



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. 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.

Members Corner

Report of the IEF General Assembly

The 26th General Assembly of the International Environment Forum was held over the Internet on the Zoom platform on 25 September 2022 with 21 members representing 15 countries attending: Cedric Åkermark (Sweden), Steve Bosserman (USA), Gary Colliver (USA), Arthur Dahl (Switzerland), Elsa Deshmuk (Puerto Rico), Cynthia Diessner (USA), Andreas Galsterer (Portugal), Mark Griffin (USA), Khondker Mustafiz Imran (Bangladesh), Matteen Kashef (USA), Desta Mesbah (The Netherlands), Laurent Mesbah (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Rebecca Teclemariam Mesbah, Wendi Momen (UK), Christine Muller (USA), Sabine Schlenkermann (Germany), Rafael Shayani (Brazil), Firouz Sobhani (France), Victoria Thoresen (Norway), Yves Werling (Slovakia), Johann Wong (Canada)

The consultation about IEF's strategic plan, enriched by the participation of young members, was lively and fruitful. For a report about the General Assembly, go here: <https://www.iefworld.org/genass26>

IEF Board Election

The following members were elected to the Governing Board: Arthur Dahl (Switzerland), Christine Muller (USA), Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (Netherlands), Laurent Mesbah (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Victoria Thoresen (Norway), Wendi Momen (UK), and Halldór Thorgeirsson (Iceland).

The IEF Board then elected Arthur Dahl as President and Christine Muller as General Secretary, the same officers as last year.

Some Specific Outcomes of the IEF General Assembly

Study, spread, and translate [One Planet One Habitation – a Baha’i Perspective on Recasting Human Relationship with the Natural World](#)

The IEF encourages all its members and associates to study this illuminating statement by the Baha’i International Community. It also encourages its translation into different languages. Of course, the good quality of the translations is important which would require group collaboration and participation of native speakers. Are there any volunteers to translate the statement? It was reported that a translation into German is in progress. Volunteers to translate the statement are encouraged to contact the IEF secretariat at ief@iefworld.org

Collaboration sought on UNESCO’s “Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education”

Rafael Shayani was impressed by [UNESCO’s “Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education”](#) and seeks collaboration with IEF members to write a paper about how to put more emphasis on values and spiritual education as a response to UNESCO’s statement. All those interested, please, contact the IEF secretariat at ief@iefworld.org

Welcome!

The IEF warmly welcomes the following new associate: Sandy Martin, The Gambia

IEF Webinars

Topic: What is at stake at this year's global climate conference - COP27?

Speaker: Halldór Thorgeirsson

Time: This webinar will take place Saturday, 5 November, 2022.

11am PDT California

2pm EDT New York

6pm GMT

7pm CET Central Europe

Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/IEF-COP27>

Description: The webinar will take stock of development in the global response to climate change on the eve of the 27 Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention COP27 in Egypt. The objectives of the Conference will be outlined, and the main challenges discussed. These annual conferences are an important focus point for global cooperative action on climate change which is gathering momentum at the same time as the adverse impacts of climate disruption are becoming more evident.

Biography: Halldór Thorgeirsson is the Chair of the Icelandic Climate Council. He served as senior director at the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC) in Bonn for fourteen years (2004-2018). His responsibilities included managing substantive support to international climate negotiations culminating in the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. As a climate negotiator for Iceland, Halldór had served as the Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) for a two-year term.

Future Webinars:

3 December

CBD COP15: Countries are preparing new global goals to protect Nature – what do they mean, and what is our role in achieving them?

Speaker: Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen

Invitation to Study Group of the IPBES Biodiversity Values Assessment



Three photographs have been provided by IEF Associate Edie Rose Canonchet Preserves, RI, USA. Oct. 7, 2022

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has prepared a special report on the many ways of understanding the values of biodiversity, ranging from material to spiritual and including Indigenous worldviews. These are very close to the concerns of the International Environment Forum to bring together scientific and spiritual perspectives. The next article will further elaborate on this.

The IEF board invites its members, associates, and friends to participate in a study group that will study relevant extracts from the assessment's Summary for Policy Makers which you can find here: https://www.iefworld.org/biodiversity_values

The study group will meet three times on
Friday, Oct. 28, 10am PDT, 1pm EDT, 19:00 CEST
Tuesday, Nov. 1, 11 am PDT, 2pm EDT, 19:00 CET
Tuesday, Nov. 8, 10am PDT, 1pm EST, 19:00 CET

Please, notice that the time in Europe is the same for all meetings, but is different in North America because Europe changes one week earlier back from daylight savings time.

Go here to register for the study group and to receive the Zoom link for all meetings:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUucO-qrTkrHdb8FzyLza4uzHKHZEPdtH0r>

Biodiversity Values Assessment

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is the scientific assessment process for the Convention on Biological Diversity, equivalent to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It has prepared a special report on the many ways of understanding the values of biodiversity, ranging from material to spiritual and including Indigenous world-views. The [Summary for Policy-Makers \(SPM\)](#) issued 1 August 2022 gives its important messages. These are very close to the concerns of the International Environment Forum to bring together scientific and spiritual perspectives.

The question addressed is how we value nature. At one extreme nature is seen only as a resource to be exploited to make money, like cutting down the trees in a forest for timber. Then there are people who believe they are part of nature, for whom a tree may be their ancestor, and if they must cut a tree they render thanks and ask for forgiveness. For others a tree might be a source of beauty or a metaphor for a fruitful life.

One important observation in the report is that, even when such alternative values are documented and shown to be important to many people, they are almost never taken into account in decision-making, which is often dominated by economic decisions that ignore other values. The report suggests ways to address this.

It is significant that the IPBES, as an official international scientific assessment body answerable to governments, has recognized and explored these intangible values of nature, and asked how they can all be



taken into account in decision-making for sustainability. It is an exploration of the relationships between humans and nature, an issue that has also been addressed by the Bahá'í International Community in its 2022 statement [One Planet, One Habitation](#).

We have posted on the IEF website in [Biodiversity Values Assessment](#) the essential parts of the Summary for Policy Makers, including the ten Key Messages of the report with their explanations, as well as the headlines of the Background Messages. These are grouped as:

- A. Understanding the diverse values of nature;
- B. Measuring and making visible the values of nature;
- C. Leveraging the diverse values of nature for transformative change towards sustainability; and
- D. Embedding the values of nature for transformative decision-making for sustainability.

There are also two boxes in the SPM of particular interest to IEF: *A values perspective on justice and power*, and *Pathways that contribute to just and sustainable futures* and that prioritize distinct underlying values of nature.

Words to Remember



Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator. Its manifestations are diversified by varying causes, and in this diversity there are signs for men of discernment. Nature is God's Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world.

Bahá'u'lláh, from the Tablet of Wisdom

Resources for Local Conversations

By Sara DeHoff

How do we break through the hopeless paralysis so many of us feel about the state of the environment? The problems are so huge it feels like there's nothing we can do.

But what if we shift our perspective? If we start seeing our natural and human resources as wealth, collective wealth, our wealth—there's a lot we can do. And it starts at the local level.

At [Our Prosperous World](#), we're developing a series of conversation starters to help neighbors and communities think about their human and environmental wealth. We'd love your feedback and ideas. Check out [Inspiration for Local Action](#) and let us know what you think. Or contact Sara DeHoff at sarad@ourprosperousworld.com.

Exploring agricultural policies in light of the oneness of humanity

Towards a Sustainable Food System A new Bahá'í International Community statement Brussels, 13 September 2022

The Brussels Office of the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) has released a statement titled Towards a Sustainable Food System, which explores the implications of the principle of the oneness of humanity for improving global food security.

The BIC presented its statement to the Ministers of Agriculture at the European Union (EU) who had gathered in the Czech Republic to discuss policies relating to food production and distribution.

The discussions at that gathering, reads the statement, “provide a timely opportunity for the discourse to... address systemic challenges,” highlighting the need for analysis to account for the broader impact of EU agricultural policies not just in Europe, but throughout the world.

The BIC proposes, in its statement, that widening participation in decision-making processes “must be understood not merely as negotiation aimed at producing a tolerable consensus, but as a collective investigation into what sustainable food systems

entail, in which all meaningfully engage and to which all contribute.”

Rachel Bayani of the Brussels Office says: “The world is in need of a food system that is sustainable, non-exploitative, and provides for all of humanity. No single actor and no single continent currently possess all the insights that would allow for a food system to be placed on a solid foundation.

“What we need is a collective inquiry and learning process where peoples from all regions of the world, from researchers to farmers, think about this challenge together and are connected to discussions where meaningful decisions are being made about food systems.”

The statement is available on the [BIC website](#) and the [IEF website](#) as well as versions in [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

Source: Baha'i World News Service, 7 October 2022, <https://news.bahai.org/story/1619/>

Food Loss and Waste

International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste 29 September

About one third of all food produced is wasted, including 17 per cent at the retail and consumer levels, while over 800 million people suffer from hunger. This has been further exacerbated by the pandemic and the global food crisis. [More than 28% of the planet's arable land](#) is used to produce food that is wasted.

29 September is the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste, urging action to raise awareness about this global challenge. Everyone has a role to play in realizing the vision of a greener world without hunger and malnutrition, where no one is left behind.

The fact that substantial amounts of food are

produced but not eaten by humans has substantial negative impacts: environmentally, socially and economically. Estimates suggest that 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed.

Reducing food waste at retail, food service and household level can provide multi-faceted benefits for both people and the planet. However, the true scale of food waste and its impacts have not been well understood until now. As such, the opportunities provided by food waste reduction have remained largely untapped and under-exploited. If we want to get serious about tackling food waste, we need to increase efforts to measure food and inedible parts wasted at retail and

consumer level, and track food waste generation in kilograms per capita at country level. Only with reliable data, we are going to be able to track progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 12.3, which aims at halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

The [Food Waste Index Report 2021](#) aims at supporting the goals of SDG 12.3. It does so by presenting the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modelling to date, generating a new estimate of global food waste;

and publishing a methodology for countries to measure food waste, at household, food service and retail level, to track national progress towards 2030 and to report on SDG 12.3. Countries using this methodology will generate strong evidence to guide a national strategy on food waste prevention, that is sufficiently sensitive to pick up changes in food waste over two- or four-year intervals, and that enables meaningful comparisons between countries globally.

SOURCE in part:

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/unep-food-waste-index-report-2021>

Rethinking Global Cooperation Report: Three New Frameworks for Collective Action in an Age of Uncertainty

a new Report by the Stimson Center and the Doha Forum

Source: <https://ggin.stimson.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/GGIN-Report-0091722-17-Final.pdf>

In 2022, the growing impacts of climate change have been felt across the globe, from prolonged drought in the Middle East and North Africa, to erratic monsoons in South Asia and record-breaking heat waves in Europe and China. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic—which reached the tragic milestone of one million deaths within the first eight months of this year—and the ongoing war in Ukraine and other violent conflicts have impeded global progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. To address these and other pressing global challenges, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for, one year ago in his [Our Common Agenda](#) report, a Summit of the Future to improve collective action worldwide. Among the summit's anticipated outcomes are a Declaration on Future Generations, a Global Digital Compact, and a New Agenda for Peace. This report elaborates on the challenges, proposed major elements, and potential spoilers to be overcome for each of these global policy frameworks. It further argues that meaningful civil society engagement in the summit's preparations can reassure all stakeholders that decisions taken are well-informed, enjoy broad social ownership, and generate a sense of co-responsibility in supporting their implementation. The report will serve as an important resource for the Doha Forum community, the Global Governance Innovation Network, and policymakers, researchers, and advocates supporting the Summit of the Future preparations.

Risk of passing multiple climate tipping points escalates above 1.5°C global warming

International Science Council news report

first published by the Earth Commission on 9 September 2022

Multiple climate tipping points could be triggered if global temperature rises beyond 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, according to a major new analysis co-authored by several Earth Commissioners published in the journal *Science*. Even at current levels of global heating the world is already at risk of passing five dangerous climate tipping points, and risks increase with each tenth of a degree of

further warming.

An international research team synthesized evidence for tipping points, their temperature thresholds, timescales, and impacts from a comprehensive review of over 200 papers published since 2008, when climate tipping points were first rigorously defined. They have increased the list of potential tipping points from nine to

sixteen.

The research... concludes human emissions have already pushed Earth into the tipping points danger zone.

Five of the sixteen may be triggered at today's temperatures: the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets, widespread abrupt permafrost thaw, collapse of convection in the Labrador Sea, and massive die-off of tropical coral reefs. Four of these move from possible events to likely at 1.5°C global warming, with five more becoming possible around this level of heating.

Lead author David Armstrong McKay from Stockholm Resilience Centre, University of Exeter, and the Earth Commission says:

We can see signs of destabilization already in parts of the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, in permafrost regions, the Amazon rainforest, and potentially the Atlantic overturning circulation as well.

David Armstrong McKay

The world is already at risk of some tipping points. As global temperatures rise further, more tipping points become possible. The chance of crossing tipping points can be reduced by rapidly cutting greenhouse gas emissions, starting immediately.

The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), stated that risks of triggering climate tipping points become high by around 2°C above preindustrial temperatures and very high by 2.5-4°C.

This new analysis indicates that Earth may have already left a 'safe' climate state when temperatures exceeded approximately 1°C warming. A conclusion of the research is therefore that even the United Nations' Paris Agreement goal to limit warming to well-below 2°C and preferably 1.5°C is not enough to fully avoid dangerous climate change. According to the assessment, tipping point likelihood increases markedly in the 'Paris range' of 1.5-2°C warming, with even higher risks beyond 2°C.

The study provides strong scientific support for the Paris Agreement and associated efforts to limit

global warming to 1.5°C, because it shows that the risk of tipping points escalates beyond this level. To have a 50% chance of achieving 1.5°C and thus limiting tipping point risks, global greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by half by 2030, reaching net-zero by 2050.

Co-author Johan Rockström, co-chair of the Earth Commission and director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research says:

The world is heading towards 2-3°C of global warming. This sets Earth on course to cross multiple dangerous tipping points that will be disastrous for people across the world. To maintain liveable conditions on Earth, protect people from rising extremes, and enable stable societies, we must do everything possible to prevent crossing tipping points. Every tenth of a degree counts.

Johan Rockström

The researchers categorized the tipping elements into nine systems that affect the entire Earth system, such as Antarctica and the Amazon rainforest, and a further seven systems that, if tipped, would have profound regional consequences. The latter include the West African monsoon and the death of most coral reefs around the equator. Several new tipping elements such as Labrador Sea convection and East Antarctic subglacial basins have been added compared to the 2008 assessment, while Arctic summer sea ice and the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) have been removed for lack of evidence of tipping dynamics.

Co-author Ricarda Winkelmann, a researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and a member of the Earth Commission says:

Importantly, many tipping elements in the Earth system are interlinked, making cascading tipping points a serious additional concern. In fact, interactions can lower the critical temperature thresholds beyond which individual tipping elements begin destabilizing in the long-run.

Ricarda Winkelmann

Source: <https://council.science/current/news/risk-of-passing-multiple-climate-t...>

Climate Tipping Points Warning

United in Science Multi-agency climate science report 13 September 2022

A group of global partner organizations, coordinated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), under the direction of the UN Secretary-General, issued a report compiling the most recent science related to climate change impacts and responses. The publication highlights “the huge gap between aspirations and reality,” and calls for “much more ambitious action” to thwart the increasingly devastating physical and socioeconomic impacts of global warming.

Titled, ‘United in Science,’ the report features contributions by WMO, the Global Carbon Project (GCP), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Met Office (UK), the Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN), the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), which is jointly sponsored by WMO, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), and the International Science Council (ISC).

The report warns that “urgent action is needed to mitigate emissions and adapt to our changing climate.” It also notes that climate-related disasters “set back progress towards achieving the [SDGs] and exacerbate existing poverty and inequality.” The report provides unified scientific information on some of the current and projected climate change impacts to inform decision makers.

The chapters of the report, each drafted by a contributing organization or organizations, address greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations, global GHG emissions and budgets, the state of the global climate in 2018-2022, global climate predictions for 2022-2026, the emissions gap, tipping points in the climate system, climate change in cities, extreme weather events and socioeconomic impacts, and supporting adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) through early warning systems.

The report highlights five key messages:

- Atmospheric GHG concentrations continue to rise. Fossil fuel emissions have now exceeded pre-pandemic levels after a temporary drop due to COVID-19-related lockdowns in 2020 and 2021.
- In recent years, global temperatures and ocean heat have reached record highs. Looking ahead, “there is a 48% chance that, during at least one year in the next five years, annual mean temperature will temporarily be 1.5°C higher than in 1850-1900.”
- Mitigation pledges are insufficient to achieve the Paris Agreement on climate change. More ambitious action is needed to prevent the continued warming that is increasing the likelihood of “tipping points,” or irreversible changes in the climate system.
- Climate change impacts affect billions of people around the world. Cities are responsible for as much as 70% of human-caused emissions. Urban populations will face increasing socioeconomic impacts, and the world’s most vulnerable will suffer most.
- Adaptation is essential to reduce the risks of climate impacts. Early warning systems can save lives, reduce losses and damages, contribute to DRR, and support climate change adaptation.

Speaking at the 13 September 2022 launch, WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said the increasing likelihood and intensity of extreme weather events due to human-induced climate change has exposed the urgent need to “scale up action on early warning systems to build resilience to current and future climate risks in vulnerable communities.”

Source: <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/multi-agency-climate-science-report-warns-abou...>

Link to the report: https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/united_in_science