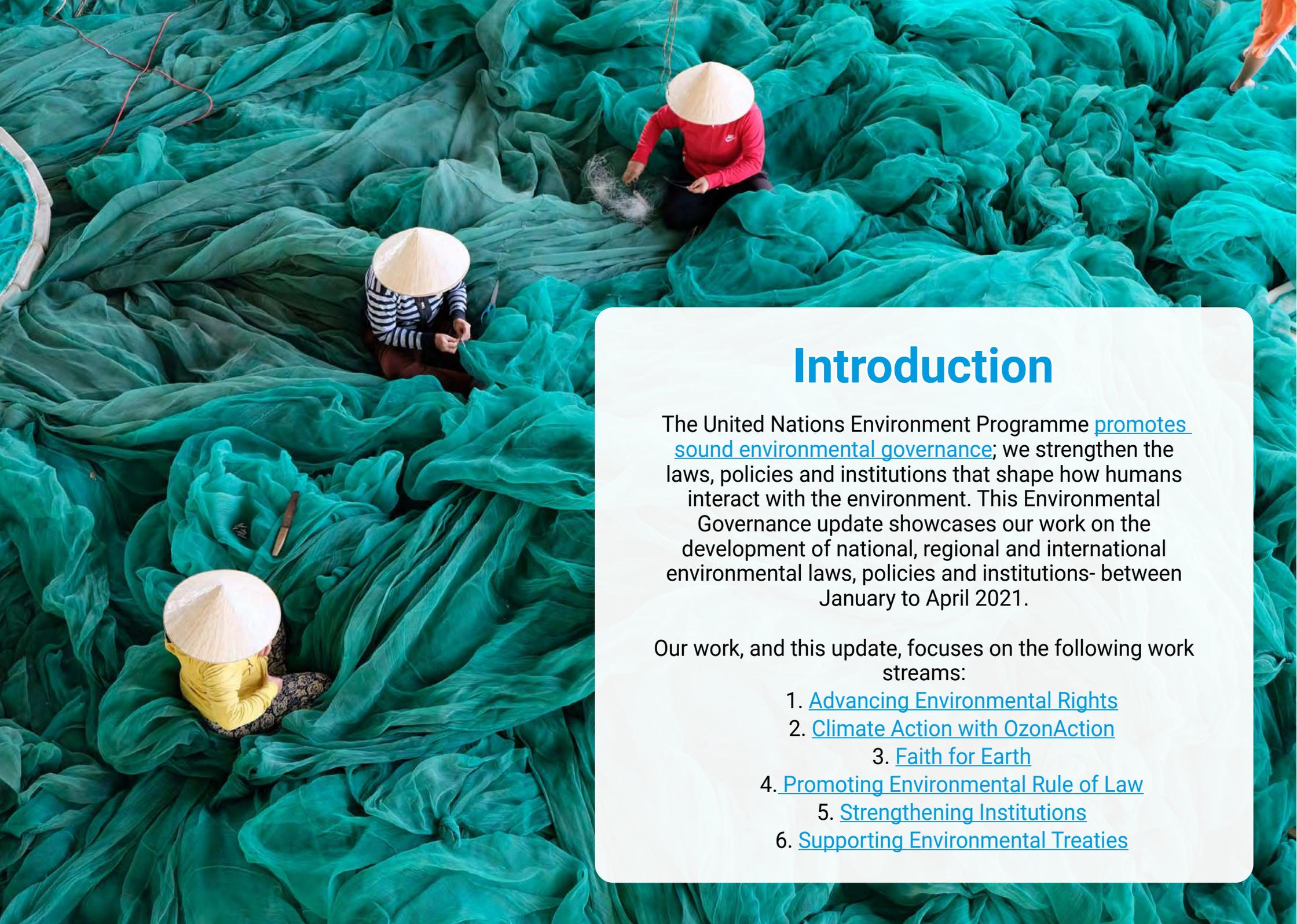


Environmental Governance Update - April 2021



Good governance for healthy planet and people



Introduction

The United Nations Environment Programme [promotes sound environmental governance](#); we strengthen the laws, policies and institutions that shape how humans interact with the environment. This Environmental Governance update showcases our work on the development of national, regional and international environmental laws, policies and institutions- between January to April 2021.

Our work, and this update, focuses on the following work streams:

1. [Advancing Environmental Rights](#)
2. [Climate Action with OzonAction](#)
3. [Faith for Earth](#)
4. [Promoting Environmental Rule of Law](#)
5. [Strengthening Institutions](#)
6. [Supporting Environmental Treaties](#)

1. Advancing Environmental Rights

UNEP supports the upholding of environmental rights through [The Environmental Rights Initiative](#), which is a coalition of state and non-state actors united to promote, protect, and respect environmental rights.

[New UN resolution reinforces link between human rights and the environment](#)

The [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) adopted a [resolution](#) that calls for a human-rights-based approach to conserving & restoring natural spaces. Find out how this resolution will help safeguard the environment and contribute to sustainable development in a [Q&A with UNEP's Law Division Director](#). The resolution explicitly supports UNEP's work on environmental rights.

[Joint statement of United Nations entities on the right to healthy environment](#)

We at UNEP were honored to present to the UN Human Rights Council, a powerful joint statement on behalf of 15 UN entities advocating that 'the time is now' for States to recognize at the global level a human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The joint statement, signed by 69 states, represents an unprecedented level of support for the global recognition of the right to a healthy environment, as well as a commitment to proceed with the process of formalising this recognition.



Universal recognition of the right to a healthy environment, video message by Ms Inger Andersen



#WikiforHumanRights

UNEP, OHCHR and Wikimedia Foundation are co-sponsoring a [month-long campaign](#) on human rights and the environment. The #WikiforHumanRights campaign is a global call to action for volunteers to write and improve content on Wikipedia about human rights, a healthy environment, and the range of communities impacted by convergent environmental crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

The campaign, running from 15 April to 15 May 2021, was launched with an online event featuring discussions on human rights and the environment as well as instructions on how to edit Wikipedia content (recording available [here](#)). More information is additionally available on the campaign's [event](#) and [participant challenge](#) webpages.



Human rights events in Asia

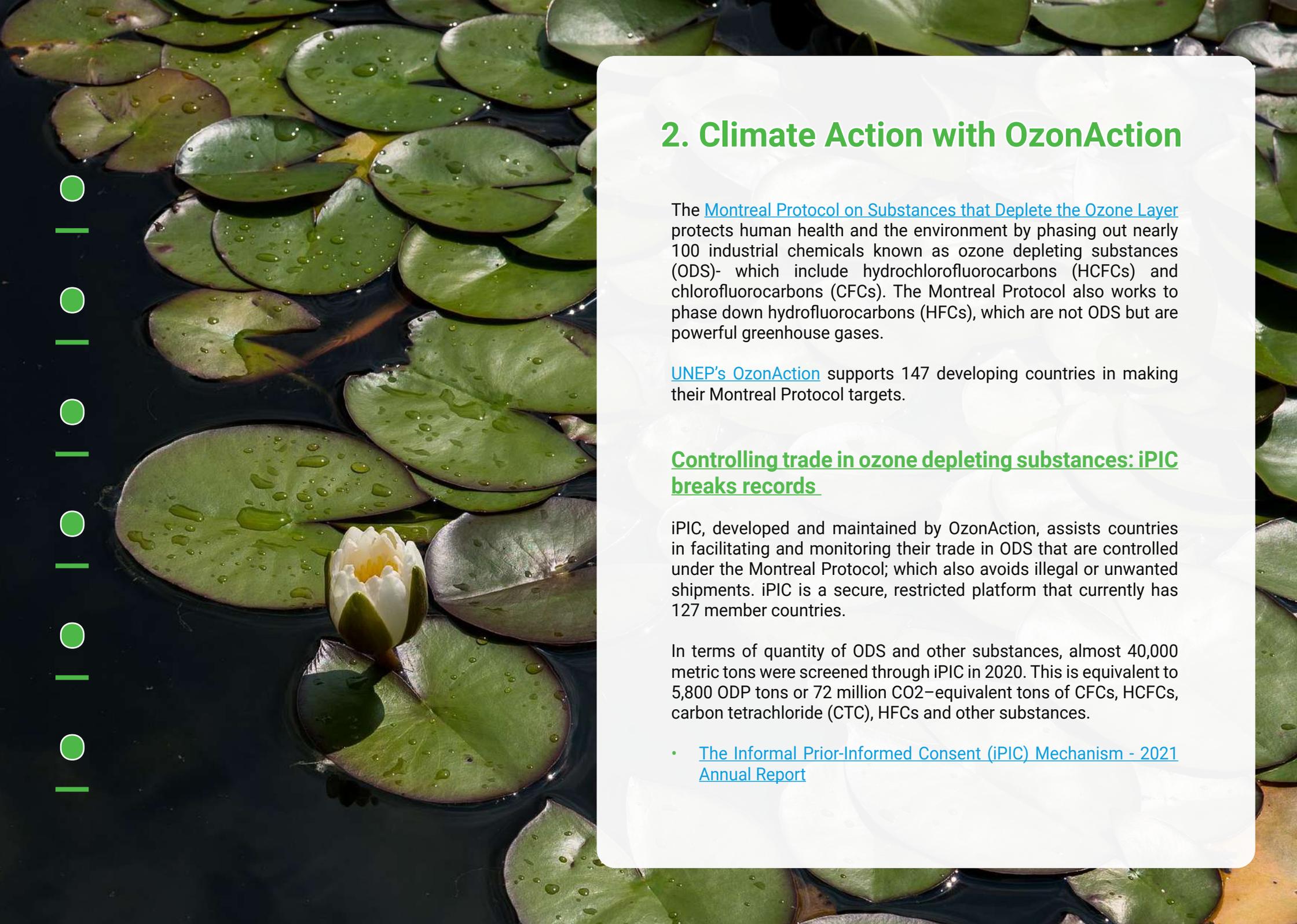
UNEP hosted three side events during the [Asia Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum](#). The events were:

1. Supporting Human Rights-based Inclusive Resilience for all- Mr. Saad Alfarargi, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, joined this event. His participation will support his consultations in preparation for his report on climate change, human rights and the right to development.
2. Enabling sustainable recovery with greater access to information, access to justice and public participation in environmental decision-making- A dialogue on a framework for access rights in Asia and the Pacific, similar to current regional agreements in Europe as well as Latin America and the Caribbean (with the secretariats of these Conventions). Watch the event [here](#).
3. The Role of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) in supporting and enhancing sustainable Covid-19 recovery- Ms. Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, and Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People, Founder and Executive Director of the Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education) joined the event.

Resources

- [Six reasons why a healthy environment should be a human right](#)
- [Webinar- Defending the Defenders: Environmental Advocates in Southeast Asia in Focus](#)





2. Climate Action with OzonAction

The [Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) protects human health and the environment by phasing out nearly 100 industrial chemicals known as ozone depleting substances (ODS)- which include hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). The Montreal Protocol also works to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are not ODS but are powerful greenhouse gases.

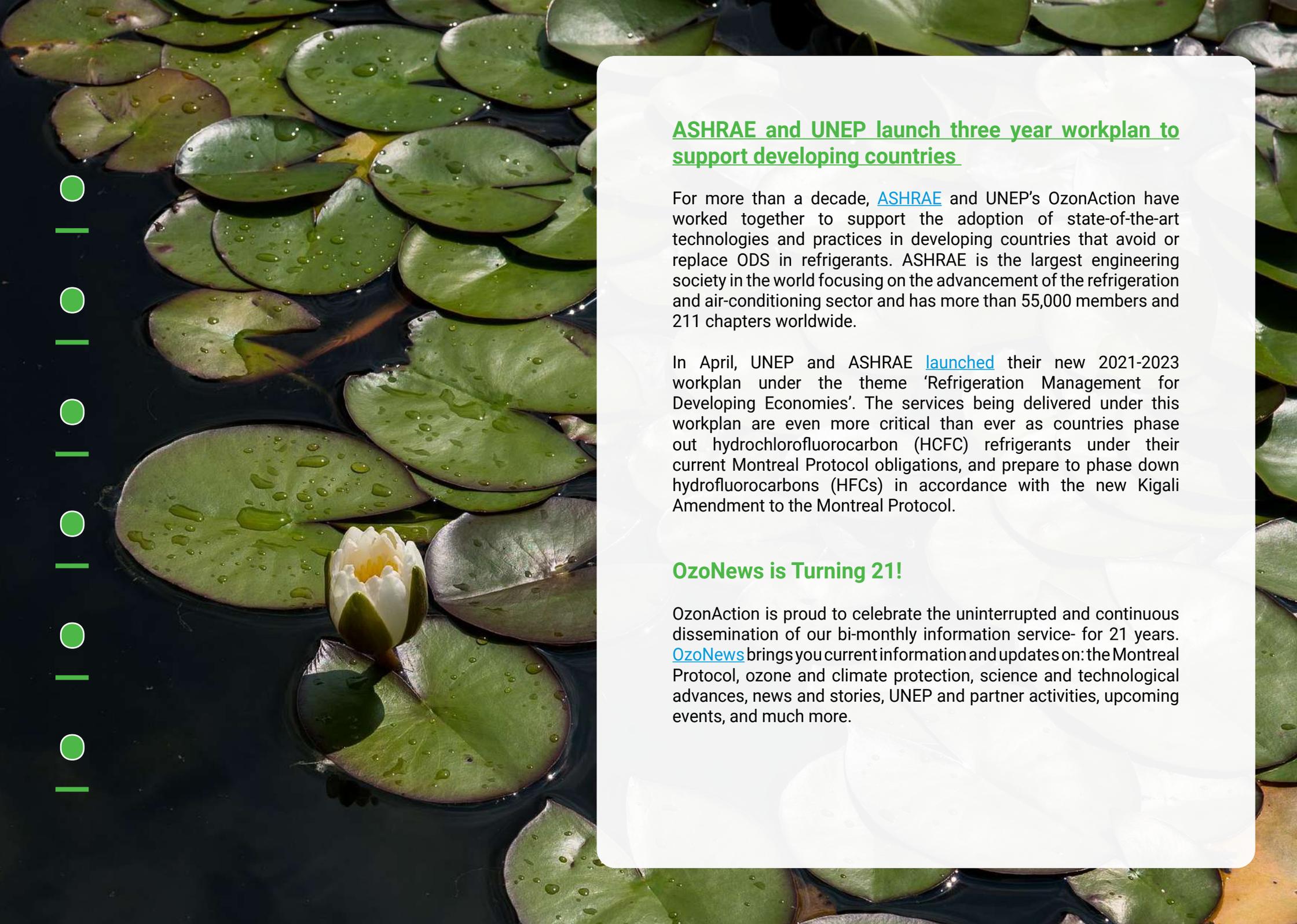
[UNEP's OzonAction](#) supports 147 developing countries in making their Montreal Protocol targets.

Controlling trade in ozone depleting substances: iPIC breaks records

iPIC, developed and maintained by OzonAction, assists countries in facilitating and monitoring their trade in ODS that are controlled under the Montreal Protocol; which also avoids illegal or unwanted shipments. iPIC is a secure, restricted platform that currently has 127 member countries.

In terms of quantity of ODS and other substances, almost 40,000 metric tons were screened through iPIC in 2020. This is equivalent to 5,800 ODP tons or 72 million CO₂-equivalent tons of CFCs, HCFCs, carbon tetrachloride (CTC), HFCs and other substances.

- [The Informal Prior-Informed Consent \(iPIC\) Mechanism - 2021 Annual Report](#)



[ASHRAE and UNEP launch three year workplan to support developing countries](#)

For more than a decade, [ASHRAE](#) and UNEP's OzonAction have worked together to support the adoption of state-of-the-art technologies and practices in developing countries that avoid or replace ODS in refrigerants. ASHRAE is the largest engineering society in the world focusing on the advancement of the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector and has more than 55,000 members and 211 chapters worldwide.

In April, UNEP and ASHRAE [launched](#) their new 2021-2023 workplan under the theme 'Refrigeration Management for Developing Economies'. The services being delivered under this workplan are even more critical than ever as countries phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) refrigerants under their current Montreal Protocol obligations, and prepare to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in accordance with the new Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

OzoNews is Turning 21!

OzonAction is proud to celebrate the uninterrupted and continuous dissemination of our bi-monthly information service- for 21 years. [OzoNews](#) brings you current information and updates on: the Montreal Protocol, ozone and climate protection, science and technological advances, news and stories, UNEP and partner activities, upcoming events, and much more.

News in different languages

- [Ciencia del Ozono, Cambio Climático y COVID-19](#)
- [Remise au niveau de formateurs en froid en Afrique francophone](#)
- [Evento virtual sobre códigos del Sistema Armonizado \(SA\) para los hidrofluorocarbonos \(HFC\)](#)

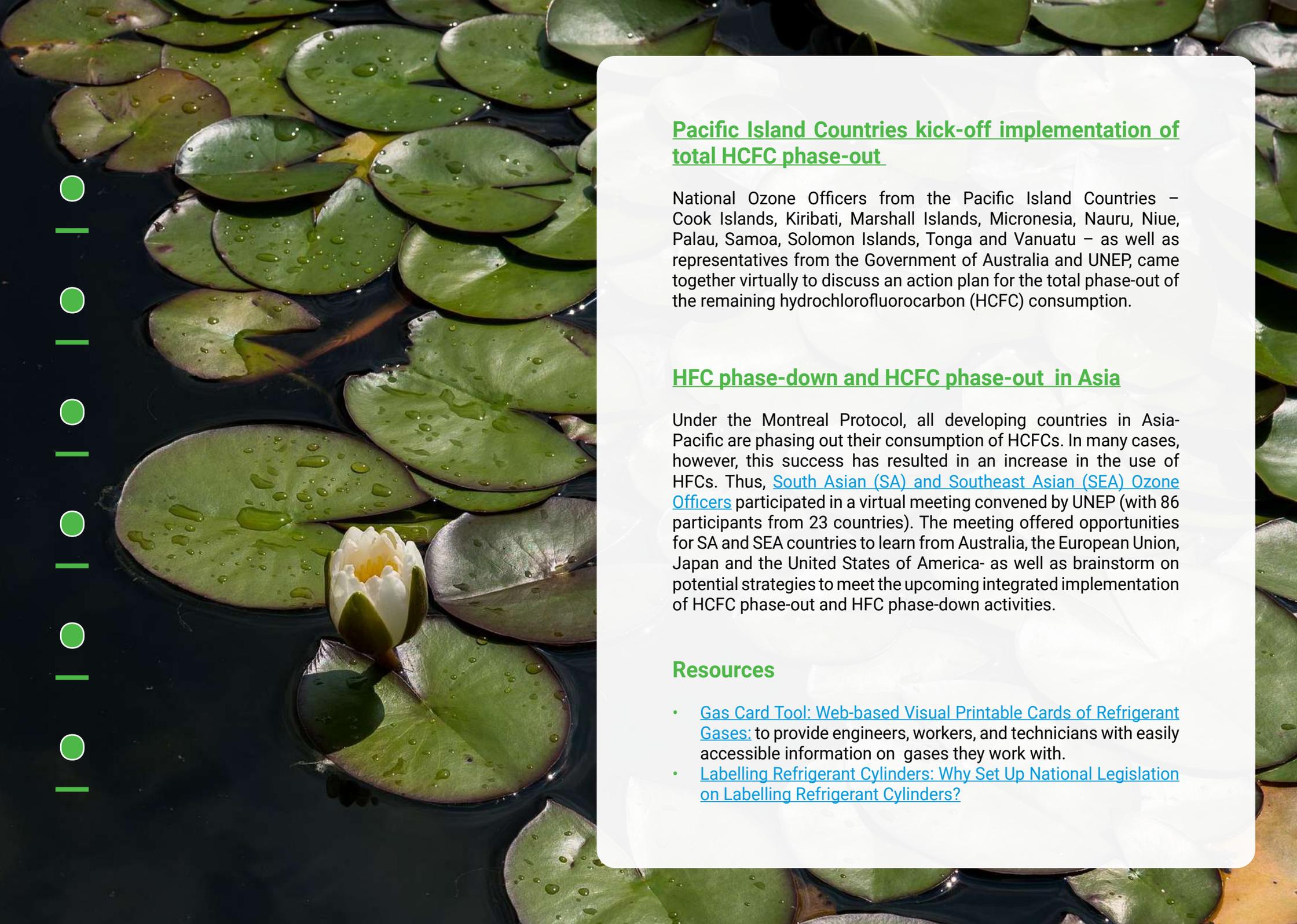
Women in Refrigeration & Air-Conditioning

- [Let's All Celebrate International Women's Day 2021, 8th March 2021!](#)
- [Stories from Nicaragua and Niger](#)
- [Stories from Nigeria](#)
- [Stories from Papua New Guinea](#)



JODIE-MARIE LAVU

"I became an air conditioning technician without knowing anything about air conditioning or refrigeration... Today, I am completing my 'Certificate III in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning' and proud to say that I am one of the first groups of Stage 3 at the erstwhile Australia-Pacific Technical College, now the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTCL)."



Pacific Island Countries kick-off implementation of total HCFC phase-out

National Ozone Officers from the Pacific Island Countries – Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu – as well as representatives from the Government of Australia and UNEP, came together virtually to discuss an action plan for the total phase-out of the remaining hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) consumption.

HFC phase-down and HCFC phase-out in Asia

Under the Montreal Protocol, all developing countries in Asia-Pacific are phasing out their consumption of HCFCs. In many cases, however, this success has resulted in an increase in the use of HFCs. Thus, [South Asian \(SA\) and Southeast Asian \(SEA\) Ozone Officers](#) participated in a virtual meeting convened by UNEP (with 86 participants from 23 countries). The meeting offered opportunities for SA and SEA countries to learn from Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America- as well as brainstorm on potential strategies to meet the upcoming integrated implementation of HCFC phase-out and HFC phase-down activities.

Resources

- [Gas Card Tool: Web-based Visual Printable Cards of Refrigerant Gases](#): to provide engineers, workers, and technicians with easily accessible information on gases they work with.
- [Labelling Refrigerant Cylinders: Why Set Up National Legislation on Labelling Refrigerant Cylinders?](#)

3. Faith for Earth

UNEP's [Faith for Earth Initiative](#) works to:

- inspire and empower faith organizations and their leaders to advocate for protecting the environment;
- green faith-based organizations' investments and assets;
- provide faith organizations with the knowledge and networks to effectively communicate with decision-makers and the public.

[A Call for Action](#)

To mark Earth Day, the Faith for Earth initiative, the [Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#) and the [Parliament of World's Religions released a call for action video](#), to accompany their Faith for Earth publication. [This resource](#) describes the reverence that all religions have for creation and nature and aims to inspire readers to learn more about our planet, to share their commitment to it and to become part of the flourishing global interfaith movement that is increasingly bringing people together to protect and sustain life on Earth.

[Greening religion: New Islamic covenant for the Earth](#)

The global Muslim community is drafting its new environmental charter, titled Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth.

[Minister of Environment of Iceland calls for the adoption of a UNEA resolution to support Faith for Earth Initiative](#)



Vatican Faith and Science: Towards COP 26

In recognition of the role of faith leaders in tackling climate change, as well as to lead preparations for COP26, the British and Italian Embassies to the Holy See, together with the Holy See, and facilitated by Wilton Park, have started a series of [virtual preparatory meetings](#) to enable faith leaders to: share their faith's theology on care for the environment; outline the action they have taken so far in tackling climate change; and discuss the way forward to COP26. The Faith for Earth Initiative has been invited to take part as a UN advisor to these discussions.

People and Planet: Gender, Environment and Climate in the 2030 Agenda

UNEP's Faith for Earth co-organized with Sida, a global learning conference from 16-18 March 2021. The conference facilitated a global dialogue, with significant input from the Global South, on gender, religions and climate change- with participants making commitments to act in their own organizations. The conference deepened 150 participants' knowledge and understanding of the nexus of environment to climate and faith.



Imams, Mosques & Climate Change Workshop

This workshop was held in Nairobi as a collaboration between Faith for Earth, [The Bahu Trust](#), the [Islamic Foundation on Ecology and Environmental Sustainability](#). Muslim faith-based organisations and faith leaders focused on local environmental challenges, strengthening partnerships and their grassroots knowledge systems. Participants identified gaps in the areas of environmental education, green spaces, responsible consumption and religious festivals.

Global Youth Environment Assembly

On 12 February 2021, Faith for Earth joined UNEP's Major Group for Children and Youth, in a Youth and Faith-Based Engagement Thematic Consultation. With over 160 participants, the session delved into how faith resonates within environmental governance intergovernmental processes- and the need to eliminate inter-generational gaps in faith groups tackling environmental challenges. The dialogue was moderated by youth representatives of UNEPs Major Group for Children & Youth (MGCY). Please visit [here](#) for more information.

Faith and Environmental National Hubs

Faith for Earth launched [Faith and Environment National Hubs](#) in India, Lebanon, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These hubs with key local entities, endeavour to educate and enable Faith Leaders and community members to respond quickly and effectively to the [triple planetary crises](#), as well as to train a select group of faith leaders as educators in their localities. This will be through increasing awareness, building the capacity of Faith Leaders, and supporting plans that affect behavioural change.



Resources

- [Interfaith Collaboration to Address Planetary Crises](#): Dr. Iyad Abumoghli, Director of Faith For Earth, was featured in a TV interview hosted by Cimpatico Studios to discuss the critical role that faith communities play in advancing environmental stewardship.



- [Resources on Judaism and Christianity at the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#): Our knowledge partner, the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, has worked for over 25 years to inform and inspire people to preserve, protect, and restore the Earth community.
- [How faith-based organizations are restoring nature](#): a story.
- [A Strategy for Engagement: The Role of Faith Leaders and Faith-Based Organisations in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration \(2021-2030\)](#)



4. Promoting Environmental Rule of Law

Environmental rule of law integrates environmental needs with the essential elements of the rule of law, and provides the basis for improving environmental governance. [We support the development of adequate and effective environmental legislation and legal frameworks to address environmental issues.](#)

Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review

The UNEP Global Climate Litigation Report: 2020 Status Review provides an overview of the current state of climate change litigation globally, as well as an assessment of global climate change litigation trends.

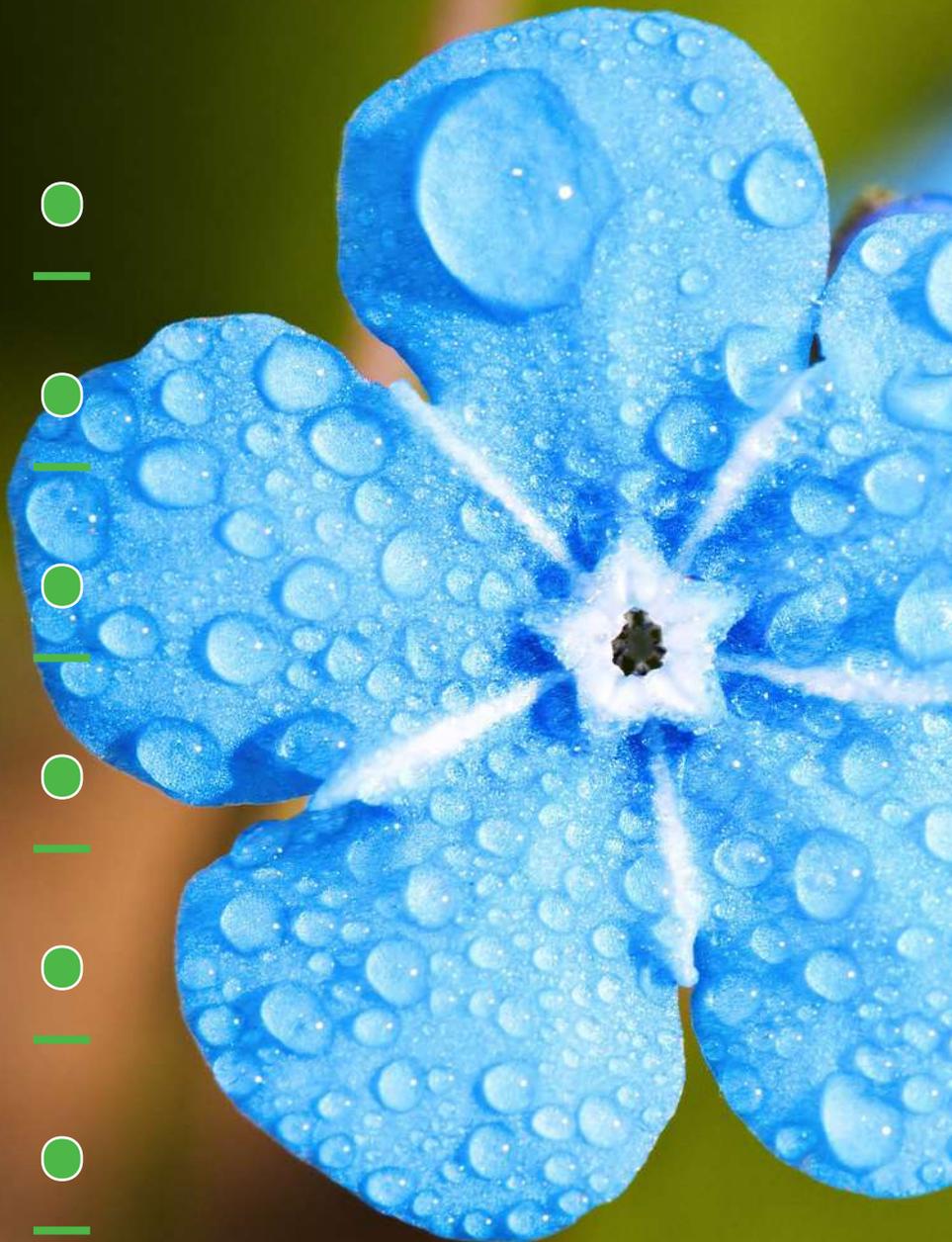


Inger Andersen ✓
@andersen_inger



Important new report from @UNEP speaks to a surge in #climatechange litigation around the world. This is a positive sign because environmental rule of law is absolutely vital for #ClimateAction🌍 #ForNature and for a sustainable future.

- [In battle against climate change, courts become a new frontier](#)
- [Surge in court cases over climate change shows increasing role of litigation in addressing the climate crisis](#)



Tackling Plastic Pollution

UNEP and the [World Resources Institute](#) have launched a [first-of-its-kind legislative guide](#) that provides four policy and legal approaches that countries can use to reduce their plastic waste permanently, regardless of the pandemic.

- [4 Ways to Reduce Plastic Pollution](#): single-use plastic bans, taxes and economic incentives, product bans and extended producer responsibility.

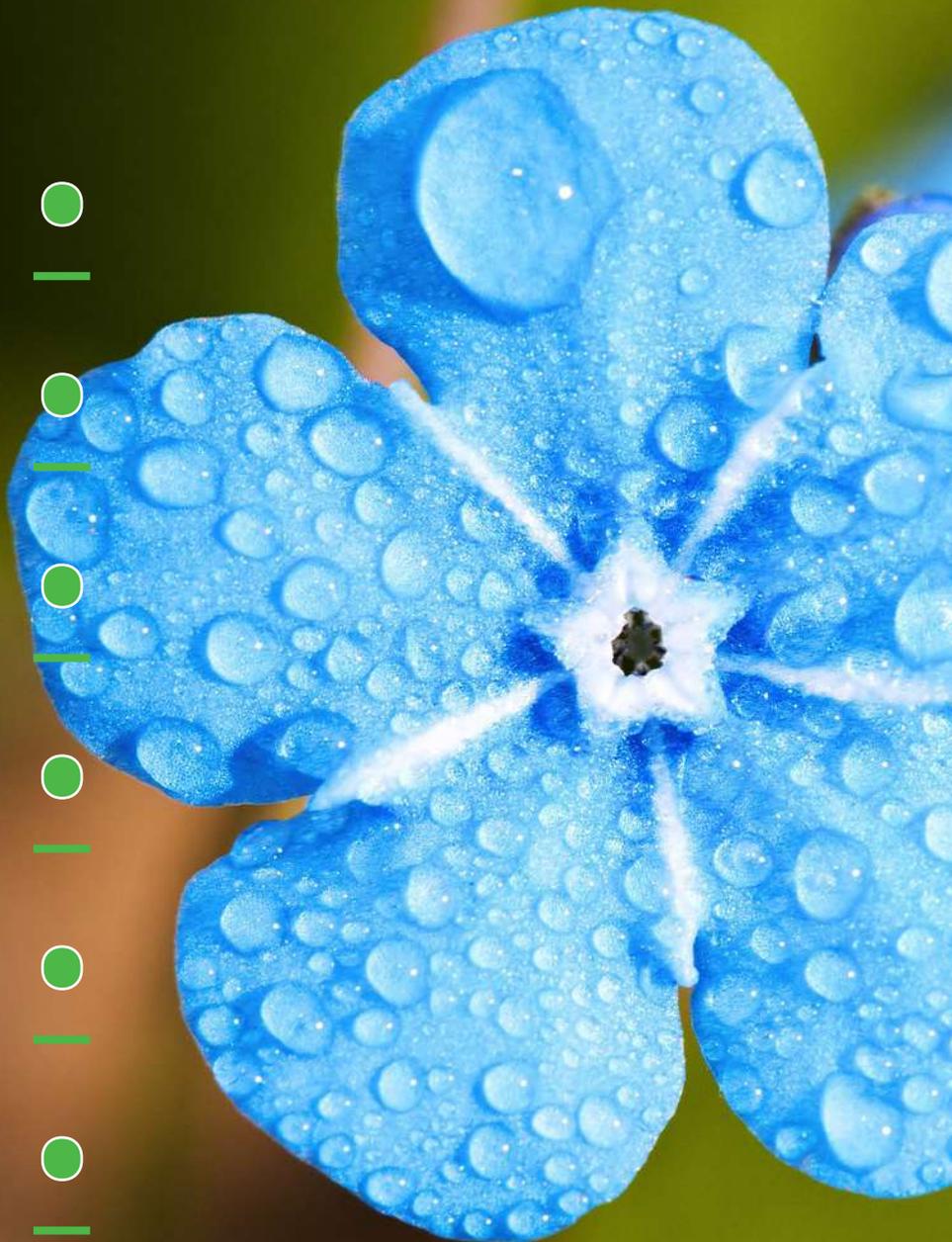
Plastic pollution is an environmental injustice to vulnerable communities – new report

UNEP [launched](#) the report [NEGLECTED: Environmental Justice Impacts of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution](#), which calls for the recognition of communities affected by plastic waste and their inclusion in local decision making. This report reviews legal and policy frameworks, exploring historical successes and challenges, and proposes actions for various state and non-state stakeholders.

- [Plastic pollution disproportionately hitting marginalized groups, UNEP report finds](#)

Resources

The [joint UNEP/IPU policy note for parliamentarians on Green approaches to COVID-19 recovery](#) was circulated to parliaments of 170 Member States and regional parliamentary organizations. The note, now available in Russian in addition to the English and French versions, was presented to parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, government representatives, members of regional parliamentary assemblies, and members of civil society.



2020 Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards

UNEP and its partners celebrated the [eight 2020 winners of the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards](#). The [winners](#) of these Awards have worked across multiple countries, made dozens of arrests, and seized hundreds of endangered species as well as thousands of tonnes of illegal waste.

Call for nominations for the 2021 Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards!

[We call on you](#) to nominate teams/individuals from Asian governments (or African governments for the Asia-Africa collaboration category) that demonstrate outstanding leadership in the enforcement of national laws to combat transboundary environmental crime- such as illegal trade in wildlife, chemicals, waste or plastic. The Awards will be given by UNEP in partnership with UNDP, UNODC, the CITES Secretariat, the WCO and INTERPOL.

[An assessment of Colombia's national legal and policy frameworks on urban and climate planning](#)

Done in collaboration with UN-Habitat and the Colombian Ministries of Environment and Sustainable Development as well as Housing, City and Territory, this study was carried out through the use of the [Law and Climate Change Toolkit](#). This toolkit, hosted by UNEP, assists countries in building the necessary legal frameworks for effective domestic implementation of the [Paris Agreement and their Nationally Determined Contributions](#). UNEP additionally collaborated with UN-Habitat in the design of the urban planning module, which was the basis of the assessment conducted in Colombia.

5. Strengthening Institutions

We [build national, regional and international capacities](#) to develop and enforce laws as well as to achieve global environmental objectives.

Supporting the 2030 Agenda

UNEP is the custodian agency for SDG indicator 17.14.1, which measures the number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. As the custodian agency, UNEP is responsible for compiling, verifying and submitting relevant country data, along with regional and global aggregates, to the United Nations Statistics Division. The first data drive was completed early this year- using a UNEP-developed methodology.

To enhance countries' understanding of the methodology for SDG indicator 17.14.1, UNEP organized an information session for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as West Asia on 28 January and 17 February 2021, respectively. In these sessions, the methodology was presented in detail and participants exchanged views on the challenges they faced in responding to the data drive, as well as opportunities for future work. UNEP is additionally actively contributing as a presenter at various relevant events; such as one organized by OECD on 14 January for its national focal points on policy coherence on sustainable development; and an online SDG workshop organized for Greek authorities on 27 April.



Protecting our Caribbean Sea through environmental diplomacy

To empower Caribbean countries to engage fully in their work to conserve their coastal and marine resources, UNEP along with the [Cartagena Convention](#), delivered a training webinar on environmental diplomacy to government representatives. From 2 to 4 February 2021, national and technical focal points to the [Caribbean Environment Programme \(CEP\)](#), the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols, were advised on how to effectively participate in environmental diplomacy - with a focus on the aforementioned Program, Convention and Protocols. This included: rules of procedure, carrying out intergovernmental meetings through virtual means, meeting preparation, negotiation skills and the procedures of environmental treaties adoption. To round out the training and ensure understanding, a successful negotiations simulation exercise was held.

"I found this training to be very useful. I learnt a lot and it has better prepared [me] for such meetings where negotiation is required".
Participant from Jamaica

The training was an opportunity for Member State delegates to enhance their skills on environmental negotiations, especially as they are preparing to discuss pollution and marine litter issues at intergovernmental meetings of the Cartagena Convention Secretariat in the first half of 2021. The participants in our training recorded an increase in knowledge on environmental diplomacy and stated that they would use the information taught in our training. UNEP received several expressions of appreciation from the government focal points, as well as from the Cartagena Convention secretariat.



Fifteen Years of a strong partnership for Green Customs

The [Green Customs Initiative \(GCI\)](#) enhances the capacity of customs and other relevant border control officers, to facilitate the legal trade and prevent the illegal trade, of environmentally-sensitive commodities. The 13 partners to the GCI came together virtually to take stock of their 2019-2020 activities. This meeting marked fifteen years of sustained collaboration between the [GCI partners](#). In the two-day meeting, partners discussed recent highlights of their collaboration under the GCI, such as support offered to [customs training institutes in the Latin America and the Caribbean](#) as well as in Kenya, and the development of knowledge materials (including updates to the [2018 GCI Guide to MEAs](#) and [GCI eLearning courses](#)).

Successful training on Asia-Europe cooperation against waste crime

[WasteForce](#) boosts the operational activities and capacities of authorities involved in the fight against the illegal trade and management of waste. As the WasteForce secretariat, UNEP, in partnership with the United Nations University (UNU) and INTERPOL, held an on-line training for frontline enforcement officials on the prosecution of waste crime and the disruption of the illegal trade in waste.

The training gathered more than 140 participants from 31 countries in Asia Pacific, Europe and across the globe. This included representatives of prosecution and judicial authorities, customs officials, police, environmental inspectorates, and Ministries- as well as representatives from international and regional organisations involved in the environmental rule of law.





6. Supporting Environmental Treaties

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are one of the key instruments of international environmental governance and international environmental law. [We provide policy advice, capacity-building services and technical assistance](#) to countries and the secretariats of MEAs to support the implementation of environmental treaties, in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT)

The [Data Reporting Tool for MEAs \(DaRT\)](#) provides Parties to MEAs with the first private and secure working space to manage information and knowledge for national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions.

UNEP supported Cameroon in establishing its DaRT national working space. The workshop was attended by high level government officials and the focal points from 5 MEAs (The Convention on Biological Diversity, The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification). Their attendance will support other countries in establishing DaRT national working spaces; especially though showcasing DaRT at CBD COP15.

- [About DaRT: How to use and its benefits](#)



Introductory Course on SDG 16 and access rights, the Aarhus Convention, and the Escazú Agreement

InforMEA celebrated Earth Day 2021 and the [entry into force of the Escazú Agreement](#) with a [brand new French version](#) of our course on SDG 16, human rights, the Aarhus Convention, and the Escazú Agreement. Learn [now](#) en français!

Concluding the Bern II Consultations on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The CBD's [post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) aims to support the world in tackling our [biodiversity crisis](#). Strongly engaging stakeholders in developing the framework is needed to ensure that it is robust and effectively implemented. UNEP has enabled MEA involvement in the formation of the framework; through organizing discussions for them and facilitating the inclusion of their inputs.

The latest round of this process was [live virtual sessions of the Bern II Consultation Workshop](#), held from 18 January to 2 February 2021. 13 MEAs (from biodiversity, chemicals and waste, drought and desertification fields) examined and shared ideas for the development of the post-2020 framework. For almost a year before these sessions, Members States and MEA Secretariats corresponded bilaterally, in groups and informal sessions, to continuously provide their consolidated comments on the CBD's new biodiversity targets.

These consultations produced a [report](#) that will inform the upcoming post-2020 biodiversity negotiation processes of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG-3) and the CBD subsidiary body meetings including the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI-3) and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties.



ACP MEAs

The [ACP MEAs project](#) promotes the enforcement of environmental treaties and goals in ACP countries- by building national and institutional capacity and strengthening their policies and legislative frameworks.

- [Enhancing the Role and Impact of Gender Equality in the African, Caribbean and the Pacific MEAs Project](#)

A gender operational plan, [launched on International Women's Day](#), was developed in consultation with all partners of the programme. The operational plan provides direct and specific guidance to all programme partners to ensure gender related issues receive full consideration in the implementation of the programme- going beyond counting the number of women participants in various activities.

As a part of this programme, four regional consultations were held involving 37 countries and 107 participants, including national focal points, youth, women's group and private sector.

- [Regional briefing sessions in preparation for informal SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 Meetings of the CBD](#)

UNEP organized a series of regional briefing sessions in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific regions to help Parties to the CBD and other stakeholders effectively participate in the Convention of Biological Diversity's informal [SBSTTA 24](#) and [SBI 3](#) meetings, during February and March 2021. About 140 participants from 41 countries participated in these sessions.

- [ACP-MEAs monthly digests and quarterly newsletters](#)