

UNEA Monitor

UNEA Monitor is a daily newsletter powered by Major Groups during the UN Environment Assembly. The newsletter tracks the most important negotiations and events and delivers the daily news through the lens of civil society.

Stories from the Green Room

The Green Room is the designated Civil Society space at UNEA-5. The UNEA Monitor is covering some of the Green Room events throughout the week of the Assembly.

For the agenda of the Green Room during the UNEA 5 week, kindly visit this link:

<https://www.unep.org/events/green-room/unea-52-green-room-events>

Gender Dimension of the Implementation of Chemical and Plastic Waste Policies

The event addressed management and control of chemicals and waste through a gender perspective, with a specific focus on Kenya and Tunisia. Drawing on the preliminary results of a WCEF and CEJAD report on the gender dimension of chemical and plastic waste policies to be presented at Stockholm+50, representatives of the two organizations presented the gender-biased impact of chemical and plastic waste pollution.



Particular attention was given to the devastating consequences on the health of women and children. Representatives from

waste pickers organizations in Kenya and India highlighted the dire conditions in which waste pickers work and live, calling for governments and societies recognition of their essential role in waste management - a recognition that should come with policies to reduce pollution from chemicals and waste. The Ministry of Environment of Kenya provided an overview of Kenya's efforts to improve the situation in the country. The Executive Director of the BRSMEAS Secretariat intervened, emphasizing the Secretariat's support to the work. Lastly, AEEFG presented an investigation on illegal traffic of waste from Italy to Tunisia, denouncing the practice of Western countries to use the Global South as a dump for their waste.

Articles

Faith – a Solution to Pollution?

UNEP's Faith for Earth has set up a task team on Plastic Pollution. We see that Faith is part of the solution to pollution. Faith based organisations bring both values and reach to the challenge of plastic pollution.

FBOs are present in the smallest rural village , in the most densely populated urban area. Our Scriptures teach us of the sacredness of the Earth and our responsibility to care for this beautiful planet. Most faith communities have a weekly gathering where environmental messages can be incorporated in the sermon, prayers or music.

FBOS are also actively involved in practical change. There are many wonderful examples,

Plastic Bank who work interfaith and support plastic waste pickers. Mothers Union of Lesotho started a project weaving and crocheting items from plastic bags for sale. Another example is the “Bring your own bag” campaign held by Green Lutherans and Anglicans in Eswatini.

People of faith have organized “Plastic free Lent” (the 40 days before Easter). Tearfund have been involved in a “Rubbish campaign” to identify the big polluters - name them and shame them! Other faiths have passed resolutions at their decision making bodies to ban the use of polystyrene. The wonderful Eco Brix project in Uganda is making building bricks out of heated plastic and sand. So many creative and live-giving ideas!

As the Anglicans in Harare, Zimbabwe say when clear up dumpsites and plant succulent plants in their place ‘Reduce, Reuse , Recycle, Rejoice’.

By Rev Rachel Mash, Green Anglicans

Poll shows people in 28 countries want to End Plastic Pollution

Despite the growing awareness of the plastic waste crisis we know more needs to be done. So we asked citizens around the world their opinions on what is needed to stop plastic pollution.

In late 2021 Ipsos polled over 20,000 adults in 28 countries in the first comprehensive global polling on the need for a plastic pollution treaty.

An average of nearly 90% of people surveyed across 28 countries believe having a global plastics treaty is important to effectively address the plastic pollution crisis.

Latin American countries lead with 93% of the region’s respondents acknowledging the importance of a global plastics treaty, followed by respondents in Europe and the Asia Pacific region. The proportion of people who think a

treaty is important was highest in Mexico (96%), China (95%) and Peru (95%).

This survey is a clear call by people from all corners of the world that they want their governments to act now.

By Liz Hebditch, Plastic Free Foundation

Towards Stockholm +50: 50 Years of Environmental Policies

Stockholm+50 will be held 2-3 June 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden, to commemorate the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment and celebrate 50 years of global environmental action. By recognizing the importance of multilateralism in tackling the Earth’s triple planetary crisis – climate, nature, and pollution – the event aims to act as a springboard to accelerate the implementation of the UN Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, including the 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement on climate change, the post-2020 global Biodiversity Framework, and encourage the adoption of green post-COVID-19 recovery plans.



The “Towards Stockholm +50” program is a joint initiative by Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future and Forum for utvikling og miljø (the Norwegian Forum for Development and Environment) ForUM. A stakeholder-led initiative funded by the United Nations Environment Program’s Civil Society Unit with support from the Government of Sweden.

Towards Stockholm+50 has the aim to engage the widest variety of non-state actors – globally – to inform about the legacy of 50 years of implementing environmental policies, with a

series of lectures. Only being well informed, you can be fully engaged to plan, prepare, implement, and follow-up on the Stockholm+50 conference.

In addition to the official process of the Major Groups coordination on their joint statements led by the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC), there are additional Regional Consultation meetings. Jointly organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), they aim to engage a broad range of stakeholder groups. Known as the UNEP/UNDP Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals (GO4SDGs) initiative, this effort will organise a series of regional multi-stakeholder consultations for Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, West Asia, and Europe. The outcomes will be collected and will be the base for the Peoples' Environmental Narrative.

Those regional consultations will take place virtually during April and May 2022. They will use the KUDO multilingual web conferencing platform. To see the framing questions for these national and regional consultations, click here.

www.towardstockholm50.org

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The Vital Role of Waste Pickers

To commemorate International Waste Pickers Day, on 01 March, a group of UNEA5.2 representatives from the Break Free From Plastic coalition hosted a press conference at the Dandora dumpsite in Nairobi to highlight the role of waste pickers in the waste management sector. Dandora is one of Africa's largest unregulated landfills, yet many families work on and live near the site.

The work of waste pickers is environmentally sustainable, economically productive, and socially inclusive. Their contributions to collection and transportation of recyclables play

a critical role in reducing municipal solid waste management costs and diverting valuable materials from landfills.



Despite this, waste pickers face threats of displacement due to competition from organised industry, privatisation of waste collection contracts, and lack of access to waste caused by incineration plants and other waste facilities. They also experience serious and often life-threatening health issues due to working conditions on the site including typhoid, amoeba infections, smoke inhalation, and often death. Everyone who works or lives near dumpsites could potentially be exposed to harmful substances, but women in particular, are at risk of developing reproductive problems due to exposure to harmful substances such as heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants. Kenyans have access to free medical care from the government, but often receive prescriptions for medications they cannot afford.

By Carissa Marnce, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternative (GAIA).

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