

# 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 Tent

The Green Tent is the Civil Society Platform at UNEA-4. The UNEA Monitor is covering some of the green tent events throughout the week of the Assembly.

### The Climate Summit - A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win

Ambassador Alfonso de Alba, the Envoy for the forthcoming Climate Summit, introduced the upcoming Summit, which will be held on 23 September 2019 in New York.

The theme of this year's Summit - A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win - will seek to challenge Member States, civil society and the private sector, to take action on the following key areas: energy transition, climate finance and carbon pricing, industry transition, nature-based solutions, cities and local action, and resilience. In addition, there will be an added focus on mitigation in new major emitters, public mobilisation and social and political drivers. A coalition of governmental actors will be invited from every region to collaborate in developing each of these themes.

Dr. Susan Gardner, Director of UN Environment's Ecosystems Division, in describing the nature-based solutions work stream, indicated that China and New Zealand shall lead the coalition in this multi-stakeholder process. In addressing such critical climate issues, the Summit will seek actions that protect or restore nature in ways that provide benefits to local society and communities in a cost-effective manner. Dr.

Gardner stated that groups interested in participating in the Summit should either contact one of the host countries or the Ecosystems Division Nature-based Solutions team.

The Summit will be preceded by two preparatory days and will be held in close association with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and the High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has indicated that the outcome of this Summit should aim to identify concrete actions in each of these areas to produce a transformative effect on our environment.



Ambassador Alfonso de Alba Dialogue with MGs.

### Innovative Solutions for Wildlife Trade Challenges and Their Potential in Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Ms. Sarah Ferguson, Director of TRAFFIC Viet Nam, and Mr. Taye Teferi, TRAFFIC's Policy and Partnership Coordinator, spoke about the

enormity of the illegal trade in wildlife, which (excluding timber and fisheries) is reported to be worth at least US\$19 billion per year, making it the fourth largest illegal global trade after drugs, counterfeiting and human trafficking. Sustainable trade in wildlife, according to Ferguson and Teferi, does not always benefit local communities. Wildlife resources, they added, are a national asset and ideally should benefit local communities and harvesters. The pathway to achieving sustainable wildlife trade, therefore, is research and analysis, producing evidence to achieve guidance and influence.

Speaking about the contentious use of rhino horn in Viet Nam, Ferguson and Teferi described TRAFFIC's local "Chi" advertising campaign aimed at combatting the use of rhino horn by appealing to the Vietnamese sense of status and character. Through its marketing strategy, Chi attempts to change behavioural patterns through communication projects, advocacy and community mobilisation.

### **Humans Use 80% of the World's Land to Feed Animals that Produce 18% of Calorific Value**

Food, Forest and Climate was panel discussion considering how to transition current global agricultural standards to maintain a future sustainable food system. Having seen a steady transition towards industrial agriculture, the question now is: how do we change these habits?

WWF International focuses on three aspects: sustainable production; food loss and waste, and sustainable diet. The scale of the impact of food production, it was argued, can also be a major part of the solution. Perception is the key. Most people don't see food production as a threat to nature. There is no awareness of where food comes from, how it is produced, how it is

sourced. The need, therefore, is to educate young people and raise awareness.

The Global Forest Coalition highlighted that the motive behind deforestation is largely to produce livestock and livestock products. Low tax rates and subsidies are used to attract foreign investment. The consequences of deforestation, however, often leads to the displacement of local communities, adding to human rights concerns as well as environmental degradation. The duty of civil society, it was suggested, is to keep these issues on the agenda, and make consumers aware of how the products they use are sourced. The Coalition added that a first step could be policy reform to promote local products and a more sustainable diet.

The FAO climate division shared perspectives on sustainable food systems. FAO highlighted some food inequality statistics: 821 million people do not have enough to eat; 2 billion people are malnourished, and 2 billion people are obese or overweight. FAO indicated that the quality of food is similarly unequally distributed. The FAO team indicated that we need to change from producing food to feed, to producing food to nourish. Awareness and education are very important issues to develop, they added, if buying and consuming habits are to change.



Local Authorities MGs delivering their statement in the plenary yesterday.



Children and Youth MG delivering their statement in the plenary yesterday.

## Forest Peoples Programme: Respect for tenure security and human rights is essential for removing deforestation from agricultural commodity supply chains

Tropical deforestation has been rising steadily since the start of this millennium. The production, global trade and consumption of agricultural commodities are clearly key contributing factors. The efforts at UNEA 4 to develop a resolution addressing deforestation and forest degradation related to agricultural commodity supply chains has come at the right time.

It appears, however, the draft resolution, withdrawn already, falls short of critical elements related to forest conversion. Insecure community tenure and illegal resource use, land trafficking, corruption and criminal activities on the forest frontier are not fully considered. The resolution also fails to acknowledge that large-scale clearance of

forests and illegal land acquisitions for cattle ranches, industrial farming and monoculture plantations not only cause significant harms to the land, livelihoods, food security and self-determination of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities but also encroach on the human rights of local communities, whose members often face violence, intimidation and even murder as a consequence of their efforts to protect their territories and community forests.

Due to the significant positive synergies that can be created by addressing deforestation, community tenure security and human rights issues simultaneously, we call on the resolution to explicitly recognise:

1. The severe human rights impacts associated with deforestation and agricultural commodity supply chains;
2. The vital role of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities in tackling deforestation; and
3. The UN Environment's own policy on environmental defenders, which recognises their crucial role in protecting the world's remaining forests and other ecosystems.

It was hoped that, the withdrawn resolution ought to set out government and private sector commitments to adopt binding measures to regulate and reform agricultural commodity supply chains to eliminate land grabbing and ensure protection of the rights of forest peoples.

Oda Almås  
Forest Peoples Programme

### Editorial Team:

**Mohamed Abdelraouf**, Gulf Research Center, Co-chair of the MGFC at UN Environment - **Ahmed Fathy**, **Ganna Proskura**, Youth Love Egypt Foundation – **Elizabeth Lewis**, UNKLESA - **Kevin Barrett**, UN-GRASP.