



LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
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Website www.iefworld.org
Article submission newsletter@iefworld.org
Secretariat Email ief@iefworld.org
President Email ief@iefworld.org
Postal address 12B Chemin de Maisonneuve,

Article Deadline December 10

Christine Muller, General Secretary
Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.
CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva,
Switzerland

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.

IEF Webinars

15th IEF Webinar

Saturday, 3 December, 2022

10am PST California, 1pm EST New York, 6pm GMT, 7pm CET Central Europe,
11:30pm IST India

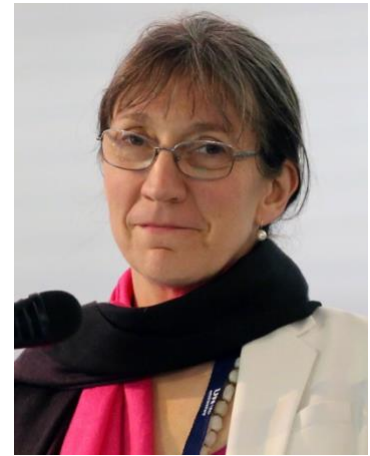
CBD COP15: Countries are preparing new global goals to protect Nature – what do they mean, and what is our role in achieving them?

Speaker: Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen

Register here: tinyurl.com/IEF-Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen

In this webinar I will give a background to and brief summary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the overarching international treaty for addressing the alarming loss of biological species around the world. I will then outline what member states to the convention are hoping to agree on in the upcoming important Conference of the Parties (COP15) that will be held in Montreal between 5 and 18 December. Finally, I will provide reflections on the topics discussed in Montreal in light of the recent statement by the Baha'i International Community, "One Planet, One Habitation."

Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen is Associate Professor with the Public Administration and Policy Group of Wageningen University. She studies the effectiveness and legitimacy of global and multilevel sustainable development governance, and the interaction between knowledge, values, and institutions. Sylvia is a member of the Task Force on Scenarios and Models for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and serves on the Board of Trustees of the One World Trust and the governing board of the International Environment Forum. She has a PhD in political science from Linköping University, Sweden.



This is one of a monthly series of webinars hosted by the International Environment Forum: <https://iefworld.org/>

16th IEF Webinar

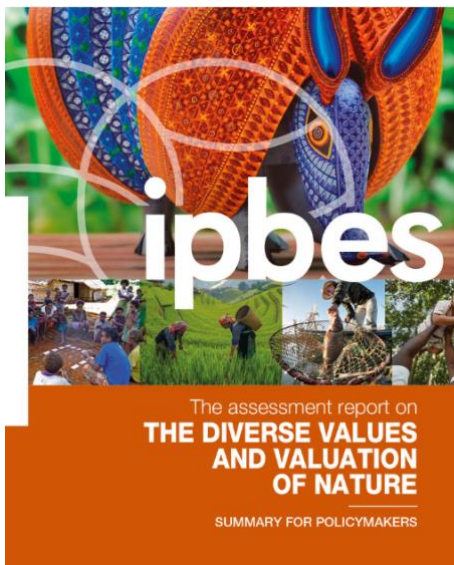
Saturday, 7 January, 2023

The Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

Speaker: Maja Groff

IEF Study of the IPBES Assessment on the Values and Valuation of Nature

The International Environment Forum organized a study of the *IPBES Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature*. IPBES stands for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.



IEF President Arthur Dahl prepared a [summary](#) of the Assessment's [Summary for Policymakers](#).

He also used beautiful [slides](#) for the study sessions which he facilitated. The study took place in three meetings at the end of October / beginning of November. There were 8 to 10 participants in each session with a total of 15 different participants, mostly IEF members.

In certain sections, Arthur Dahl pointed out similarities between this IPBES Assessment and the statement of the Baha'i International Community [One Planet, One Habitation - A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World](#).

The discussions were lively and much appreciated by everyone. Here are a few of the important findings in the *IPBES Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature*:

- Decisions based on narrow set of market values of nature underpin the current global biodiversity crisis.
- Achieving sustainable and just futures requires the recognition and integration of diverse values of nature into political and economic decisions.
- Ignoring, excluding or marginalizing local values often leads to socio-environmental

conflicts linked to value clashes, especially in the context of power asymmetries, which undermines the effectiveness of environmental policies.

- Recognising the values of local people affected by decisions results in better outcomes for people and nature.
- There is no shortage of methods and approaches to value nature, yet their uptake into decisions remains limited. Less than 5% of published valuation studies report their uptake in policy decisions.
- Transformative change needed to address the global biodiversity crisis relies on shifting away from values that over-emphasize short term and individual material gains to nurturing sustainability-aligned values across society.
- The findings of the Values Assessment are expected to empower the voices of emerging social actors such as women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to promote their role in transformative change.

WHO People-Planet-Health Action Board

IEF participation in new World Health Organization initiative for health promotion

The UN World Health Organization is making a major effort to promote human and environmental well-being and not just curing illnesses. The WHO issued on 21 December 2021 [The Geneva Charter for Well-being](#), developed at a global conference with the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), where over 5000 plus participants met virtually and in Geneva, Switzerland, to agree on the Charter. The Charter builds on the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and the legacy of nine IUHPE global conferences on health promotion, with one of which IEF partnered in 2019. It highlights the need for global commitments to achieve equitable health and social outcomes now and for future generations, without destroying the health of our planet. This charter will drive policy-makers and world leaders to adopt this approach and commit to concrete action.

The IEF was invited to designate a member of the new WHO People-Planet-Health Action Board, a civil society element of the People-Planet-Health Initiative, intended to provide a five year sounding board to inform WHO global policies from "unheard voices" in planetary health. Arthur Dahl of IEF joined nine members from around the world, and they met on 13-14 October 2022 to consider: what does well-being look like on a healthy planet? They presented their conclusions to Dr. Ruediger Krech, WHO Director of Health Promotion, including new forms of global and community accounting, and the need for common values.

The Director asked the Action Board to review and comment on a new draft WHO Achieving Well-being document. They are thinking very much along the lines of the IEF [Global Solidarity Accounting Project](#), including measures beyond GDP, and are also interested in reaching down to the community level.

The organisers of the People-Planet-Health Action Board are active in the IUHPE, with which IEF partnered at its [23rd Annual Conference](#) in Rotorua, New Zealand, in 2019 through Sione Tu'itahi, the IUHPE regional vice-president and a Bahá'í in New Zealand. One of the organisers' academic papers on [People-Planet-Health](#) quotes near the end from a New Zealand health promotion document including text that is almost word-for-word from a Bahá'í reference about world order.

IEF Input on Water to Preparatory Meeting for UN 2023 Water Conference

As part of the IEF accreditation to the UN 2023 Water Conference, IEF representative and water expert Mark Griffin has been participating in the stakeholder consultation and Preparatory Meeting in New York on 24-25 October 2022. In addition to Mark's own professional stakeholder input to the Preparatory Meeting, the IEF made the following formal input as an accredited organisation:

The International Environment Forum proposes to the UN 2023 Water Conference to consider more strongly the manifold values of water to local populations and ecosystems to ensure its effective management.

Water is more than a resource. The aquatic environment is a habitat for many species and provides many ecosystem services. Water also has other values beyond its practical uses. In many cultures, water has social, symbolic and spiritual meanings. The Maori sacred rivers in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and many Pacific Islanders' unity with water and oceans are some examples.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recent Assessment of the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature shows how a broader perspective on natural resources can improve management. Such an approach, with more consultation and participation in decision-making, can lead to better outcomes for water in general.

The Right Time for UN Reform

Baha'i International Community NEW YORK
3 November 2022

Source: <https://www.bic.org/news/now-right-time-un-reform-its-best-time-bic-says-during-talks>



Fundamental change to global governance systems was at the heart of a Baha'i International Community (BIC) event co-hosted recently with the Coalition for the United Nations We Need, entitled "Tipping the Scales: Proposals for UN Reform in a Time of Need."

In addition to considering a number of proposals for reform, the event also explored how such proposals can be implemented—getting from ideation to actualization, in the words of one attendee.

"Too often in the UN we spend a lot of time talking about the what and the when and the why, but not the how," said Ambassador Christopher Lu, of the United States, one of the event's featured respondents.

"Think outside the current construct of the UN," Ambassador Lu added, urging attendees to be audacious in their consultations. "If you were designing it all from scratch, what would you do?"

The fifth in a series exploring the Our Common Agenda (OCA) [report](#) of the UN Secretary General, the event attracted around 100 in-person and online participants, including representatives of over 20 Member States. A link to the unattributed summary of the proceedings can be found in the full article on the IEF website here: https://iefworld.org/index.php/BIC_UNreform2022

Love, Peace and Sustainability

Based on a contribution by IEF President Arthur Dahl to the Triglav Circle
5 November 2022

The [Triglav Circle](#), which addresses the ethical dimension of social issues, met on 5 November to consider the topic "Universal Selfless Love [Agape] as a Political Philosophy and Practice". The following is my attempt to present a Bahá'í perspective on the topic.

The Bahá'í concept of universal selfless love is very broad. The following texts can help us to define such love and its applications, including in politics. The first comes from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith:

"Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul. Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the one means that ensureth true felicity both in this world and the next. Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul. Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, 12)

Today's problems can largely be ascribed to the complete absence of such love in so many individuals and institutions in today's society. This higher human potential for selfless love, ultimately love for that Unknowable Essence or Absolute Reality that we may call God, is in fact our true human purpose. By learning to love the unknown and unknowable, we learn also to love the unknown qualities and potential in ourselves, in others, and in the natural world. This is what unites us with all of humanity and with nature.

Here is one practical application of selfless love, as expressed by the Bahá'í International Community:

"When leaders consider the impact of policies before them, they will need to give thought to what so many might term the human spirit — that essential quality which seeks meaning and aspires to transcendence. These less tangible dimensions of human existence have typically been viewed as confined to the realm of personal belief and lying outside the concern of policymakers and administrators. But experience has shown that progress for all is not attainable if material advancement is divorced from spiritual and ethical advancement.... Only by ensuring that material progress is consciously connected to spiritual and social progress can the promise of a better world be fulfilled."

(Bahá'í International Community, *A Governance Befitting: Humanity and the Path Toward a Just Global Order*, 21 September 2020)

The international governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice, has recently put this into context:

“The global challenges now facing humanity are a severe test of its willingness to put aside short-term self-interest and come to terms with this stark spiritual and moral reality: there is but one, interconnected human family and it shares one precious homeland.”

(Universal House of Justice, 4 January 2022)

“It is through love for all people, and by subordinating lesser loyalties to the best interests of humankind, that the unity of the world can be realized and the infinite expressions of human diversity find their highest fulfilment.... Fostering unity, by harmonizing disparate elements and nurturing in every heart a selfless love for humankind, is the task of religion.... A heart that has embraced love for the whole of humanity will certainly be pained when confronted by the suffering that so many endure because of disunity.”

And they quote ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “... *peace must first be established among individuals, until it leadeth in the end to peace among nations. Wherefore... strive ye with all your might to create, through the power of the Word of God, genuine love, spiritual communion and durable bonds among individuals.*”

(Universal House of Justice, 18 January 2019)

Love is truly the only path to peace and sustainability.

Fly Less!

Wilmette Institute November Sustainable Living Tip

Source: <https://wilmetteinstitute.org/fly-less/>



Whoso cleaveth to justice, can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation. ... The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. ... If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation. ... The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities, ...

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

Flying less is probably the most effective action we can take as individuals to lower our impact on the climate. For example, avoiding an international flight from New York City to London is comparable to the effect of eating vegan for two years. (Vegan means to not eat any animal products such as meat and dairy.) (1)

Flying is also an issue of inequity: The great majority of the world’s population does not fly – they cannot afford it. However, just about 1% of the world population, the frequent flyers, are responsible for more than half of the total emissions from passenger air travel. (2) Economically less advantaged people on the other hand suffer the most from the impacts of climate change such as worsening water scarcity, droughts, heat waves, wildfires, floods, and storms. Every little bit of global warming results in significantly more serious climate disruption which cause deaths and much suffering for many people living today, and even more for future generations.

While there are still some compelling reasons for flying, with love for humanity in our hearts we can no longer fly for mere pleasure.

References

(1) [Frequent fliers are a problem for the planet. Should they pay more?](#) (The Washington Post)

(2) Gössling S. and A. Humpe [The global scale, distribution and growth of aviation: Implications for climate change](#)

Christian churches call for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture

Extracts from an open letter to the Group of Twenty (G20) meeting in Bali, Indonesia 15-16 November 2022

We are on the brink of a major social crisis. Rising inequalities in terms of economic disparity linked with racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other social disparities threaten to reach a breaking point. Signs of this are already being seen worldwide, whether it is racial tensions in the USA and Europe or religious conflict in the South Asian region.

We are amid a climate catastrophe, demanding urgent, deep-seated and concerted transformations in all sectors, including a timely shift out of fossil fuels towards affordable and renewable energy sources in ways that are respectful of Indigenous Peoples' rights. While we previously thought we had a decade to mitigate climate change, we now know that we have even less time to stay below the relatively safe limit of 1.5 °C of warming. Climbing temperatures coupled with rising sea levels and the loss of biodiversity are having devastating impacts including on agriculture that feeds our communities. This is a matter of justice, as climate change affects the destitute, women, and Indigenous Peoples the most, though they contribute least to it.

At the same time and undergirding both the social and climate crisis is a burgeoning debt and broader economic crisis. Amid tighter financial conditions due to the ballooning of government spending during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of low-income countries are currently at high risk of – if not already in – debt distress (World Bank 2022). For many of them, debt servicing – estimated at USD 43 billion in 2022 – is equivalent to half of combined food import bills and public health spending. From higher prices of basic needs to cutbacks in social support, it is always the “least among us” who shoulder the most pain of austerity.

In addition, today we are faced with an alarming food crisis, made worse by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, adding to a set of weather-related disasters. Drought and floods joined by rising international prices of food mean increasing malnutrition and starvation. In just the last two years, the number of severely food insecure people doubled from 135 million to 276 million even as the ten richest billionaires increased their wealth from USD 700 billion to USD 1.3 trillion (WFP 2022 and Oxfam 2022). A global financial market that feeds on and encourages speculation and volatile capital flows first into and now out of developing countries has further aggravated it.

Built on the legacies of colonialism and slavery, the prevailing economic system has profited from the exploitation of people and the planet. The model of growth that it is based on is harmful and unsustainable. While we focus today on the immediate shortages of food, fuel and shelter, in the long run this planet and its people cannot maintain this present system of production and consumption. We need an economic system that is equitable, respects planetary boundaries, involves the participation of all and nourishes the health and resiliency of our communities and ecosystems.

If we are to “recover together” and “recover stronger” from these intertwined crises as a global community, we believe that the G20 Leaders at their Summit meeting in Bali, Indonesia on the 15th and 16th of November 2022 ought to pursue the following measures:

- Adopt new economic and wellbeing indicators that deliver better outcomes for people and the planet and place them at the centre of policymaking. The goal should be ensuring wellbeing for all within planetary boundaries rather than growing gross domestic product or GDP particularly in already high-income countries.
- Stronger rules to curb financial speculation on food, energy and other vital commodities. Financial commodity markets must be regulated to prevent disruptions which make for volatile commodity prices that do not reflect costs of production.
- Adequate social protection for the socio-economically vulnerable (including children, the aged and those unable to work) and support to small farmers. Ensuring healthcare provision, increasing access to education for all girls and women, and expanding support to struggling families and small farmers practicing natural land regeneration and agro-ecology are critical for protecting livelihoods and helping farmers cope with rising fuel prices and fertiliser shortages.
- An end to subsidies to giant agri-businesses and the fossil fuel industry coupled with fast-tracked and tripled investments in sustainable, community-based agricultural and renewable energy systems. In the face of climate change, the main challenge is to produce enough nutritious and affordable food while reviving biodiversity and substantially cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This entails both a redirection and a radical mobilisation of resources towards alternative food and energy models.
- Cancellation of unsustainable debts and a moratorium on debt payments for low and middle-income countries in debt distress while their debts are being renegotiated. To prevent nations and communities from falling deeper into economic crisis and to avert future debt crises, new mechanisms such as the issuance of SDRs, debt-for-climate swaps, as well as debt restructuring models that bring all creditors to the table must be developed and implemented.
- A stronger global effort of cooperation to realise systems of just taxation to raise resources to fund social protection systems and the public investments needed to address the climate emergency. We reiterate the calls of the ecumenical Zacchaeus Tax campaign for: wealth taxes, measures to stop tax evasion by multinational corporations and the rich, creation of an intergovernmental United Nations (UN) tax body and a UN tax convention, progressive carbon and other pollution taxes, financial transaction taxes, capital gains taxes as well as windfall taxes on oil, gas, food, pharma and other corporations that are reaping excessive gains from the current crises. These proposals developed and supported by policy research and civil society organisations offer real, effective and practical solutions to the financing gap.

We are all interdependent in God's whole creation. Therefore, together we are called to immediate actions to transform unsustainable and deadly systems towards an economy of life for the benefit of planet earth and all humankind.

Authors: The call for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture or NIFEA is a collaborative ecumenical effort that brings together the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the Council for World Mission and represents more than half a billion Christians across the world.

Source: https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/NIFEA-Letter-To-G20-Leaders-Summit_07112022.pdf

World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency 2022

26 October 2022

An international coalition of researchers says in a report published on 26 October 2022 that the Earth's vital signs have worsened to the point that "humanity is unequivocally facing a climate emergency."

The report, [World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency 2022](#), published in the journal *BioScience*, notes that 16 of 35 planetary vital signs the authors use to track climate change are at record extremes.

The report's authors share new data illustrating increasing frequency of extreme heat events, rising global tree cover loss because of fires, and a greater prevalence of the mosquito-borne dengue virus.

They also note large increases in fossil fuel energy consumption following COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns – despite an upswing in commitments for fossil fuel divestment – and a rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels to 418 parts per million, the highest on record.

William Ripple, a distinguished professor in the OSU College of Forestry, and postdoctoral researcher Christopher Wolf are the lead authors of the report, and 10 other U.S. and global scientists are co-authors. The report follows by five years the "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice" published by Ripple in *BioScience* and co-signed by more than 15,000 scientists in 184 countries.

"As we can see by the annual surges in climate disasters, we are now in the midst of a major climate crisis, with far worse to come if we keep doing things the way we've been doing them," Wolf said. "We implore our fellow scientists to join us in advocating for research-based approaches to climate and environmental decision-making."

Other co-authors of the report are from UCLA, the University of Sydney, Independent University Bangladesh, the University of Cambridge, the University of Exeter, Bezos Earth Fund and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

"Climate change is not a standalone issue," said Saleemul Huq of Independent University Bangladesh. "It is part of a larger systemic problem of ecological overshoot where human demand is exceeding the regenerative capacity of the biosphere. To avoid more untold human suffering, we need to protect nature, eliminate most fossil fuel emissions and support socially just climate adaptations with a focus on low-income areas that are most vulnerable."

The report points out that in the three decades since more than 1,700 scientists signed the original "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" in 1992, global greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 40%.

"As Earth's temperatures are creeping up, the frequency or magnitude of some types of climate disasters may actually be leaping up," said the University of Sydney's Thomas Newsome. "We urge our fellow scientists around the world to speak out on climate change."

"World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency 2022" is an update of a paper published in *BioScience* three years ago. The Alliance of World Scientists, an independent organization formed to be a collective voice on environmental sustainability and human well-being, continues to collect co-signers on the 2019 paper. To date more than 14,000 scientists from 158 countries have signed.

Based on Oregon State University press release 26 October 2022 <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/968620>

Climate Crisis to International Court of Justice

by Emily Wilkinson, Matt Bishop, Nadia Sánchez Castillo-Winckels
The Conversation, 4 November 2022

Why a chain of tiny Pacific islands wants an international court opinion on responsibility for the climate crisis

Small island states are losing their patience with big polluting nations as they suffer the devastating impacts of climate change. Without significant movement at the forthcoming COP27 climate talks in Egypt, a pivotal vote at the next UN general assembly meeting, brought by the tiny Pacific islands of Vanuatu, could open the floodgates to international climate litigation.

A core group of 16 states led by Vanuatu, will table a draft resolution at the General Assembly in December requesting that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) gives an “advisory opinion” to clarify the rights and obligations of states under international law in relation to the adverse effects of climate change.

Vanuatu needs only a simple majority of members present and voting (50% plus one), and support is growing. If successful, the baton passes to the ICJ to bring legal clarity to this complex issue.

The advisory opinion would be non-binding. Nonetheless, such an opinion draws enormous moral power and legal authority. Although the vote takes place after COP27, Vanuatu’s initiative could have an influence on negotiations in Egypt.

Responsibility and compensation for loss and damage

Low-income island states like Vanuatu have contributed the least to climate change, but as a group are the most directly affected by it. For low-lying atolls in particular, sea-level rise poses an existential threat – some Pacific nations will be entirely underwater by the end of the century. So it’s not surprising to see states seeking clarity from the ICJ. Vanuatu has taken the lead in going to international courts, but others could follow suit.

As far back as 1991, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) first called for a mechanism to compensate countries affected by sea level rise. These days, there are calls for “loss and damage” payments to address impacts associated with climate change that cannot be adapted to.



Image Credit Seiji, Unsplash.com

But repeated attempts to raise the profile of loss and damage within the negotiations have been met with hostility from rich countries. At COP26 in Glasgow last year, AOSIS, supported by a coalition of 134 developing countries and China, called for a new facility to finance loss and damage, but this was firmly blocked by the US and EU.

The costs of responding to climate disasters in developing countries could be in the trillions of dollars by 2050, and rich countries will want to avoid any legally binding commitment to meet these costs with public resources. But an ICJ advisory opinion could help unstick negotiations, as the threat of expansive litigation in the future may encourage the rich countries to capitulate.

Diverging interests

All of this plays into the increasingly contentious geopolitics between developing island states and larger, richer nations. A simple divide between rich and poor, north and south, or in the lingo of climate policy “Annex I” and “non-Annex I” countries does not tell the whole story.

For instance, many middle income “emerging” countries are rapidly industrialising. Their fast-growing emissions are causing their interests to diverge from those of small island states, and it is unclear whether the large group of developing countries will remain united in loss and damage negotiations.

Recognising the power of small states

Vanuatu’s initiative acknowledges the failures of the climate change negotiations but exemplifies the unique ways that small island developing states can exercise power.

First, the recognition by the country’s president that the ICJ is “the only principal organ of the UN system that has not yet been given an opportunity to help address the climate crisis” is extremely insightful. This seemingly banal observation about a process with no legal force, actually carries huge political significance because, if given the opportunity, the ICJ could make a judgement that powerful polluting countries would rather not have to hear.

Second, Vanuatu’s initiative is triggered by the low level of ambition under current nationally determined contributions (the amount each country pledges to cut its emissions by). International law requires states to prevent harm to the environment and protect human rights. At best, these obligations are not being met; at worst, they are actively being undermined by the lack of transformative climate action being demanded by vulnerable states.

Third, this initiative is being spearheaded by a country of just 300,000 people across 83 islands and atolls, many of which are literally going under water. This is a remarkable example of the kind of leverage that can be exercised by small and vulnerable states. In the absence of conventional sources of power (size and military might), island states have been able to build multilateral coalitions and leverage institutional forms of influence (such as their UN membership, international law, and moral persuasion) to redress the imbalance.

Powerful nations should stand up and take notice. Vanuatu and its partners are pursuing a groundbreaking diplomatic strategy and others will likely follow.

But regardless of the ICJ initiative outcome, any acknowledged responsibility for loss and damage caused by climate change will only have meaningful effects when countries redress them. For the sake of the smallest, most vulnerable nations on earth, it’s high time that they did.

Authors: Emily Wilkinson (Co-director, Caribbean Resilience and Recovery Knowledge Network, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus)

Matt Bishop (Senior Lecturer in International Politics, University of Sheffield)

Nadia Sánchez Castillo-Winckels (Visiting Research Fellow, Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development, Utrecht University)

Source: The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/why-a-chain-of-tiny-pacific-islands-wants-an-international-court-opinion-on-responsibility-for-the-climate-crisis-193595>

Keynes on the real values of life

Excerpts from a paper by economist
John Maynard Keynes, 1930

Blog by Arthur Dahl

The famous economist John Maynard Keynes published a most interesting paper in 1930 in which he took a long view of where the economy was going. It is so insightful about what is wrong with materialistic economic thinking and its unsustainable consequences that I felt compelled to share excerpts more widely. For those who quote the invisible hand of self-interest as the economic paradigm, here is a valuable antidote.

After referring to the growth of capital and of science and technological inventions, with advances in housing, transport, industry and soon in agriculture, creating temporary technological unemployment, but which would ultimately lead to everyone being better off and solve the economic problem, Keynes raises the next challenge in the following excerpts.

“Now it is true that the needs of human beings may seem to be insatiable. But they fall into two classes – those needs which are absolute in the sense that we feel them whatever the situation of our fellow human beings may be, and those which are relative in the sense that we feel them only if their satisfaction lifts us above, makes us feel superior to, our fellows. Needs of the second class, those which satisfy the desire for superiority, may indeed be insatiable; for the higher the general level, the higher still are they. But this is not so true of the absolute needs – a point may soon be reached, much sooner perhaps than we are all of us aware of, when these needs are satisfied in the sense that we prefer to devote our further energies to non-economic purposes.”

To continue reading more excerpts from Keynes' paper, go here:

<https://iefworld.org/index.php/node/1330>

Items of Interest

UNICEF: Young climate activists demand action and inspire hope

“Climate change impacts everyone but the future belongs to young people. Meet some of the youth activists on the frontline”.

[Watch and read](#) what youth around the world tell us.

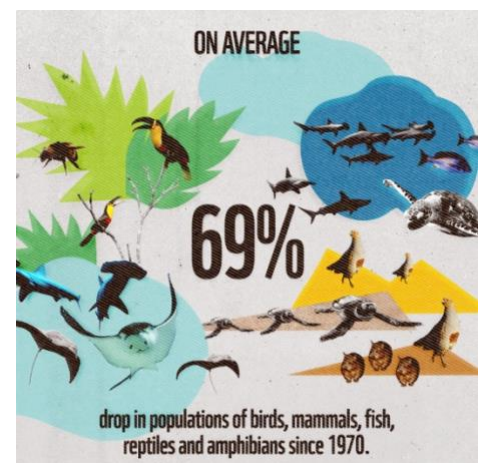
WWF's Living Planet Report 2022

[The WWF Living Planet Report 2022](#) reveals that nature is being lost at an alarming rate, with species populations having declined, on average, by 69% since 1970.

WWF has also created a youth edition of their 2022 Living Planet Report that uses engaging infographics and visuals to highlight the state of our planet and explain the causes of decline, what this means for us, and what we can all do to help reverse nature loss.

All resources can be found on the WWF's Living Planet Report 2022 website:

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/living-planet-report-2022>



Faith and forests discussion with Dr. Nalini Nadkarni

On October 18, Interfaith Power & Light hosted a webinar with pioneering forest canopy biologist Dr. Nalini Nadkarni. Dr. Nadkarni talked about her work studying the forest canopy and that many faith and spiritual traditions have trees and forests as central parts of their respective religious texts. The recording is available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/InterfaithPowerandLight/videos/475836180990727>

COP27: Closing the Climate Adaptation Investment Gap in Small Island States and Coastal Communities

The Stimson Center hosted a hybrid event in anticipation of COP 27 whose major goal is to turn past climate pledges into action. Yet during COP26, island states and least developed countries across the Global South called for greater focus and more resources devoted to climate adaptation and resilience. Recent extreme weather events in places like Pakistan and the Philippines underscore this urgency. With the UN estimating that \$300 billion is needed annually to fill the adaptation gap in developing countries, tensions run high as world leaders grapple with ways to reduce carbon while also building resilience where it is needed most.

You can watch the ~ one hour discussion with US leadership, the World Bank, and the COP 27 Presidency's Egyptian government [here](#).

Global Methane Assessment: 2030 Baseline Report

The report is available [here](#).

8 billion strong – infinite possibilities for people and planet

“Our world is approaching a landmark moment in human history. On 15 November 2022, the global population is projected to reach 8 billion people. Thanks to science, technology, and groundbreaking innovations, we now live longer and healthier. It took the human family 125 years to get from 1 billion to 2 billion. But only 12 years to grow from 7 to 8 billion.”

[Watch the 2 min. video.](#)

Source: [UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(UN DESA\) Nov. 1, 2022 Newsletter](#)