance;
10. Raise awareness of concerns around carbon offset/nature-based solutions that can lead to abuse of land and rural people.

### **We commit ourselves to:**

11. Act and practice what we preach, and to become protectors of this earth, to strive to live in harmony and sustainability, through our daily actions, how we invest, how we manage assets, and how we engage with our faith communities;
12. Divest from fossil fuels and call for an immediate halt to new fossil fuel explorations and to promote a responsible climate finance as a moral imperative in protecting the most vulnerable from impacts of climate change;
13. Promote “refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle” in all public events, leading by example to reduce pollution, especially plastic waste;
14. Amplify the prophetic voices of young people, older persons, women and Indigenous people;
15. As faith leaders, representatives of faith-based organizations and faith communities, to lead by example to reduce our carbon and water footprints for a healthy planet;
16. Strengthen the interconnectedness of relevant UN mandates such as the two new Human Rights Council Resolutions on climate change and human rights.

\*(as it was first mentioned at the Stockholm Conference in 1972 by the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme)

## The Other Energy Crisis

Arthur Dahl's blog

Energy powers all systems from machines and cities to the planetary biosphere and all of life, including our own. Recent events have underlined how dependent we are on energy supplies and how vulnerable to price rises and shortfalls. And this is on top of the fossil fuel energy crisis due to the release of fossil carbon causing climate change. Yet there is little awareness of the other energy crisis that also threatens our future. Almost all our useful energy comes from the sun, whether directly received as solar radiation or through ancient solar energy stored in fossil organic matter.

Solar energy supports and powers planetary systems in two ways: one is the thermal heating that maintains the global environment within a temperature range suitable for life, that creates convection currents that power winds and weather, and that drives the water cycle of evaporation and precipitation. Today rising greenhouse gas concentrations threaten that thermal equilibrium, causing global heating and climate change. That energy crisis is well documented, even if our response is inadequate.

The other solar energy system is photosynthetic, where plant and microbial life use solar energy to build the carbon chains of organic compounds. These energy-rich materials flow through the extensive food chains that power all life, including our own. For hundreds of millions of years, the biosphere has evolved an ever-greater capacity to support life with increasingly complex ecosystems including forests, savannas, coral reefs, ocean plankton, and many other marvels of efficient energy capture. Only in a few remote and extreme places, such as hydrothermal vents in the deep ocean, are there communities of life that do not depend on solar energy. Before there were significant human impacts on the planet, much of the land was covered in lush vegetation, forests and prairies, supporting in turn abundant animal life. Many indigenous peoples learned to live in respectful balance with nature, drawing what they needed while preserving the richness that nature provided. The sea was similarly full of marine plants and phytoplankton at the base of rich food chains all the way up to abundant whales.

Today, our economic drive for endless growth by exploiting natural resources for profit without regard for the future is rapidly degrading the biosphere, its rich biodiversity, and the ecosystem services it provides, including all the energy to support life. The rapid destruction of tropical rainforests, the demise of coral reefs around the world, soil degradation and erosion, and the conversion of much of the land surface to human uses, with many other impacts, are destroying the photosynthetic capacity of the planet. I have not seen anyone calculate how close we may be to tipping points where the energy captured by plant life on the planet may no longer be sufficient to support the needs of all living things, including human society. We worry about food shortages and rising prices leading to famine, without looking beyond that to the biological capacity of the planet to feed us all, animals, microbes and humans alike. We need urgently to measure the rapid decline in ecosystem services like photosynthesis, and the speed with which we may be approaching an energy catastrophe even more fundamental than that precipitated by global heating and climate change.

Consider the difference in total productivity and standing stock of organic matter between a lush tropical rainforest and a field of soybeans plowed and left bare much of the year, producing feed for livestock with only a tiny fraction of the energy captured by a single crop arriving on your plate. Yet we only value the steak and not all that has been lost in the process of producing it.

Biodiversity conservation and restoration are certainly critical to preserve the fantastic diversity and efficiency with which evolution has endowed the planet, and the wonders of nature with all its beauties and benefits. Losing parts of these complex systems will trigger many other failures and cascading impacts. However, beyond this it is essential to maintain our continuing access to enough food energy and other organic matter to support our still-growing human population. This can only be done by protecting what still exists of the natural

world and restoring much of what has been degraded, along with all the ecosystem services that nature has provided for millions of years. We need to rethink agriculture and fisheries to again become part of complex ecosystems with continuing high productivity and resilience. Only then can we ensure an adequate photosynthetic solar energy system to maintain the sustainability of the biosphere and its component ecosystems long into the future, and thus guarantee our own survival.

## Brief Report on Criminalising Ecocide - Online Discussion

by IEF Member David Menham

When we want to return to good health, we seek out a prescription that will hopefully provide us with the right ingredients to enable us to do so. From a Baha'i perspective, the whole of humanity requires a Divine Physician in order to deliver the correct remedy for the entire world.

When it comes to the environment, we need to recognise that its good health is essential for the very survival of the human species.

In order to protect ourselves from injustice we have gradually developed a series of laws to protect us from such crimes as homicide or other crimes, which affect our human rights as citizens of an increasingly global society. Despite much progress, many international laws remain quite weak and ineffective.

One aspect of international law that is currently gaining ground, however, is the concept of 'Ecocide.' This concept has been gradually arising out of obscurity since the 1970s, but now, thanks particularly to the work of 'Stop Ecocide International', it is beginning to gain momentum.

On 18 May I took part in an online discussion organised by Jojo Mehta, the executive director of Stop Ecocide. The main aim of the discussion was to find the most effective ways to encourage the International Criminal Court (ICC) to adopt the principle of 'Ecocide' in the same way as 'Homicide' so that it can also be recognised as a criminal act. Homicide is the unlawful and wanton destruction of a human life, but Ecocide is the unlawful and wanton destruction of the environment, especially when it is conducted with reckless disregard for the consequences.

This would then make not only individuals, but also

corporations and even governments liable to prosecution when being identified as acting unlawfully and with wanton destruction. It was pointed out that industrial practices don't tend to change unless the law itself has been changed. Many crimes are being committed with impunity and the same criminal groups who are involved in such activities as human trafficking, drug trafficking or dealing in the trafficking of wildlife etc. also seem to be involved in environmental crime.

Such crimes are being conducted both legally and illegally, but there is a growing amount of solid physical evidence that links these various crimes together. From a purely human perspective, it was pointed out that Global Witness has collected much data on the killing of environmental activists, especially in campaigns related to acts of deforestation.

Andrea Crosta from The Earth League made some salient points in connection with the convergence of various aspects of environmental crime, especially in relation to rare and endangered species.

This convergence, not just of crimes but of evidence, highlights how connected everything has become. Kleptocrats, for example, steal their own country's assets and resources and become linked to international crime. They can only be stopped through strong legislation that can be enacted globally through such agencies as the International Criminal Court.

On a lighter note, Antonio Hermann Benjamin who acted as moderator rounded off the discussion by stating that LOVE was probably the key factor in our desire to resolve such difficult issues when coupled together with our strong desire for concerted action.