



LEAVES, a Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

Volume 26, Number 1 --- 15 January 2024

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,
Switzerland

Article Deadline February 10, 2024

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

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

Important Message to all IEF Members and Associates from the IEF Board

There is much knowledge in the IEF community that could be of service to others! Baha'is and their friends all over the world want to take action to help the environment and their local community, but they may not always have access to the knowledge they need. That is why, the IEF board asks all members and associates to update their user accounts on the IEF website - if you have not done so yet in the past five months. Just login to access your account. You will see that these user accounts are greatly improved - they allow you to provide more information about yourself. If you have any trouble with the login, contact the IEF secretariat at ief@iefworld.org

Many thanks to all of you who have already updated their information. This will greatly help with referring people who need advice to those who have experience or professional expertise in the area they need assistance with!

Here is an example of a Baha'i friend who just submitted his IEF membership application. Neil Whatley describes how he could be of assistance to farmers.

Neil has 40 years of experience with crop-based agriculture and rural community development. He has worked with agronomy, applied research and rural development in Western Canada and overseas, and with farming systems in both the temperate and tropical biomes. Raised on a farm in Saskatchewan, after high school Neil co-managed the farm for several years. He worked as a rural developer and systems agronomist in Latin America. He managed the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers' farmer participatory applied research program. Neil worked with the government of

Alberta for 13 years as a soils and crops agronomist. Currently, he is a crop specialist with the Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta. He also serves on the board of directors for the Rockefeller Foundation funded NGO, Prairie Food System Vision Network, that works with rural community development across the Canadian Prairies. Neil has a bachelor's degree (crop science and agriculture extension) from the University of Saskatchewan and a Master's degree (rural social studies) from the University of Regina.

You can see how valuable that information could be for farmers who may have questions. Thank you, Neil, for sharing!

We hope that Neil inspired you to **update your IEF user account** so that you can also potentially be of service to others. **Please, share your knowledge, expertise, and interests!**

IEF Webinars

By IEF Webinar Coordinator Khela Baskett

24th IEF Webinar

Saturday, 3 February, 1pm EST / 7pm CEST

Oceans of Hope

Speaker: Rosie Poirier, Canada

Go here to register: <http://tinyurl.com/IEF-OceansHope>

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.



About 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.

The 23rd IEF webinar

on *Reflections on Cop28 and Ideas for Moving Forward* took place on Saturday, 6 January 2024. The recording is now available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCXkj9beZdE>

A Baha'i Perspective on The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision

The Agriculture Working Group of the Association for Baha'i Studies presents its monthly webinar on **Sunday, January 28** at 1pm EST

The speaker will be Bill Sharp

How to join the webinar: Subscribers to the ABS Agriculture Group Mailchimp page will receive an announcement with the link the week before presentations. People are free to unsubscribe at any time. Sign up here to receive a link: <https://agriculture-working-group.mailchimpsites.com/>

IEF submission to the Summit of the Future

In preparation for the UN Summit of the Future to consider UN reform in September 2024, the organisers invited civil society organisations to make verbal and written submissions on what they would like to see in the outcome document. The IEF made both a short verbal contribution on 13 December, and submitted the written proposals below in the format requested.

Here is an excerpt of IEF's contribution:

- Transform the goal of the economic system from material wealth creation to human and environmental well-being.
- Social development should address inequality within and between countries to eliminate the extremes of poverty and wealth.
- Define human rights more broadly to include the seven fundamental human rights identified by the Secretary-General: to peace, to social and economic development, to a clean, healthy, sustainable environment, to cultural diversity, to gender equality, to civil and political rights, and the rights of future generations.
- Values of justice, equity, solidarity, and the oneness of humanity must be at the centre of United Nations action.
- Global United Nations funding mechanisms for global action should be created, including uniform taxation on the profits of multinational corporations, charges or taxation at the source on pollutants and persistent wastes including carbon taxes, a tax on international arms sales, and other disincentives for globally-damaging activities. Point source methane emissions can be detected from space and could be taxed accordingly.

To read the full IEF contribution to the Summit for the Future, go here:

https://iefworld.org/SOTF_IEF

A responsibility to include: Maria Fernanda Espinosa

UN NECESSARY Podcast by the Coalition for the UN We Need

In the UN Necessary podcast's launch episode, we hear how Ms. Fernanda Espinosa, a woman who was previously Ecuador's minister of foreign affairs, ambassador to the UN, and many other roles, continues to draw on lessons learned from indigenous communities in rural Ecuador.

Listen to the 31 min. podcast here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-responsibility-to-include-maria-fernanda-espinosa/id1722730044?i=1000639507716>

More information about the podcast:

Nudhara Yusuf and Daniel Perell of the Coalition for the United Nations We Need—also with the Stimson Center's Global Governance Innovation Network, and the Baha'i International Community—look ahead to the UN's 2024 Summit of the Future through a series of intimate and penetrating discussions with many of the international figures contributing to the Summit's shaping. Join them as they talk with people from all regions of the world, and with diverse international service experience, as they consult on how the Summit of the Future can realize its promise.

Nudhara and Dan are joined by Maria Fernanda Espinosa, president of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly and Executive Director of GWL Voices, about the international community's responsibility to include diverse voices at the upcoming 2024 Summit of the Future.

Climate Change and the Importance of Indigenous Knowledge

KAICIID and IF20 - G20 Interfaith Forum

A video summary of the recording of *Climate Change and the Importance of Indigenous Knowledge* is now available on KAICIID's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D52LldQuM7g>

The webinar was held on 12-13 October 2023 with moderator Arthur Dahl, president of the IEF. It is very much worth watching!

Also, you can find a report of the webinar on the IEF website here: <https://iefworld.org/webinarCCindigenous>

Austin Bowden-Kerby on saving coral reefs

In a new short video, IEF member Dr. Austin Bowden-Kerby talks about the marine heatwave moving towards the South Pacific and his efforts to keep the corals alive by moving them to cooler water before the bleaching begins. The film showcases the creation of the biggest rescue reef in history, 15-meter high letters that spell out the word BULA, which means LIFE, and includes Bowden-Kerby's passionate call to action to world leaders to take action to save the reefs, and the world.

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SSQE0x6nSM>

To learn more about the important coral restoration work being done by Dr. Bowden-Kerby at his nonprofit, Corals for Conservation, visit <https://corals4conservation.org/>.

Events at Climate Change COP28

You can find many reports on dimensions of COP28 of interest to the International Environment Forum on our website:

[Report on COP28 Conclusion](#)

[Summary Report on COP28](#)

[Reports on COP28 Events](#)

[Highlights of more COP28 events](#)

[Presentation summarising COP28 results and Bahá'í contributions](#)

[Interfaith Statement Pre-COP28](#)

[Faith for Climate - A Call to Action](#)

Source: <https://iefworld.org/climateCOP28>

COP28 Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People

Excerpt from the Statement:

WE, THE UNFCCC COP28 PRESIDENCY, CBD COP15 PRESIDENCY, CHAIRS OF THE UNDERSIGNED PARTNERSHIPS, INITIATIVES AND COALITIONS, AND ENDORSING MEMBER COUNTRIES ... pursue the following common objectives:

1. Fostering stronger synergies, integration and alignment in the planning and implementation of national climate, biodiversity and land restoration plans and strategies, with specific emphasis on ambition, comprehensiveness and coherence between the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), updated National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and forthcoming revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as appropriate/within their respective mandates, and the implementation of a whole-of-government approach that mainstreams coherence, coordination and the efficient use of resources within and between relevant ministries and departments;

2. Scaling of finance and investments for climate and nature from all sources, including domestic budgets, multilateral development banks, multilateral climate and biodiversity funds, bilateral development agencies, private sectors actors, and philanthropic sources, in a synergetic, dedicated and progressive manner that ensures the promotion of co-benefits and efficient use through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem based approaches, and access to finance in an inclusive and equitable manner, including through direct access modalities, in particular for indigenous peoples, local communities, women, girls, and youth, among others;

3. Ensuring the full, equitable, inclusive, and effective representation and participation of indigenous peoples, local communities, women, girls, youth, and other vulnerable communities in the planning and implementation of climate and biodiversity plans and strategies at all levels, in a manner respecting rights, enhancing land tenure security, and utilizing traditional knowledge;

4. Promoting a whole-of-society approach in the synergetic planning and implementation of national climate, biodiversity and land restoration plans and strategies that draws upon and includes the contributions of indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society including women, youth and children, the private sector, financial institutions, academic institutions, and subnational authorities, including through the voluntary actions under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action and the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming and Montreal Action Agenda for Nature and People, and their respective Champions;

5. Encouraging coherence and interoperability across data sources and data collection, metrics and methodologies, and voluntary reporting frameworks for climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable land management efforts, including through collaboration with international, non-governmental and private sector organizations, scientific and academic institutions, and indigenous peoples and local communities.

To read the full statement, go here: <https://www.cop28.com/en/joint-statement-on-climate-nature>

COP28 highlights the need for fundamental transformations in climate governance

Maja Groff

Convenor of the Climate Governance Commission

The outcome text of COP28 has been hailed as historic, as it may, according to some, officially signal that “our future is in clean energy and the age of fossil fuels will end”. While representing a breakthrough in negotiated text, with an explicit mention of “transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems” – albeit with plenty of predictable loopholes, ambiguous language and missing commitments – this hard-won step forward for the international community is unfortunately too little, too late, underlining the urgent need to upgrade planetary climate governance to ensure reliability and efficacy, in the interests of global public safety.

COP28 has taken place amidst an ever-worsening planetary emergency, with the Earth on the verge of breaching five critical tipping points with grave and potentially irreversible consequences for the planet. Since the first COP in 1995, the number and diversity of participants have grown to the extent that this year’s UN Climate Change Conference is estimated to have involved more than 70,000 participants, including a record number of fossil fuel lobbyists. Despite this growth in participation, COP28 has underscored the limitations of the current model of climate governance, and in turn the need for a transformative shift in our approach to the planetary emergency.

Key flaws of COPs include their lack of a reliable accountability mechanism, and a failure to adequately interlink science-driven policy with the needed climate commitments and action on the ground, among others. Recent findings from both the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UNFCCC Global Stocktake show that we are still well off-track to achieve sufficiently ambitious reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to avoid breaching the 1.5°C temperature limit. According to the UNEP, if countries follow through on their current climate commitments, warming would rise to a catastrophic 2.9°C. However, we have already crossed the limits of adaptation in various localities to the current temperature rise (about 1.2°C), and scientists are raising further doubts if the 1.5°C limit is a safe level. Additionally, scientists have assessed that we have already breached six of the nine Planetary Boundaries, which are critical to maintaining a ‘safe operating space’ for human societies.

We need to move away from the current model of inordinate reliance on unwieldy and slow-moving COPs, to a strengthened whole-of-system approach where diverse parts of the international system and all of society are engaged with solving critical climate issues. The Climate Governance Commission (CGC) has brought together a diverse coalition of innovative leaders, thinkers, and activists to advocate for the necessary transformations to our shared climate governance. Its 2023 report, [Governing Our Planetary Emergency](#), sets out a series of near- and medium-term proposals for vital governance improvements, providing a path forward for the feasible, equitable, and ambitious action needed to respond to an unprecedented planetary emergency.

Near-term proposals which can be acted upon immediately include remodelling future COPs to streamline COP meetings themselves, and repurposing them into reporting, accounting and action-oriented working sessions. At the same time, compliance mechanisms under the Paris Agreement should be enhanced and current mediation and facilitation tools should be used to overcome traditional disagreements that have stymied progress on climate action. COP structures should move beyond the typical emphasis on states parties to enable the formation and inclusion of multistakeholder coalitions to advance practical and just solutions to the planetary emergency.

These reforms to the COP process should be complemented by broader near-term solutions to address the full scale of the climate emergency. These include: a formal declaration of a 'planetary emergency' by the UN General Assembly at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the activation of an 'Emergency Platform' elaborating on a proposal by the UN Secretary-General; the establishment of a Science-Policy-Action Network (SPAN) to enhance multilateral science-driven climate policy; and renewed, innovative efforts to bridge the 'great climate finance divide'. Efforts for the latter would include steps on debt forgiveness, reforms to multilateral development banks and balanced global carbon taxes and tariffs to help fund climate mitigation and adaptation in low- and middle-income countries.

The CGC has also offered solutions for 'next-generation' governance, which should be seriously discussed in the aftermath of COP28 and could culminate at COP30 in 2025 ('Paris +10'). These solutions include the establishment of a Global Environmental Agency to serve as the central node for climate governance, and an International Court for the Environment as a standing international legal accountability mechanism. Next-generation climate governance would work in tandem to the streamlined COP process to ensure and enhance efforts and accountability as part of the whole-of-system approach to the planetary emergency.

COP28 may have been disappointing, but its outcome can catalyse the push for a fundamental overhaul of climate governance. The CGC will seek to seize this opportunity and work with partners to address this quintessential global governance challenge of our time.



Interfaith Statement Pre-COP28

Global Faith Leaders Summit

Abu Dhabi, November 2023

Introduction

In the spirit of unity, shared responsibility, and Human Fraternity, and at this pivotal moment of the global climate crisis that demands transformative action to keep 1.5 degrees within reach and serve affected and vulnerable communities, we, representatives of diverse faith and Indigenous traditions, through dialogue with scientists, religious scholars, academics, women's organizations, youth, civil society, business leaders, and environmental policymakers, convened in Abu Dhabi in the lead-up to COP28 to express our shared concern for the escalating climate impacts that imperil our cherished planet, as well as our common commitment to jointly address this global crisis, building upon our previous efforts, including the interfaith appeal for COP26. Our faith instills in us a sacred duty to cherish not only our human family but also the fragile ecosystem that cradles us.

To continue reading the Global Faith Leaders' Statement, go here:

<https://iefworld.org/Interfaith-Statement-PreCOP28>

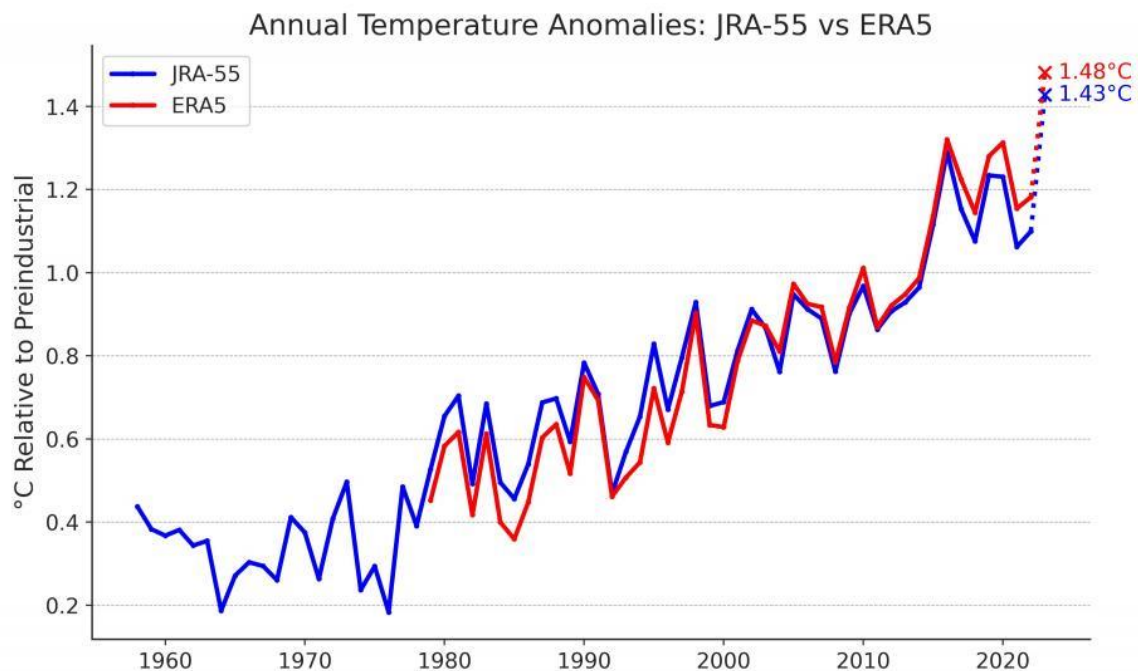


2023 warmest on record, temperatures 1.48°C above preindustrial level

Down to Earth
by Rohini Krishnamurthy

The year 2023 is the warmest year on record by a “huge margin,” with global temperatures reaching 1.48 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial level, according to data from Copernicus, the Earth observation component of the European Union’s space programme.

This is higher than the 1.43°C that was reported by the Japanese reanalysis project (JRA-55) conducted by the Japan Meteorological Agency earlier this week, Zeke Hausfather, climate scientist and energy systems analyst, [wrote on X](#) (formerly Twitter).



The graph shared by Zeke Hausfather on X

From January to November 2023, the global mean temperature was also the highest on record, reaching 1.46°C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average, Copernicus said on its website.

It was also 0.13°C higher than the eleven-month average for 2016, the warmest calendar year on record, it added.

These records were set when El Nino, a recurring climate pattern characterised by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific, was of moderate strength.

“These records coincide with a moderately strong El Nino, but they exceed expectations for even the strongest El Nino, if that were the only driving factor,” [read a blog](#) by James Hansen, Makiko Sato and Pushker Kharecha, researchers from Columbia University.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said there is a [54 per cent chance](#) that this El Nino event will end up “historically strong”, potentially ranking in the top five on record. It is expected that El Nino will end and neutral conditions will return by April-June.

The researchers said that warming is also being driven by Earth's increased absorption of sunlight.

"The El Nino will fade in the next few months, but we anticipate that the string of record monthly temperatures will continue for a total of 12 and possibly 13 months because of Earth's unprecedented energy imbalance," they added.

By May 2024, the 12-month running-mean global temperature could be 1.6-1.7°C relative to 1880-1920. "Thus, given the planetary energy imbalance, it will be clear that the 1.5°C ceiling has been passed for all practical purposes," they explained.

However, the year 2023 has seen temperatures briefly breaching 1.5°C. The global mean temperature crossed the 1.5°C limit in the first week of June, according to Copernicus.

And then on November 17, 2023, the world breached 2°C of warming, according to [preliminary analysis](#) from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). The temperatures were 2.06°C warmer than the pre-industrial era.

The global temperature for November 17 was 1.17°C above the 1991-2020 average, Samantha Burgess, deputy director of Copernicus Climate Change Service at Copernicus at ECMWF, wrote on X. This, she said, is the warmest on record.

November 2023 was about 1.75°C warmer than the November average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period.

The [2023 State of Climate Report](#) highlighted that the world has already witnessed 38 days with global average temperatures above 1.5°C by September 12, 2023 — more than any other year.

This trend began towards the end of 2022. Temperatures from November 2022 to April 2023 reached 1.32°C above the pre-industrial era, [according to Climate Central](#), a nonprofit organisation that researches and reports on climate science and impact. This was the warmest in the last 125,000 years, it added.

In May 2023, the [World Meteorological Organization estimated](#) that there was a 66 per cent likelihood that the annual average near-surface global temperature between 2023 and 2027 would be more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for at least one year. Further, there is a 98 per cent likelihood that at least one of the next five years and the five-year period as a whole, would be the warmest on record.

In 2015, 196 parties signed the Paris Agreement to limit the long-term temperature goal to hold global average temperature increase to "well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels".

SOURCE: Down To Earth:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/2023-warmest-on-reco...>

