



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

The IEF warmly welcomes the following new members and associates:

Members

- Susan Stephenson, Canada
- Monica Eghrari Ghaem-Maghani, UK
- Philippe Gerling, USA
- Julie Zettl, Canada
- Zayanih Dennis, South Africa
- Kian Taheri, UK
- Nava Khorram, Latvia

Associates

- William Edgar, Canada
- Velankini Suhas Singareddy, India
- Reuben Ikape, Nigeria

We regret to announce the passing of

Associate Edith Rose, RI, USA

Image: "Illumination", papercut by Edith Rose



IEF General Assembly 21 October and IEF Board Election

IEF members and associates are warmly invited to attend the **27th IEF General Assembly which will be held on Saturday, 21 October**. This year, the General Assembly will be held twice so that members from all time zones can attend.

Members are also strongly encouraged to participate in the election of the IEF Governing Board.

Please, look for the invitation to the General Assembly in your Inbox. It contains the times and Zoom links, and the letter to members also contains detailed voting instructions. The deadline for voting is 20 October.

We hope that many of you will be able to attend the General Assembly!

In addition to administrative agenda items such as approval of the Annual Report (<https://iefworld.org/report2023>) and the results of the Governing Board election by IEF members, you are invited to contribute to the consultation about the following topics:

- Brainstorming for ideas how IEF could contribute to the Summit of the Future (SOTF). To prepare for that consultation, you are invited to reflect on the two-page UN description "The Summit of the Future: What would it deliver?" on the IEF website at <https://iefworld.org/SOTFdeliver>.
- How to best implement the [IEF strategic plan](#) and what revisions may now be needed.
- How to encourage the participation of younger people
- How we might follow up on the [Global Solidarity Accounting project](#) and the community conversations it has stimulated.
- You are also encouraged to propose other agenda items and to volunteer for IEF.

IEF Webinar

By IEF Webinar Coordinator Khela Baskett

20th IEF Webinar

Field Reports: Junior Youth Ecological Camps in Colombia and a Baha'i Sponsored Environment Fair in Ottawa

Saturday, November 4th

1pm COT Bogota, Colombia
2pm EDT Ottawa, Canada
6pm GMT
7pm CET Central Europe
9pm EAT Nairobi, Kenya

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/IEF-FieldReports>

We are going to hear field reports from several IEF members about environmental projects they've organized in their home communities. First up, we have Pascal Molineaux, who will tell us about the Junior Youth Ecological Camps he organized in Colombia, in the early 2000's when "Junior Youth" activities were just beginning to be encouraged. Then, Bill and Aaron Kelly will share how the Ottawa Cluster Environment Group hosted their Second Annual Environment Fair recently on September 30th

at the Ottawa Baha'i Centre. They will be sharing their resources and ideas, so other interested communities (yours?) can follow suit!

IEF 27th Annual Conference A Brief Review with Reflections

The 27th Annual Conference of the International Environment Forum took place 16 – 22 September 2023. The participants at the six online conference events discussed the overall theme of *Implementing Solidarity – Global to Local* from different perspectives. See the IEF conference website for a comprehensive report: <https://iefworld.org/conf27>. Here is a brief overview with some reflections.

Two of the events discussed the global dimension, namely “[Global Environmental Governance](#)” and “[Trust and Accountability: Bringing Values into our Future](#)”. The program on “[Global Solidarity Accountability: Values for Well-being](#)” started off with a presentation of the need for accountability for human and environmental well-being on the global level and then moved to the application of the same principles in the community. The other events focused on the local level: “[Community Engagement and Diverse Representation for Social Transformation](#)” provided inspiring stories from different areas of the world, and the first and last events “[What have we learned?](#)” and “[Where Do We Go from Here?](#)” consisted of sharing experiences and consultation about what we all can do to improve human and environmental well-being.

While it is impossible to report on all the wonderful insights shared, let us reflect on just a few topics. These topics were also brought up repeatedly at the UN conferences that happened at the same time: the [Sustainable Development Goals Summit](#) in New York, the [Climate Ambition Summit](#), and the [Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future](#). (You can read more about the UN Summits on the IEF website [here](#).)

At the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, for example, various speakers emphasized the need to build **trust** between countries and fight misinformation. During the IEF conference, Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen said that today, “global governance is full of broken promises. States don’t take responsibility to implement their ambitious plans, they are not held accountable and don’t want to be held accountable.” Daniel Perell pointed out that we see a breakdown of trust for any institutions: media, governance, medicine ... He then explained that to build trust, promises must be kept - trust depends on trustworthiness.

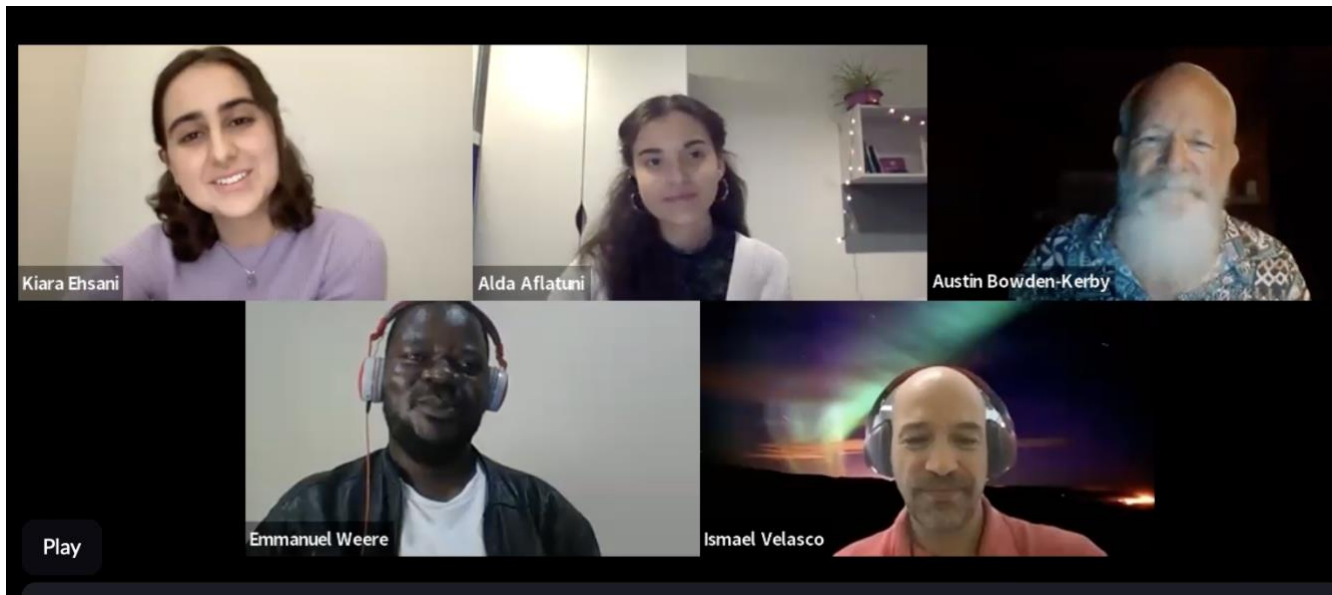
For international relations, promises of climate action must be kept. There must be accountability for each nation, but accountability has been turned into a weapon. Systems of accountability should not be used to blame other nations, this only results in the hiding of facts and leads to untruthful reporting. Sylvia then explained that we need accountability in a spirit of helping each other, so that we are not too afraid to share failure; recognizing mistakes is necessary for learning.

Trust also requires fulfilling funding commitments. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said “We need a transformation to rebuild trust. Governments must push the global financial system towards supporting climate action.” The money promised for the Global Climate Fund must be delivered for trust to be built.

Baha'u'llah said: “Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquillity and security of the people. In truth the stability of every affair hath depended and doth depend upon it.”

One recurring theme at the UN meetings was the need for local action and grassroots support, and the important role of knowledge and technology in such efforts. The IEF event *Community Engagement* illustrated the importance of access to knowledge and education. Alda Aflatuni shared a project initiated by young people in Armenia in which youth and children learn how to collect biowaste and compost it. Austin Bowden-Kerby inspired the audience by telling the story how young and

indigenous people have been empowered with scientific knowledge about how to save warm water-resistant corals and how to propagate them. Christian Lupemba and Emmanuel Weere explained how access to knowledge and education helped women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Uganda to improve their personal lives with sustainable agricultural methods, and how this contributed to the well-being of the whole community.



The international community is realizing more than ever “how interconnected we are, and how much work we have to continue to do”. There is an urgent need to end human conflict and war, poverty and hunger, ensure access to health care and quality education, promote gender equality and human rights, protect the environment and build sustainable infrastructure. This can only happen when we develop a spiritual perspective. It alone can overcome our “culture of competition and tribalism” and help us “break out from the shells of national interests”, and, most importantly, address the root cause of narrow-mindedness, egotism and nationalism, which is fear. The profound realization of the oneness of humankind can bring about the necessary shift of mindset which will enable us to truly *implement solidarity – global to local*. Baha’u’llah stated this so clearly already in the 19th century:

“O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof ...”

Wilmette Institute Online Course on Sustainable Development and the Prosperity of Humankind October 25 – December 19, 2023



Our headlong pursuit of economic development since World War II to respond to the needs of a rapidly expanding world population has created great wealth and lifted many out of poverty, but also pillaged the planet’s natural resources, polluted the environment and overshot planetary boundaries, while increasing inequality and leaving half the world population struggling to meet basic needs. The UN has called for a fundamental transformation towards sustainable development to assure that future generations can also meet their own needs. The Bahá’í teachings shed useful light on what this alternative should look like and how we might get there.

We shall explore the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN. How do these translate into things we can do ourselves and in our local communities to live more sustainably? Combining science and spirituality can help us to work with both our head and our heart to build a more just and sustainable world.

All the faculty are IEF members: Laurent Mesbah, Arthur Dahl, Rebecca Teclemariam Mesbah, and Christine Muller.

For more information and to register, go here: <https://wilmetteinstitute.org/courses/sustainable-development/>

Webinar on Oceans of Hope by the Agriculture Working Group of the Association for Baha'i Studies

This webinar will take place on **Sunday, October 29 at 1:00pm EDT / 6pm CEST.**

Oceans of Hope...This is a story of communities at the forefront of blue economy, conservation, resource management and restoration. The presentation is an exploration of solutions around the world that have been developed to tackle current challenges facing our oceans.

Speaker: **Rosie Poirier**

Rosie Poirier is a marine scientist, underwater photographer and an artist. She works primarily in the field of sustainable resource management and conservation. Rosie has spent many years doing field work with a variety of marine animals from sharks to whales to fish. She recently completed a year as the [North American Our-World Underwater Scholar](#) studying marine resource management projects around the world. Now she focuses on conservation strategy and accelerating programs of action in the sustainability sector. Working with both non-profits and industry to help communities improve the ways they interact with the ocean.

To attend this webinar, please subscribe before the event at <https://agriculture-working-group.mailchimpsites.com/>

Governing Our Planetary Emergency Charting a Safe Path for a Workable Future

A Statement by the
Climate Governance Commission

The Climate Governance Commission has issued a Statement entitled *Governing Our Planetary Emergency: Charting a Safe Path for a Workable Future*, released for the UN General Assembly High-Level Week and Climate Week 18-22 September 2023. It is available [here](#).

Members of the Commission, co-chaired by Mary Robinson, Maria Fernanda Espinosa, and Johan Rockström, preview ideas from their forthcoming report (in time for COP-28 in Dubai), *Governing Our Planetary Emergency*, on pioneering a system-wide approach to solving the climate crisis while advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By working with diverse partners and contributing to smart coalitions of governments, civil society groups, cities, businesses, and others worldwide, the Climate Governance Commission aims to advance innovative solutions in the near and medium-term, to catalyze a shift in global governance and provide a practical path forward for ambitious and doable climate action.

As the Statement notes: The world faces a deepening planetary emergency – and is on a reckless path toward catastrophic climate change – having already over-stepped six of nine scientifically-

identified [planetary boundaries](#). A continued failure to address the underlying causes of this [emergency](#) – such as fossil fuel-based economies, resource waste/overconsumption and the destruction of nature – will have further devastating effects for all of humanity, triggering potentially irreversible tipping points, with dangerous consequences for planetary stability, both social and ecological. A system-wide approach to solving the climate crisis is required now, ensuring reliable climate and planetary boundary governance for the Earth as a whole.

The Commission makes ten short-term proposals:

1. Urgent Improvement of Climate COPs to Focus on Delivery, Action, and Accountability
2. Declaration of Planetary Emergency, Planetary Emergency Platform, and Broadening International Security Paradigms
3. Transformative Action and Accountability of Powerful Actors
4. Enhance International Scientific Capacity for Earth System Governance
5. Elevate Environmental Governance within the Multilateral System and MEA Accountability
6. International Economic/Financial Measures
7. Better use of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Law, and UN Human Rights Council, and Facilitate Citizen Participation
8. Connecting Trade and International Investment Law with Climate/Planetary Ecological Priorities
9. Business as a Force for Good while holding it Environmentally Accountable
10. Boosting “Next Generation” City and Regional Alliances

In addition, it proposes four deeper reforms:

1. A Global Environment Agency (GEA)
2. An International Court for the Environment
3. Institutional Reform of the Global Financial System
4. UN Charter Reform

The Climate Governance Commission is convened by IEF member Maja Groff and several IEF members have contributed to its work. The proposal for a [Global Environment Agency](#) was prepared by IEF board members Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Arthur Dahl.



The Rights of Nature

Blog from IF20, the G20 Interfaith Forum

<https://blog.g20interfaith.org/2023/09/21/the-rights-of-nature-part-1-r...>
<https://blog.g20interfaith.org/2023/09/21/the-rights-of-nature-part-2-f...>

By Clair Brown, Arthur Dahl, Yoshinobu Miyake, Sherrie Steiner, and Victoria W. Thoresen; G20 Interfaith Forum Working Group on the Environment

Review of the Legal Movement

The Rights of Nature “as a key global legal movement, instrumental in preserving and restoring the health of Nature for future generations” is a project promoted by the United Nations that seeks to secure the Rights of Nature globally.

Summary of the doctrine

The “Rights of Nature” reorients how humans relate to nature from a relationship of exploitation to one of interdependence and equality. The right recognizes that ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, and mountains are entitled to legal personhood status. When nature bears legal rights similar to human beings, then it has the right to legal representation by an appointed guardian, who can file lawsuits against those who are causing environmental harm, including sea level rise, air and water pollution, deforestation, and extinction of species, along with extreme weather causing flooding and droughts

and extreme heat. The first part of this essay will look into legal frameworks being utilized across the globe in efforts to protect nature's rights.

To read about *Activities by Nations and States*, and about *Faith Viewpoints of the Rights of Nature*, go here: https://iefworld.org/IF20rights_nature

Supporting and Saving the New Regenerative Revolution

Hugh Locke and Tim Tensen
Smallholder Farmers Alliance, Haiti

A radically new approach to farming is taking the agricultural world by storm, but it is already under attack from greenwashing. This new methodology has the disruptive potential of the first green revolution of 60 years ago, but the new “regenerative” revolution is so diametrically opposed to its predecessor that serious efforts are underway to co-opt it.



Image: A member of the Smallholder Farmers Alliance in Haiti providing data to support the regenerative claims of the cotton crop which he will harvest in 3 to 4 months. (Photo credit: SFA / Thomas Norielle)

The origins of today's conflict trace back to the late 1950s and early 60s when it became clear that the world needed to double global food production over the next 30 years to feed a rapidly growing population and avert extensive starvation, particularly in developing nations. This spurred the widespread introduction of hybrid seeds, synthetic chemicals and intensive mechanization in farming. Often referred to as industrial agriculture, or the “green revolution,” this historic transformation did indeed result in

producing enough additional food to avoid disaster. The unintended side effect is that agriculture now contributes one quarter of the global greenhouse gas emissions fueling runaway climate change.

Fast forward to 2023 and food production once again needs to double over the next 30 years in order to feed a projected population increase of two billion people. This time around we also need to turn farming from a major driver of climate change into a net-positive force in reducing emissions.

To this end there is a new agricultural revolution currently taking shape with the potential to produce this additional food and tackle climate change at the same time. Regenerative agriculture, an often cited but little understood term, is a new approach that centers on replenishing soil nutrients, helping to clean waterways and air, capturing carbon, and creating biodiverse farming systems that function holistically and support the well-being of all forms of life within its boundaries and beyond.

The emerging regenerative movement is rooted in indigenous and ancestral agroecological traditions, while at the same time drawing on decades of scientific and applied research by the global communities of organic farming, agroecology, holistic grazing, and agroforestry.

Go [here](#) to read the full article.

Hugh Locke is a Partner in [Smallholder Data Services](#) and President and Co-Founder of the [Smallholder Farmers Alliance](#) in Haiti. Tim Tensen is a Partner in [Smallholder Data Services](#) and COO of [Terra Genesis](#).

Coral Reefs in Danger

based on a report by IEF member Austin Bowden-Kerby in Fiji

There is a serious developing situation with the collapse of coral reefs, as this represents a threat to the prosperity of our communities. Coral reefs were recognized as being the most vulnerable system to climate change decades ago, expected to be 90% dead under a 1.5°C increase, which may arrive soon. However not every region is the same, and in 2014-2019, Kiribati became the leading country globally in coral reef collapse due to climate change, and the massive death of corals has resulted in reef fish becoming too poisonous to eat on many reefs.

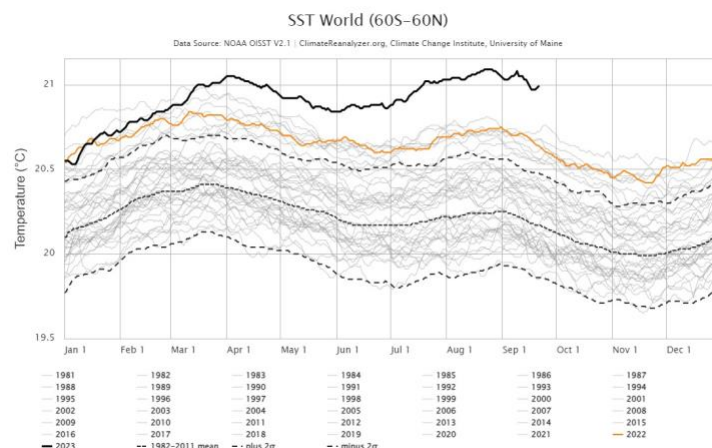
It is now urgent to respond before it is too late. Communities can train their youth about corals, to gather information on what corals remain and where, and build on that information to create coral nurseries where the corals of rare but formerly dominant species can be brought closely together so that they can finally reproduce again, sending out babies to the wider reef to help nature repair itself. Austin has prepared a short film about the urgency of the coral work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnJ-eUVJwqE>.

For Tuvalu, where the work is going forward under the Bahá'í-inspired NGO Fuligafou, the situation has become extremely urgent, as the very first severe hot water coral bleaching event is now heading their way, and many or most of the corals of Tuvalu could be dead by January. So in early November, we plan to move heat-adapted corals from the hottest parts of Funafuti into cooler areas where they can survive in spite of the marine heat wave. That same marine heat wave may head into Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, etc. in February through May 2024, and so we will be planning appropriate actions as resources allow. We cannot wait any longer, as it will be too late to save the very corals needed for the future restoration of damaged coral reef ecosystems and the prosperity of the communities. With the global heat spike, which started in March 2023, many reefs will be gravely stressed in the coming months, and the corals will need more help than ever. Putting our community as a stimulant for action could make a big difference.

The Tuvalu work will include a 3 minute professionally-edited film, which Talua Naivaga, the director of the Baha'i inspired youth based NGO there, along with our contacts in the Coral Restoration Consortium, will take to COP 28, for presentation in the Ocean Pavilion. Where this will go is uncertain, but it is immensely important work, and only the Baha'is seem to be in a position at this critical juncture to take charge and lead the way, to include all those interested, like-minded government departments and individuals.

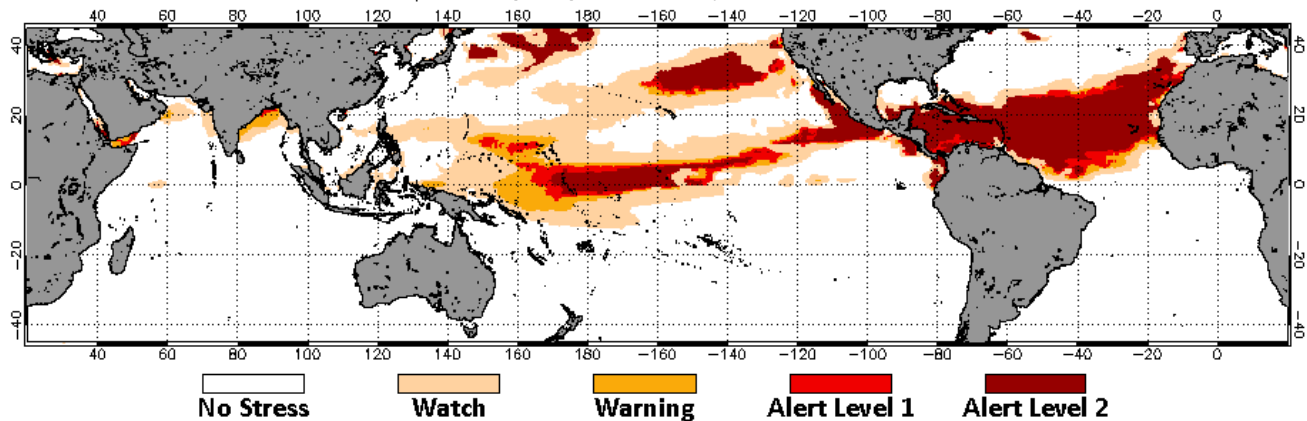
Here are the data graphs of the very dangerous situation that is presently killing Caribbean corals in the worse event in their history, where nearshore waters have reached 38°C (101°F), and this is now heading our way.

Sea Surface Temperature September 2023



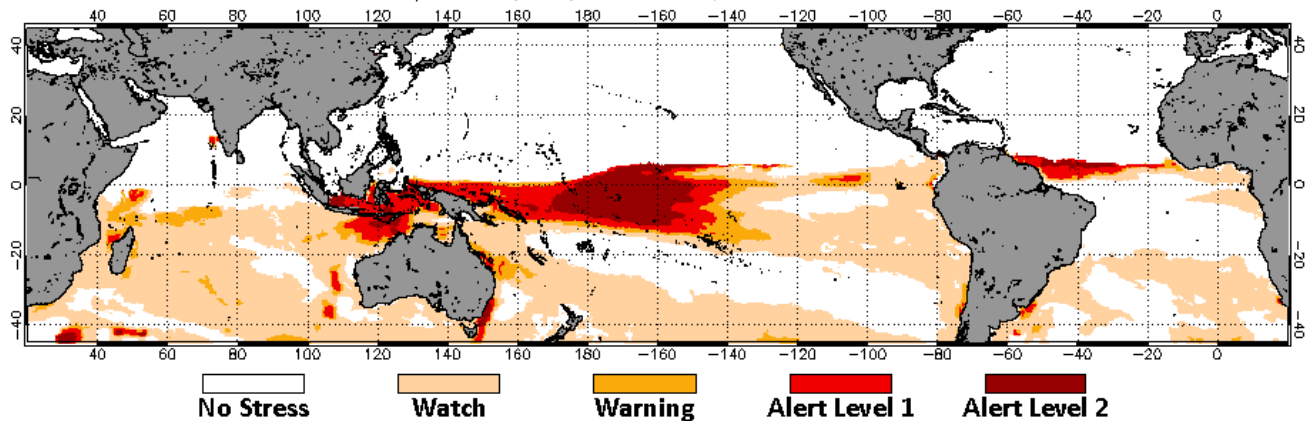
Projected coral bleaching October 2023

2023 Sep 19 NOAA Coral Reef Watch 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Heat Stress for Week 4 (Oct 15 2023)
Experimental, v5.0, CFSv2-based, 112 Ensemble Members



Projected coral bleaching January 2024

2023 Sep 19 NOAA Coral Reef Watch 60% Probability Coral Bleaching Heat Stress for Week 19 (Jan 28 2024)
Experimental, v5.0, CFSv2-based, 28 Ensemble Members



The experts are unsure of what has caused the present heat wave on top of the already bad carbon-related climate change, but many think that the Tonga volcano ejecting massive amounts of water and salt into the upper atmosphere is likely part of it, delayed impacts which now might last for several years. The experts all agree that 2025 might be even worse, due to the arrival of El Niño, as typically the second year is worse. A "wait and see" approach for coral reefs is not wise. We may have a short window of time to act to save our corals, and no one in power seems to be giving the warning.

The governments and intergovernmental institutions like SPC and SPREP move far too slowly to do the emergency interventions required, and at this point they are mostly unaware of the grave situation, and even if they were, none of them has a strategy to save the coral reefs that are so vital to the food security of our communities. So the existing crisis in Kiribati, and the coming crisis in Tuvalu and the other islands represents an important opportunity for service. Once we rescue and secure the heat adapted corals, a longer term youth-focused service and educational program of extreme relevance to our region can then be developed around it.

Austin leads a Bahá'í-inspired NGO, [Corals for Conservation](#) (C4C), that operates a [livelihoods centre](#) in Fiji which can accommodate groups of up to 30 people, and they have established training sites in the waters around Fiji, and can be viewed as a regional resource by the wider community. Kiribati and Vanuatu have asked for the coral work as a means of service to the community, as well as a doorway to increased knowledge. They also have trained Bahá'ís in the forefront of the coral work in Tuvalu, Samoa and New Caledonia, and will soon will also have one or more in Vanuatu. The

Bahá'í-inspired NGOs like Corals for Conservation and Fuligafou in Tuvalu have the ability to bring the coral reef and alternative livelihoods (happy chicken, etc.) programs to communities suffering from climate-change-related collapse of coral reefs, cyclones, and the destruction of associated protein and food resources.

September smashes monthly temperature record

World Meteorological Organization

Earth just had the hottest September on record – and by a record-breaking margin, according to a leading international dataset which is used by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for its State of the Global Climate monitoring reports.

This continues an extended streak of extraordinary land and sea-surface temperatures and is an ominous signal about the speed with which greenhouse gases are changing our climate. The year 2023 is now on track to be the warmest year on record. Numerous high temperature records have been broken in recent months.

September had an average surface temperature of 16.38°C. This was 0.5°C above the temperature of the previous warmest September, in 2020, and around 1.75°C warmer for the month of September compared to the pre-industrial reference 1850-1900 period, according to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) implemented by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasts.

"Since June, the world has experienced unprecedented heat on land and sea. The temperature anomalies are enormous – far bigger than anything we have ever seen in the past. Antarctic winter sea ice extent was the lowest on record for the time of year. What is especially worrying is that the warming El Niño event is still developing, and so we can expect these record-breaking temperatures to continue for months, with cascading impacts on our environment and society," said WMO Secretary-General Prof. Petteri Taalas.

"WMO will work with our partners in the scientific community to try to understand what additional factors are contributing to this exceptional warming," said Prof. Taalas.

The WMO provisional State of the Global Climate 2023 will be released at the start of the UN climate change conference, COP28, in Dubai in November.

"The unprecedented temperatures for the time of year observed in September - following a record summer - have broken records by an extraordinary amount. This extreme month has pushed 2023 into the dubious honour of first place - on track to be the warmest year and around 1.4°C above preindustrial average temperatures. Two months out from COP28 – the sense of urgency for ambitious climate action has never been more critical," said Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Roberta Boscolo, Climate and Energy Leader at WMO, commented on LinkedIn:

The world has breached a crucial warming threshold, 1.5°C, on approximately a third of the days in 2023. But the alarming truth is that, as of October 2nd, we've already seen around 86 days surpassing this limit.

The urgency of the situation cannot be overstated. We're at a critical juncture, and addressing climate change demands concerted, sustained action from all of us - governments, businesses, and individuals.

2023 is "on track" to be the hottest year on record, and 2024 could be hotter. The clock is ticking, but there's still time to act.

SOURCES: <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/september-smashes-monthly-temperat...>
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:711745791517041459...>



Summit of the Future: What would it deliver?

United Nations

How would a Pact for the Future that adopts the proposals of the Secretary-General change our world?

PURPOSE

Strengthen international cooperation so it delivers fully and fairly on existing agreements, while enabling us to respond effectively to new threats and opportunities for present and future generations. In so doing, restore trust in multilateralism and in each other.

BACKGROUND

The 75th anniversary of the UN came at a time when the whole world was confronting the shared threats of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, the risks and opportunities of technological advances, and stagnation on the Sustainable Development Goals. In recognition of these trends and our unprecedented interconnectedness, Member States pledged to strengthen global governance and asked the Secretary-General for his recommendations to address current and future challenges (A/RES/75/1). The Secretary-General responded with Our Common Agenda, calling for solidarity between people, countries and generations, and a corresponding renewal of the multilateral system to accelerate implementation of existing commitments and fill gaps in global governance that have emerged since 2015. The report proposed a Summit of the Future as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take these steps.

The General Assembly decided that the Summit of the Future would take place in September 2024, building on the 2023 SDG Summit, and that its outcome would be an intergovernmentally negotiated, action-oriented Pact for the Future, comprising a chapeau and five chapters on sustainable development and financing for development; international peace and security; science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance. At the invitation of Member States, the Secretary-General issued eleven Policy Briefs containing more detail on certain proposals from Our Common Agenda, to support Member States in their preparations for the Summit.

ACCELERATING THE SDGs

The proposals in Our Common Agenda aim to turbocharge the 2030 Agenda. The specific ideas from the report that are suggested for consideration at the Summit of the Future focus on the “how” of global cooperation, to in turn enable us to deliver on the “what” by: (a) getting the SDGs back on track, while also (b) responding to new opportunities and challenges.

To keep reading, go here: <https://iefworld.org/SOTFdeliver>
[Download this document as pdf](#)



Global framework agreed to address harm from chemicals and waste

United Nations Environment Programme

The Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) concluded on 30 September 2023 in Bonn, Germany, with the adoption of a comprehensive global framework that sets concrete targets and guidelines for key sectors across the entire lifecycle of chemicals.

A unique international negotiating process – where representatives from governments, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations, intergovernmental organizations, youth, and academia participated at the same level – resulted in the historic decision to establish the “Global Framework on Chemicals – For a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste.”

Based around 28 targets, the framework outlines a roadmap for countries and stakeholders to collaboratively address the lifecycle of chemicals, including products and waste.

“Everyone on this planet should be able to live and work without fear of falling sick or dying from chemical exposure. Nature, free from pollution, should be able to thrive and support humanity for millennia to come,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). “This is why this framework provides a vision for a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste, for a safe, healthy and sustainable future.”

The newly adopted framework calls for the prevention of the illegal trade and trafficking of chemicals and waste, the implementation of national legal frameworks, and the phase out by 2035 of highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture. It also calls for the transition to safer and more sustainable chemical alternatives, the responsible management of chemicals in various sectors – including industry, agriculture and healthcare – and the enhancement of transparency and access to information regarding chemicals and their associated risks.

“Beating a target is better than meeting a target, so I call on governments, the chemicals industry and everyone involved to go above and beyond what has been agreed to protect people and the planet upon which we all depend,” said Andersen. “Slow or weak implementation will come back to haunt us in the shape of more deaths, more assaults on nature and more economic losses.”

A decision was made to unlock financing for the implementation of the framework from different sources. Germany, the president of ICCM5, pledged EUR 20 million to this fund, which will be administered by UNEP.

With the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals, pollution and waste, is recognized at the same level as the crises of climate change and nature and biodiversity loss, which already have frameworks in place.

In addition to the Global Framework on Chemicals, ICCM5 participants adopted the Bonn Declaration, in which they committed to “prevent exposure to harmful chemicals, and phase out the most harmful ones, where appropriate, and enhance the safe management of such chemicals where they are needed”.

They also expressed their will to “actively promote and support transitions to circular economies, including through the development of safe chemical and non-chemical alternatives and substitutes, which protect health and the environment, and lead to reduced waste, recycling free from harmful chemicals, and efficient resource utilization”.

SOURCE: [https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/global-framework-ag...;](https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/global-framework-ag...)



Laudate Deum

Pope Francis on the climate crisis

On 4 October 2023, Pope Francis has issued *Laudate Deum* on the climate crisis and the challenges before COP28, building on his earlier encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It represents a clear acceptance of climate science and a critique of the materialistic economy that continues to degrade the planet for selfish ends. It is encouraging when faith leaders take a strong stand on the climate crisis.

See the IEF website for [some relevant excerpts](#) from this important statement. Go [here](#) to read the entire *Laudate Deum*.