



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.

**IEF Webinars**

**By IEF Webinar Coordinator Khela Baskett**

**18<sup>th</sup> IEF Webinar**

**Sunday, March 5th, 2023**

10am PST California  
1pm EST New York  
6pm GMT  
7pm CET Central Europe

**"Book Club" Style Webinar on "The Teachings of Grass"**

**Register here:** <https://tinyurl.com/TeachingsOfGrass>



Photo Credit: Unsplash, Kristine Cinate

**Description:** We'll be using the "Book Club" format for our webinar again this month, which is focused on member participation, discussion, and principals we can implement in our lives to live in harmony with our natural world.

We'll listen to Robin Kimmerer read the chapter "Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass" from her book "Braiding Sweetgrass." This chapter discusses our assumptions about how nature works, and interdependence among species.

You do not need to read ahead, as we will listen to the audiobook chapter together, but for your reference, [here's the book](#).

Last month's "**Book Club**" Webinar: **Council of Pecans**, also from Braiding Sweetgrass, was a great success. The participants all enjoyed a very lively discussion. In order to encourage maximum participation and discussion, "Book Club" Webinars are not recorded.

### Recording of the 16<sup>th</sup> IEF Webinar is available

The talk by **Maja Groff**, International lawyer, on **the International Adoption of a Right to a Healthy and Sustainable Environment** is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r43tnAQhvoM>

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## Members Corner

The IEF warmly welcomes the following new members and associates:

### Members

Margot Brinn, USA  
Arsila Dian Karmel, Indonesia  
John Fetzek, USA  
Janice Jensen, USA  
Janelle Heise, USA  
Robin Dogruluk, Netherlands  
Rebecca Ellison, USA  
Faran Fanaeian, India



### Associates

Faraz Maani, China  
Dawn Egerton, USA  
Louis Offstein, USA  
Deborah Griffin, USA

### **Study of One Planet, One Habitation: A Baha'i Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World**

Three IEF groups are currently in the process of studying this statement by the Baha'i International Community together, all benefitting from the facilitation of IEF President Arthur Dahl. One group is the initiative of the IEF Youth Task Force with participants from the Netherlands to Costa Rica. The other two groups are planned so that participants in different time zones can attend. It is truly amazing how we can get together from all over globe and learn from the perspectives from different cultures. Participants come from all over the world such as from Australia, China, Colombia, France, Italy, Malawi, Kiribati, Ukraine, USA, and Switzerland.

Of course, everyone can read the statement for themselves. The statement is available for download in a [beautiful PDF](#) version as well as in a [text version](#) that is more suitable for study. It is now also available in [Romanian](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#).

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## Association for Baha'i Studies Agriculture Group Webinars

**Sunday, February 26 at 1:00pm EST / 19:00 CET**

**Unlocking the Potential of the Youth for Agricultural Transformation in Kenya**  
with speaker **Holiance Odhiambo**

Rural youth are the future of food security. Yet around the world, few young people see a future for themselves in agriculture or rural areas. ([fao.org](http://fao.org))

Agriculture contributes significantly to Kenya's annual Gross Domestic Product despite being primarily characterized by small-scale subsistence farming. It, therefore, holds potential for growth and transformation and employment and livelihood opportunities for many unemployed young Kenyans. This presentation will review various strategies employed in Kenya that seek to address challenges that hinder youth from participating effectively in agriculture and its value chains. In the end, the presentation will highlight some of the impacts of the policies and strategies.

### **About Holiance Odhiambo**

I have served in the Office of External Affairs of the Baha'is of Kenya as a coordinator since 2019. The office explores the discourse themes on the environment and climate change; peace and national cohesion; sustainable development; and gender equality. Previously, I worked for the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), one of the CGIAR centres that conduct research on agroforestry and livelihoods. It is while promoting sustainable land husbandry that I developed a keener interest in smallholder farming. I hold a Bachelor of Environmental Science degree from Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya. I am also a farmer (phone call farmer). Together with my family, we cultivate crops and raise livestock in Lambwe valley for home consumption, often selling surplus.

[Sign up here](#) to receive the announcement with more information and with a link.

### **Agriculture and the International Order**

The Association for Baha'i Studies Agriculture Group offered a webinar on *Agriculture and the International Order* with Daniel Perell from the Baha'i International Community (and IEF member) on January 29. You can listen to the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ3-zpaUCwk>

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## **Global Futures Forum March 20 – 22, 2023**

Source: Coalition for the UN We Need C4UN: <https://c4unwn.org/global-futures-forum/>

The United Nations Summit of the Future (SOTF) is proposed for 22-23 September 2024 in New York to advance ideas for governance arrangements in the areas of international concern. In order to ensure that diverse civil society perspectives are engaged in the preparatory process of the 2024 Summit of the Future, a civil society-led **Global Futures Forum (GFF) is proposed for 20-21 March 2023 in New York, followed by a Missions Engagement Day on 22 March**. The forum will comprise **two days of discussions and action in a hybrid format** to ensure global reach, preceded by multiple consultation tracks, immediately followed by a "Civil Society-UN Missions Engagement Day."

### **Purpose**

1. Explore the design, feasibility, and potential impact of wide-ranging proposals, from the unique vantage point of civil society, as a contribution to the Summit of the Future's preparations.
2. Raise awareness, build ownership, and mobilize energy around the promise of the Summit of the Future to deliver on an ambitious set of outcomes that reinforce and help to accelerate the achievement of a reformed UN system and Agenda 2030. Model true partnership and creativity worldwide among civil society to ensure active and equal participation across age groups, geographic representation, professional disciplines, and other forms of global diversity.

Go here for more information: <https://c4unwn.org/global-futures-forum/>

## Chile Temple

### Promoting a harmonious relationship with the natural world

Bahá'í World News Service  
Santiago, Chile, 11 January 2023

The site of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile, was recently host to a gathering that marked a significant milestone in a conservation project aimed at safeguarding the diverse ecosystems in the Andes Mountains.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Mountain Project, which was initiated six years ago, has engaged the public and private sectors to protect the natural environment and cultural heritage of the Santiago Metropolitan and Valparaíso regions, including in Peñalolén, where the temple is situated.



Image Credit: [Baha'i World News](#), A view of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Chile in its natural surroundings

Carolina Leitao Alvarez, the mayor of Peñalolén, expressed her appreciation for the role the temple has played in promoting environmental stewardship in the region since its inauguration. “These grounds have a special meaning because... the efforts [of the Bahá'í community] to restore these foothills has been very important,” she said.

Maximiliano Cox Larrain, a representative of the GEF project, spoke about the steps taken to reforest and conserve the flora and fauna and on the temple site, saying: “By using native plants, minimizing visual obstructions, and engaging in ecological restoration, the design and landscaping of the gardens create a tranquil space in which the city finds silence, and visitors can connect with nature. This connection inspires meaningful conversations and invites you to approach the temple in a state of meditation and reflection.”

Other attendees included the Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Environment, as well as representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme, the GEF Mountain Project, and civil society organizations.

Veronica Oré, the director of the House of Worship, explained in her remarks that beyond conservation efforts on the site, the Bahá'í community has sought to further support the project by creating spaces for conversations that explore a holistic vision of progress grounded in spiritual principles such as the oneness of humanity.

“The planet, its peoples, and its creatures have suffered greatly from a materialistic mindset that views

the individual as purely economic and a self-interested unit, competing with others to accumulate an ever-increasing share of the world's material resources," she said.

Mrs. Oré explained that by viewing progress through the lens of the oneness of humanity, one can see with greater clarity that true prosperity must include the flourishing of all people and the planet that we all share. This suggests that material progress alone is not enough, and that true progress must also include the spiritual and moral development of individuals and society.

Reflecting on the event, Luis Sandoval, a member of Chile's Bahá'í Office of External Affairs, says that the House of Worship has played an important part in inspiring this vision, "catalyzing people's reorientation toward their spiritual nature."

The Bahá'í temple, says Mr. Sandoval, "has acted as a point of attraction for those seeking to work for the renewal of society."

SOURCE: <https://news.bahai.org/story/1638/>

## Vanuatu leading on climate change and environment

Case study submitted by Fidel Zebeta  
Climate Diplomacy team, Vanuatu  
January 2023

The single greatest threat to our very existence is climate change. Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world [1](#). Urgent action is required to deal with increasing risks of heatwaves becoming a new normal, forest wildfire, droughts and floods that are already exceeding plants and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals. These weather extremes are occurring simultaneously, causing cascading impacts that are increasingly difficult to manage. They have exposed billions of living things to acute food and water insecurity, especially in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and South America.

It is past time to recognize that climate action is not a mere matter of State discretion; it is an exacting requirement under international law. Now is a critical window in which humanity has a last chance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent catastrophic climate change. Future generations will look back at what present generations did, or failed to do, to rise to this challenge.

The devastating impacts of climate change can no longer be ignored. Science confirms that human caused climate change is unequivocal. Past and present anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are responsible for the impacts we now face, and the loss and damage we now suffer.

Vanuatu has been ranked the world's most disaster-prone country for both climate related and geological hazards in an annual World-Risk-Report published by the United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS). Thus, Vanuatu itself has experienced environmental extinction where a number of endemic species of plants and animals are now gone, as well as marine species.

Plants and animals are sensitive beings that can be influenced by the slow onset change of our climate. It changes the way species and populations interact with the environment and one another. These impacts can be felt throughout an entire ecosystem [2](#).

The Vanuatu government and NGOs are working together in introducing an Ecosystem-based adaptation approach. This is a strategy for adapting to climate change that harnesses nature-based solutions and ecosystem services. For instance, protecting coastal habitats like mangroves provides natural flood defences; reforestation can hold back desertification and recharge groundwater supplies in times of drought; and water bodies like rivers and lakes provide natural drainage to reduce flooding.

Community Conservation Areas in some islands in Vanuatu earn carbon credits to support

communities and keep forests standing as a way for carbon sequestration to fight against climate change.

Vanuatu is building a coalition of States seeking a non-binding Advisory Opinion on Climate Change from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to gain clarity on how existing International Laws can be applied to strengthen action on climate change, protect people and the environment and save the Paris Agreement.

An advisory opinion of the ICJ will draw a clear line between what actions can be negotiated and what is already required by international law. An advisory opinion from the ICJ will foster ambition in the pledges made by States, which is crucial for the success of the process set in motion by the Paris Agreement and will send a clear signal to present and future generations that no stone is being left unturned in this critical decade to address the climate impacts on human rights, justice and inter-generational equity and save our environment.

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## Community Organizing Toolkit on Ecosystem Restoration

IUCN UNEP FAO

Ecosystem degradation has reached the far corners of our planet from our precious rainforests to our priceless reefs. Irresponsible human activities have caused and exacerbated our climate crisis and ecosystem degradation, forcing us to cope with biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, dramatic weather events, and more. A recent UN report found that more than 75% of the earth's terrestrial areas are substantially degraded. This has had a huge impact on biodiversity, human health, and economic well-being. But there is hope. Individuals around the world are rallying around our planet and searching for solutions to our biggest environmental impacts.

IUCN has put together the "Community Organizing Toolkit on Ecosystem Restoration" to equip change-makers with the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to restore ecosystems back to productive and healthy spaces. This toolkit shows the importance of community organizing, offers some potential aspects of a project, presents successful examples of community-organized restoration and then guides to a wealth of tools including online and financial resources.

It is important to note that this toolkit is for everyone, from the individual looking to restore their backyard or block, to the existing nonprofit looking to make lasting change in their region. Whatever the needs or obstacles may be, the restoration journey, or the ultimate goals, this toolkit will help to take action.

The toolkit can be downloaded at [https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/iucn\\_community\\_organiz...](https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/iucn_community_organiz...)

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## Tree growing for conservation and ecosystem restoration: A guide for faith-based actors

Worldwide Fund for Nature  
8 December 2022

The first-ever tree growing guide for faith groups aims to support organizations in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.

Trillion Trees, WWF and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have jointly published the first-ever comprehensive guide to tree growing, designed for use by faith groups across the world.

Launched in December 2022 at the UN Biodiversity Conference COP15 in Montreal, Canada,

the *Tree growing for conservation and ecosystem restoration: A guide for faith-based actors* outlines a straightforward and informative step-by-step approach to assist faith groups in planning and implementing tree-growing initiatives and engaging in restoring their local environment to benefit people, nature, and the climate.

The guide sets out six clear steps providing a practical framework for any faith-based organisation or group to adapt to its own community and context. Each step was developed in consultation with faith actors on the ground already planting millions of trees, using evidence-based and proven approaches to restore multiple benefits through successful tree growing. The guide includes detailed guidance and a checklist for each step, ranging from agreeing the purpose and partnership for tree-growing, developing, and implementing the plan and finally, caring for trees as they grown and sharing knowledge with the global restoration community.

*Tree growing for conservation and ecosystem restoration: A guide for faith-based actors* will be available in 10 languages and emphasises the importance of growing the right trees in the right places and taking a rights-based approach, working in collaboration with local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

The guide can be downloaded

from [https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our\\_focus/forests\\_practice/?7230441/](https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/forests_practice/?7230441/) (12 mb)

## Furthering Science Education for Sustainable Development through Educational Streams

By IEF Associate Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra

Institutionalising science education at all levels of educational streams is essential in order to address sustainable development (SD) defined here as “an approach to the economic development of a country without compromising the quality of the environment for future generations.” This also includes social transformation. In today’s world situation (where economies are confronted with multiple developmental challenges) the bottom line should be the scientific community and sustainable development scholars joining hands to ensure a rapid societal transformation toward sustainability. In this context, it is pertinent to note that in today’s world, in the name of development, the price of environmental damage is paid in the form of: (a) land degradation, (b) soil erosion, (c) air and water pollution, and (d) deforestation, to name a few.

Science education, which has the potential to ensure sustainability at all levels, locations, and times, is, in a true sense, a key venue for this transformation. The author of this manuscript argues that learners of all educational streams (including formal, non-formal, and extension [community] outreach channels) should be placed as critical actors with initiatives that are aimed at ensuring sustainability in a science education context. It is imperative for sustainable development advocates to pursue meaningful efforts directed towards helping learners (student community) reimagine “what science means to them and to society”. The author of this brief review argues that there is a need to design a theoretical framework within which science education, as an educational intervention strategy, can be used for the purpose of ensuring sustainable development under all conditions. Importantly, from the point of view of strengthening the learners’ science engagement, national governments and all other involved stakeholders are urged to devise strategies for climate change learning and actions (more particularly place-based, participatory, and action-focused pedagogies).

Thus, it is imperative to focus on the global need for sustainable development through

educational interventions. This growing realization has resulted from the fact that “the quality of education is critical for SD” and has led authors in high-quality science education journals to call for the improvement of education at all levels for the purpose of ensuring overall sustainable development.

*Author:* Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra is an Independent Researcher (Scholar) having retired from the Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension S. N. D. T. Women’s University, Mumbai, India. His areas of expertise include demography, population and development education, sustainable development, and other allied multi-disciplinary subject areas.

## Planned science-policy panel on chemicals, wastes and pollution

UNEA Open-ended Working Group  
February 2023

Currently, there is no global science-policy panel that broadly addresses chemicals, wastes, and pollution. Policymakers need strong science to help inform sound policy. Such an interface between science and policy can help link these two communities and help them communicate: the scientists can speak to policymakers in a way relevant to policy, and policymakers can query scientists to learn more about possible options.

In March 2022 the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) agreed to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. Substantive discussions will begin at an Open-ended Working Group meeting on 30 January-2 February 2023.

There are many science-policy bodies in the field of chemicals and wastes. Several science-policy bodies are linked to existing chemicals and waste treaties, and, as a result, tend to have narrower mandates, such as screening chemicals to determine if they are persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and should be listed in the Stockholm Convention on POPs. These bodies have provided valuable advice and helped advance knowledge and bring together scientists worldwide, often to work on discrete questions. The new science-policy panel is to complement, but not duplicate, the work of these many bodies while providing a broader overview of scientific knowledge.

The open working group meeting will focus on the new panel’s scope and functions, which both raise challenging questions. The scope could be enormous: there are hundreds of thousands of chemicals in products on the market, hundreds of waste streams, and even more pollutants. Participants will discuss how to define the panel’s scope in a way that complements existing bodies and responds to global and national scientific and policy concerns. They will also have to contend with uncertainty, as there are many chemicals for which public data is lacking.

Science-policy bodies can serve many functions, from awareness raising and capacity building to providing policy-relevant advice and identifying emerging issues. Awareness raising is a crucial function many hope the new panel can take on, to help bring pollution-related issues on par with climate change and biodiversity.

The UNEA mandate also calls for a “horizon scanning” function, unique among global science-policy bodies, including those for climate change and biodiversity. The new panel could be tasked with identifying future chemicals, wastes, and pollution challenges where preventative action can help avoid the worst health and environmental impacts.

SOURCE: based on IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin <https://enb.iisd.org/oewg1-2-science-policy-panel-contribute-further-so...>

## Items of Interest

### Legacy website on the life and message of Richard St. Barbe Baker

IEF member Paul Mantle sent us the link to a legacy website on the life and message of Richard St. Barbe Baker, "The Man of the Trees," whom many consider the greatest forester in history. Paul put it together several years ago, but hopes that it will still be of interest and use to the IEF community: <https://web.archive.org/web/20100108210416/http://www.manofthetrees.org/index.htm>

### Principles for Ecosystem Restoration to Guide the United Nations Decade 2021 – 2030

To support the implementation of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and help achieve its goals, there is a need for a shared vision of ecosystem restoration. A key step in creating a shared vision of ecosystem restoration is to adopt principles that underpin the full set of ecosystem restoration activities. To this end, this brochure presents ten principles for ecosystem restoration including a first principle that orients restoration in the context of the UN Decade, followed by nine best-practice principles. These best-practice principles detail the essential tenets of ecosystem restoration that should be followed to maximize net gain for native biodiversity, ecosystem health and integrity, and human health and well-being, across all biomes, sectors and regions.

[10 Principles for Ecosystem Restoration](#)

### Faith groups help to save disappearing forests

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/faith-groups-help-save-disappearing-forests>

### Global Carbon Budget

Climate Central provides a useful visual and explanation about the sources and effects of carbon pollution, and how the planet balances its carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) budget:

<https://www.climatecentral.org/climate-matters/the-global-carbon-budget-2023?>

