

LAUNCHING #GENERATIONRESTORATION

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2021 AND START OF
THE UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

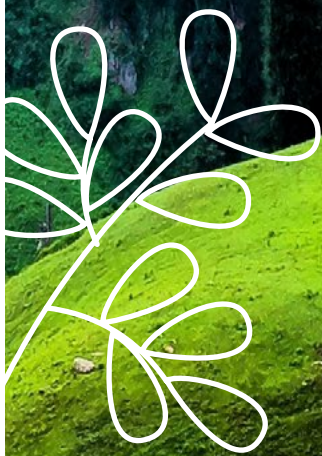


UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030

UN
environment
programme



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



**REIMAGINE
RECREATE
RESTORE**
#GenerationRestoration



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REIMAGINE. RESTORE. RECREATE #GENERATIONRESTORATION

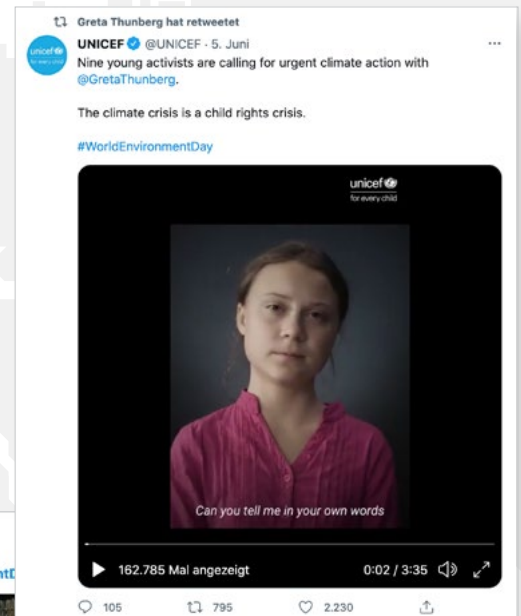
World Environment Day 2021
on 5 June marked the launch
of the United Nations Decade
on Ecosystem Restoration
2021 – 2030 (UN Decade) with
a clear message that
resonated across the globe.
The planet is ailing but
humanity still has time to undo
decades of environmental
destruction and recalibrate its
relationship with nature.



REIMAGINE. RESTORE. RECREATE #GENERATIONRESTORATION

The collective efforts of UN agencies, governments, businesses, civil society and individuals from around the world took 'ecosystem restoration' from being a relatively unknown concept to a top-trending topic globally. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the celebrations mobilized hundreds of millions of people to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of the natural world.

Events were held across the globe, from Pakistan, which hosted World Environment Day in partnership with UNEP, to Europe, the Americas and Africa. On the agenda were tree plantings, community cleanups, concerts and film screenings. Political and business leaders also committed to tackling the unsustainable practices that fuel the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.



LAUNCH OF A NEW MOVEMENT

At the [launch event](#) for the UN Decade, global leaders emphasized that restoration was vital to mitigating climate change, preventing biodiversity loss and promoting sustainable development.

Several other global leaders also lent their support to UN Decade, including British Prime Minister [Boris Johnson](#), [Pope Francis](#) and [Ahmed el-Tayeb](#), the Grand Imam of al-Azhar. They were joined by poets, musicians, celebrities and scientists, including [Jane Goodall](#).



[António Guterres](#)
UN Secretary-General

"WE NEED TO REPLANT AND PROTECT OUR FORESTS, CLEAN UP OUR RIVERS AND SEAS, AND GREEN OUR CITIES TO SAFEGUARD THE PLANET'S RESOURCES."



[Imran Khan](#)
Prime Minister of Pakistan

"I WOULD LIKE TO APPEAL TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY THAT WE ALL NEED TO PROTECT OUR ECOSYSTEMS, WE NEED TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT, THE RAPIDLY DEPLETING TREE COVER"



[Inger Andersen](#)
UNEP Executive Director

"WE MUST STOP FURTHER ECOSYSTEM DESTRUCTION BY REFORMING AGRICULTURE, BY CHANGING HOW WE BUILD OUR CITIES, BY DECARBONIZING ECONOMIES AND BY MOVING TO CIRCULAR ECONOMIC MODELS."



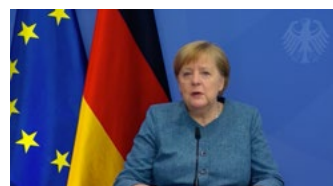
[Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi](#)
President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Chairperson of the African Union

"AFRICA INTENDS FIRST AND FOREMOST TO PRESERVE ITS NATURAL CAPITAL WHILE SHARING THE AMBITION OF THE UN TO RESTORE ALL ECOSYSTEMS."



[QU Dongyu](#)
FAO Director-General

"BUSINESS AS USUAL IS NOT AN OPTION. WE NEED TO PREVENT, HALT AND REVERSE THE DEGRADATION OF ECOSYSTEMS WORLDWIDE"



[Angela Merkel](#),
Chancellor of Germany

"I AM PLEASED THAT WE ARE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO PROVIDE FUNDING OF 14 MILLION EUROS TO THE TRUST FUND FOR THIS DECADE."

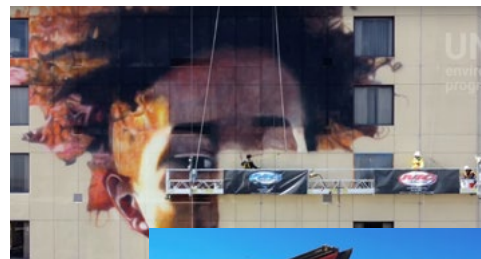
UNEP devised a communications strategy that focused on marshalling public support, driving political action and ramping up financing for restoration. **The UN Decade is powered by a partnership of over 60 leading civil society organizations from across the globe.**

The partners raised awareness about the urgency to restore the planet, educated the public about restoration practices and mobilized stakeholders into action. Through **success stories, incisive web articles, an ambitious social media plan, and stakeholder events** – all of which started on 22 April – the UN community and partners showcased the latest innovations and built political ambition and financial support for the UN Decade.



"WE ARE A FRACTION OF A SECOND IN EARTH'S LIFETIME. YET SHE IS OUR ONLY LIFELINE."

Spoken word artist Jordan Sanchez penned a poem for World Environment Day.



Streetart for Mankind announced a partnership, producing 50 restoration murals over the next ten years.

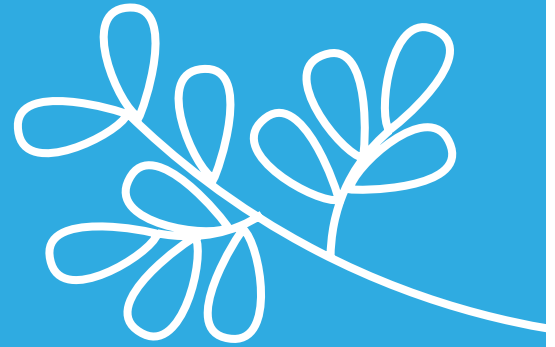


Madrid develops a 75km-long green belt around the city.



In Kenya, citizens came together to clean up and regreen their communities.

TOOLS



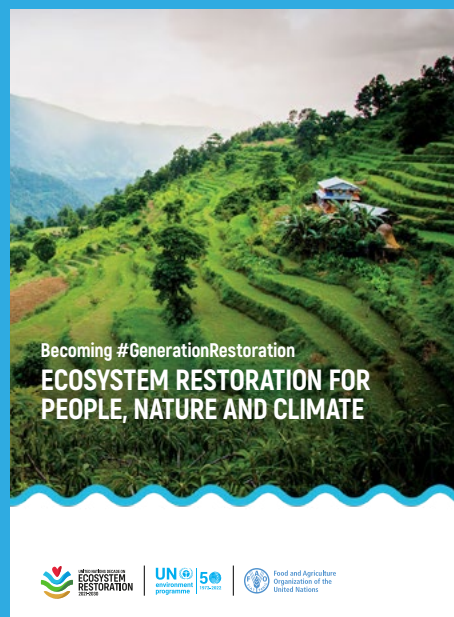
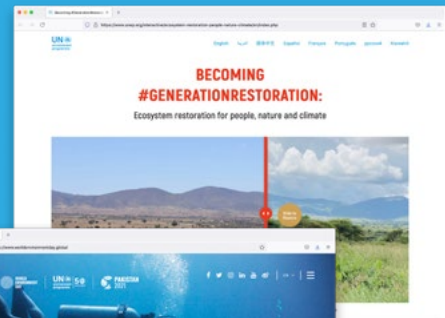
THE UN DECADE LAUNCH WEEK SAW MORE THAN 50 EVENTS HELD BY 41 PARTNERS, FEATURING OVER 300 INSPIRING SPEAKERS, FROM MINISTERS AND CEOS TO YOUTH LEADERS, INDIGENOUS ACTIVISTS, AND MUSICIANS, COVERING 20-PLUS TOPICS. OVER 30,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED THESE ACTIVITIES.

DEDICATED WEBSITES CREATED FOR WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AND THE UN DECADE SHOWCASED SCIENCE, DATA, PRACTICAL GUIDES, AND EVENTS. THEY FEATURED OVER 30 RESTORATION-RELATED ARTICLES, INCLUDING CASE STUDIES FROM MEMBER STATES, Q&A'S WITH SCIENTISTS AND 'HOW-TO' LISTICLES.

THE LAUNCH OF THE FLAGSHIP REPORT **BECOMING #GENERATIONRESTORATION** DETAILED THE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF RESTORATION.

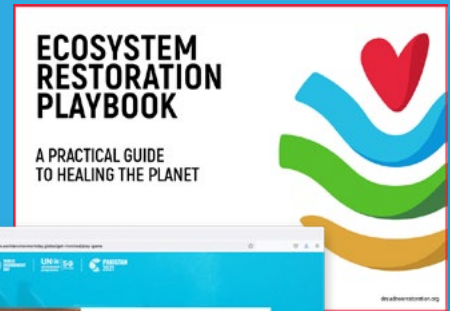
A ROBUST CONTENT PLAN FEATURED STORIES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE, TARGETED DIVERSE AUDIENCES, AND COVERED ALL EIGHT UN-RECOGNIZED ECOSYSTEM TYPES.

THE UN DECADE DIGITAL HUB CONNECTED GOVERNMENTS, FUNDERS, AND CITIZENS WITH RESTORATION EFFORTS ON THE GROUND.





THE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PLAYBOOK, A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS, POLICYMAKERS, BUSINESS LEADERS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, WAS REFORMATTED INTO AN EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND GAME, PLAY A GAME, RESTORE THE PLANET. IT SEES USERS TAKE SIMPLE ACTIONS BASED ON AN ECOSYSTEM OF THEIR CHOICE. SOME 79,000 PLEDGES WERE MADE IN TOTAL. MOST ADVOCATED FOR GREEN SPACES, PLANTING TREES, GROWING FOOD, REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE AND BEACH CLEAN UPS.



CREATIVE MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTS, SUCH AS VIDEOS FROM THE FIELD AND DIGITAL BILLBOARDS IN PLACES LIKE TIMES SQUARE AND PICCADILLY CIRCUS, ACTIVATIONS AND LIVE EVENTS GARNERED MILLIONS OF VIEWS AND HELPED BUILD MOMENTUM FOR THE MOVEMENT: SEE THE FULL LIST HERE



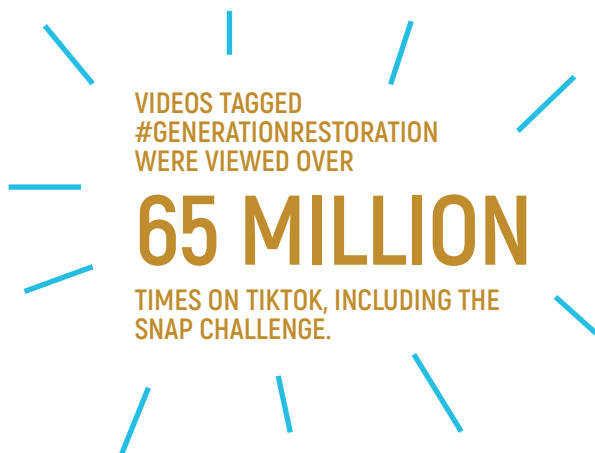
THE SNAP CHALLENGE, PART OF AN OVERARCHING DIGITAL CAMPAIGN, HELPED DRIVE HOME THE IMPACT OF RESTORATION BY SHOWING THE BEFORE-AND-AFTER EFFECTS OF RESTORATION PROJECTS.



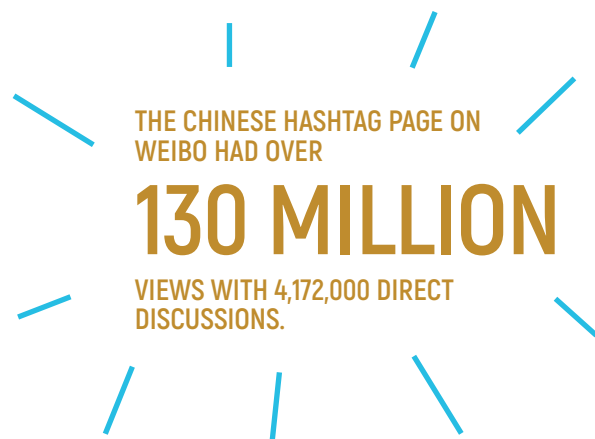
HIGHLIGHTS



The campaign generated massive worldwide attention for World Environment Day and the UN Decade. For seven consecutive hours on 5 June, #WorldEnvironmentDay was the number one hashtag in the world and for 10 hours, it was among the 10 most used hashtags.

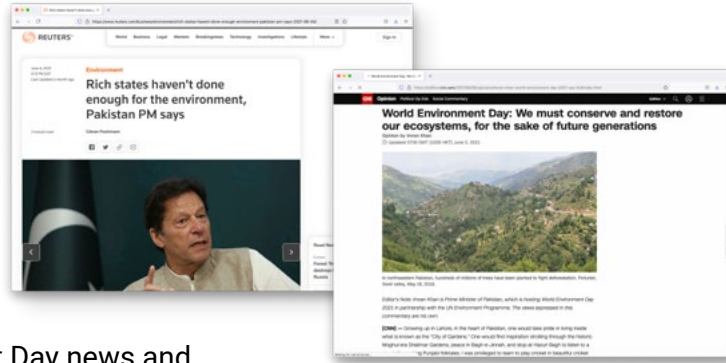


The UNEP-TikTok collaboration broke new ground. This was the first time UNEP engaged with audiences on the platform for World Environment Day.



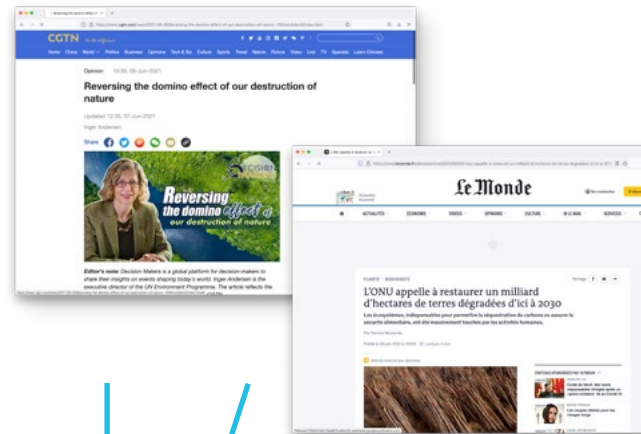
More than 1.7 million people from 195 countries visited unep.org, and the dedicated World Environment Day and UN Decade sites, a 28 per cent year-over-year increase. In what is commonly referred to as a hockey stick surge, the term “ecosystem restoration” dominated the virtual search engine realm for hours on World Environment Day.

The World Environment Day site acted as the base for the celebrations. The UNEP site housed the editorial content, while the UN Decade site served as the restoration knowledge and implementer hub. While most traffic came from India, the United States, the United Kingdom and Brazil, there was a fair balance from both the Global South and Global North. Most users were interested in learning about World Environment Day itself, understanding what restoration is, and were eager to participate in events, games and broadcasts. The most popular stories were around [restoration guides](#) and global restoration issues viewed through a [local lens](#).

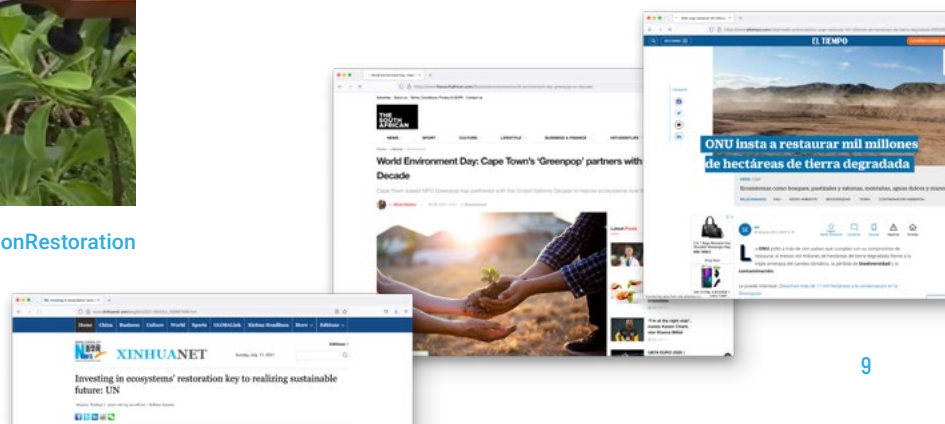


World Environment Day news and media coverage broke records from previous years, primarily because it set the stage for the successful launch of the UN Decade.

[Pakistan's World Environment Day celebrations were broadcast live on TV stations reaching over 170 million people.](#) Thousands organized their own community events, including a swimathon in Tuvalu to raise money for shoreline cleanups, a restoration capacity building workshop in Iceland, a forest conservation walk in Madagascar, and concerts by renowned musicians [DJ Don Diablo](#) and [Jack Johnson](#).



Jack Johnson performing for #GenerationRestoration



THE UNITED NATIONS ACTS AS ONE

On 4 June, the eve of World Environment Day, a group of more than 50 UN experts issued a joint UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights statement calling on countries to take urgent action to recognize and implement the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In the statement, they called for human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, **"TO BE PLACED AT THE HEART OF THE REQUIRED TRANSFORMATIONS RELATED TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES."**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced the establishment of the Human-Nature Panel to guide the UN Decade. The organization will focus on making the crucial link between education, culture and ecosystem health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) joined the movement holding the inaugural meeting of the newly established Expert Working Group on Biodiversity, Climate, One Health and Nature-based Solutions concurrently with the 74th World Health Assembly. WHO will host an online #GenerationRestoration event in July 2021 with key partners and stakeholders on mainstreaming health in nature-based solutions.

On 1 June, **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** staff in Pakistan supported the **#PedalForAGreenPakistan** event to commemorate World Environment Day, cycling across Islamabad in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Climate Change, and Urban Innovation. **UNICEF** also teamed up with Pakistan to engage with youth to mark the launch of the UN Decade.

At the **UN headquarters in Vienna**, **beehives and an insect hotel were installed** to promote the rewilding of corporate campuses. UN country offices and information centers worldwide mobilized to share information and multilingual assets across their platforms and place materials in local media outlets.



Inauguration of beehives at the Vienna International Centre.

HOST COUNTRY MILESTONES AND GOALS

Pakistan is emerging as a leader in the global push to halt and reverse the destruction of ecosystems. Soon after the COVID-19 outbreak, the country announced the [Protected Areas Initiative](#) as part of its ambitious Green Stimulus plan, which aims to protect and increase forest cover, create thousands of green jobs and address the challenges of climate change. [Making the announcement](#) at the virtual Fifth UN Environment Assembly, Pakistan's Minister of Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam, joined Executive Director Inger Andersen in acknowledging the urgency of restoring ecosystems.

Leading up to World Environment Day, Prime Minister Imran Khan released an [opinion piece on CNN](#), calling on governments and financial institutions to mend their relationship with nature. During the official live event, Khan announced [the planting of the first billion trees under the country's flagship 10 Billion Tree Tsunami initiative](#).

Pakistan confirmed its pledge to the Bonn Challenge of restoring 1 million hectares of space by 2023. Some 200,000 green jobs will be created in one year, adding to the 85,000 created during COVID-19. The Natural Parks Services will also provide jobs and



Women working in government-owned nurseries in Haripur, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan ©Zofeen T. Ebrahim/IPS

training courses to 5,000 youth. A further 1 billion Pakistani rupees (over \$6 million) was allocated for the restoration of 15 wetlands and natural lakes around the Indus River.

"PAKISTAN HAS SHOWN REAL LEADERSHIP IN EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE COUNTRY'S FORESTS," said Andersen. **"WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO HOST WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2021 AND LEAD THE CHARGE FOR ALL NATIONS TO RESTORE OUR DAMAGED ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH THE UN DECADE."**

Other announcements included the launch of electric cars in Pakistan by the end of 2021. The nation's first Green Eurobond (Indus bond) also attracted international investments worth \$3 billion.

GLOBAL COMMITMENTS

World Environment Day saw a series of [political and financial commitments](#) from governments and the private sector:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) launched the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021 - 2025), which provides a scalable, solution-focused joint strategy to address marine plastic debris across the region.

Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, issued a statement reviving his pledge to **"BUILDING A CLEANER, MORE RESILIENT WORLD."** He committed to planting 2 billion trees over the next decade and protecting 25 per cent of Canada's land and oceans by 2025.

Finland pledged to restore 60,000 hectares of mires, 700 aquatic bird sites, 52,000 hectares of semi-natural grasslands, over 1,700 forest sites and over 1,500 freshwater and coastal sites, in addition to supporting the UN Decade's launch and regional implementation plans with 3 million euros.

Germany announced it would be the first country to provide funding – 14 million euros – to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the UN Decade.

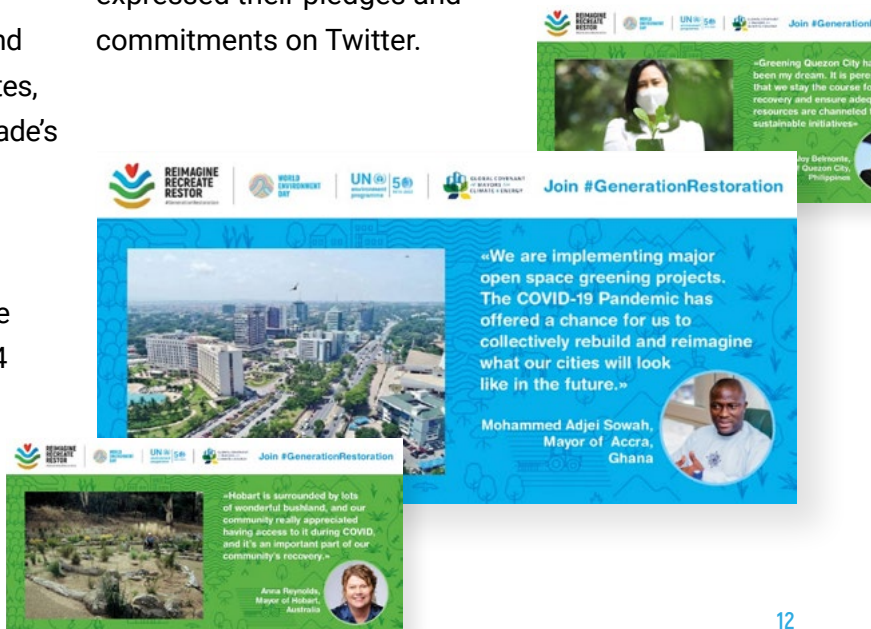
Papua New Guinea promised a new protected area bill, which is scheduled to be passed before the end of the year.

South Africa is implementing a series of biotrade projects, benefitting ecosystems while developing sustainable jobs. The model is based on indigenous biodiversity conservation knowledge.

The United Kingdom pledged over £8 million in new funding to protect rare wildlife and vulnerable habitats across the globe.

The United States of America and many development partners are collaborating with regional governments to implement a range of ecosystem restoration projects in the **Aral Sea**.

In addition, mayors worldwide expressed their pledges and commitments on Twitter.



PARTNER COMMITMENTS

E.ON, Europe’s largest operator of energy distribution networks, stepped up to support the UN Decade by creating a digital hub connecting restoration implementers with the wider support community. The company also pledged to create biotopes and enhance ecosystem connectivity under 13,000 kilometers of high-voltage lines in forests.

Beauty brand **Dove** and Conservation International committed 8.5 million euros to protect and restore 20,000 hectares of forest in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

BYJU’S, a leading Indian technology company with over 90 million users, joined UNEP to launch the Eco Guardian Initiative, a platform to educate young minds on ecosystem restoration. A virtual ecosystem

restoration classroom was also created for students in South Africa.

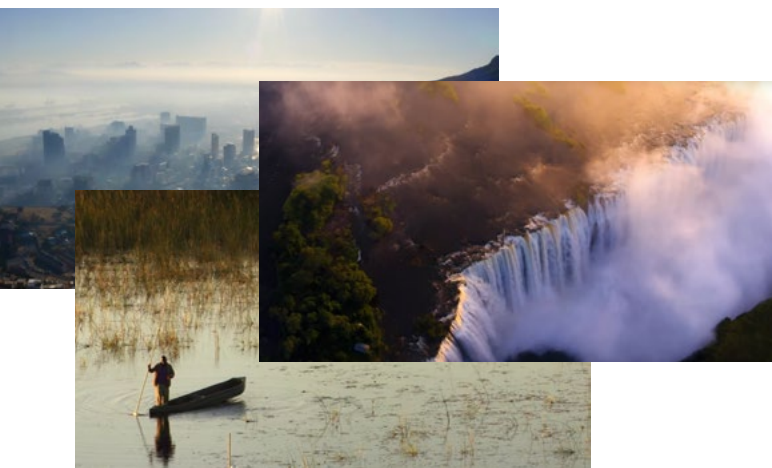
JC Decaux – the largest outdoor advertising company in the world – supported World Environment Day and the launch of the UN Decade through a global billboard campaign of \$400,000 in advertising value. Print and digital billboards were placed strategically across 20 countries in Europe and Africa, including Germany, Italy, Mozambique, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and Uganda. Locations included the prestigious digital billboard at The Kensington, London.

LG joined the global effort, and contributed a prominent digital billboard at Times Square, New York.



PARTNER COMMITMENTS

National Geographic Africa launched the documentary *The Grand African Greenup: Our Decade on Ecosystem Restoration* broadcast in 45 countries across Africa, reaching an estimated 18 million households.



Twitter partnered with climate change-minded organizations, including UNEP and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to create a climate change topic hub. The social network also announced its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Tech giant Apple committed to supporting projects that aim to reduce carbon and protect wildlife in Kenya.

Nikon Egypt launched a youth-led photo contest, **Kellogg Company** committed to ecosystem restoration and **Samsung** launched a month-long celebration of sustainability programs and innovations.

Faith-based organizations also embraced the launch of the UN Decade and World Environment Day celebrations. Sending signals of interfaith hope across the oceans, Norway marked the day with the inauguration of the **Hope Cathedral**, built on a barge out of wood, roots and marine plastic. During the UN Decade launch gala, Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, said, **"NO HUMAN BEING IS FREE TO COMMIT CORRUPTION AGAINST THE EARTH. NOT ON IT, NOT IN ITS ATMOSPHERE. NOT IN ITS AIR, WATER OR ANIMALS."**

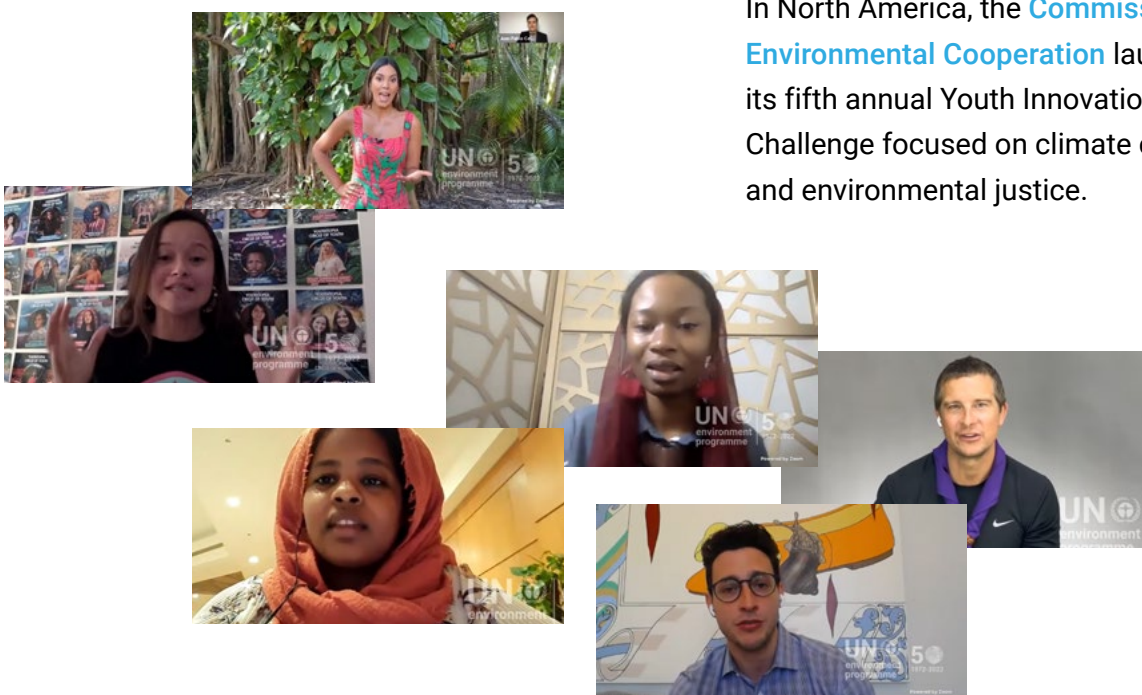


THE POWER OF YOUTH - ENGAGED

A [Virtual Youth Forum](#), jointly organized by UNEP and the United Nations Department of Global Communication, brought together more than 2,000 participants worldwide and received more than 2 million views on Instagram alone.

Advocacy group [Connect4Climate](#) posted a [#ClimateBulletin](#) on its Instagram. The [global partnership programme](#) launched by the World Bank Group, the Italian Ministry for Ecological Transition, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development produced several quizzes and games, such as an emoji puzzle, across its platforms to engage young people in the global drive to heal the planet. Argentinian journalist and writer [Magela Demarco](#) gave voice to the next generation with a poem featuring an angry young girl who upbraids her elders for their failure to take care of the environment.

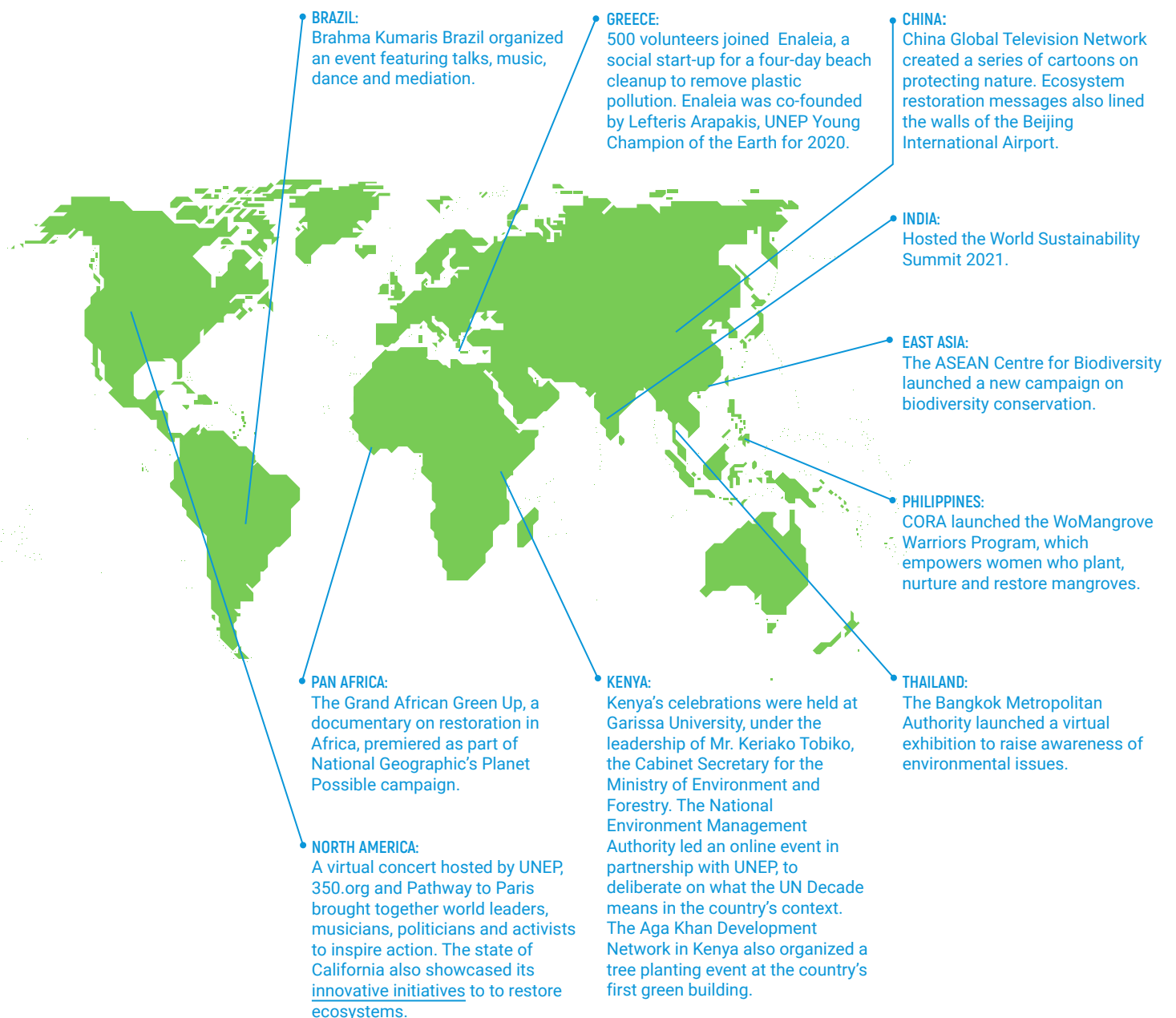
In North America, the [Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#) launched its fifth annual Youth Innovation Challenge focused on climate change and environmental justice.



GLOBAL CELEBRATIONS

On 5 June, people globally showcased their efforts to restore the natural world. From tree planting in India to beach cleanups in Hong Kong, over 1,400 events were registered to

commemorate the day and make community-level commitments to restoration. The map below depicts a few of the thousands of events.



WHEN THE STARS ALIGN – ARTISTS RALLY FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

International and local celebrities commemorated World Environment Day, making personal commitments to restoration and healing the planet. Celebrations included a virtual concert featuring [Patti Smith](#), the [Dave Matthews Band](#), [Michael Stipe](#), [Jack Johnson](#), Reggae-star [Rocky Dawuni](#) and other international artists. World-famous [DJ Don Diablo](#) and international hip hop star [Ty Dolla \\$ign](#) are dedicating their new track, [Too Much to Ask](#), to the growing global ecosystem restoration movement. Under the motto “stream to regreen,” 100 per cent of the streaming proceeds will go towards restoring degraded lands in Africa.



[Streetart for Mankind](#) announced a new partnership with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to create 50 murals and 10 pieces of landscape art across the globe over the next 10 years. They will be co-created by famous street artists, restoration experts and local communities.

Music-led environmental non-profit [REVERB](#) launched a [Music Climate Revolution](#) to galvanize musicians, fans and music industry leaders to fight the climate crisis.

[ELLE Magazine](#) produced a special edition on World Environment Day “[Standing For Trees](#)” featuring [Gisele Bündchen](#), which was covered in nine national editions of the magazine.

Award-winning violinist and environmentalist [Yury Revich](#) brought together 90 artists worldwide to produce [Green Anthem](#), a virtual song project celebrating the planet.

In India, the [Bhamla Foundation](#) released a [series of videos](#) featuring actors like [Shilpa Shetty](#), [Akshay Kumar](#) and [Arjun Kapoor](#), calling for a concerted global effort to protect the environment.

UNEP Goodwill Ambassadors [Gisele Bündchen](#), [Dia Mirza](#), [Antoinette Taus](#), [Alex Rendall](#), [Rocky Duwani](#), [Roberta Annan](#), [Li Chen](#), [Li Binbing](#), [Massimo Bottura](#) and [Lucas De Grassi](#) lent their support on social media. Some 27 digital influencers promoted World Environment Day, with one, actor [Karry Wang](#), attracting 5.3 million views.



Young artists, such as American poet [Jordan Sanchez](#) and Indian sand artist [Sudarsan Pattnaik](#), created imaginative pieces to highlight the urgent need for restoration.



[Angélique Kidjo](#) unveils “Mother Nature” Music Video in collaboration Environmentalist/Photographer [Yann Arthus-Bertrand](#)

Musician and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador [Angélique Kidjo](#), unveiled a special song from her forthcoming album *Mother Nature* to mark the day. She summed up the urgency of the world’s task. **“THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD, THIS PLANET, WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME IF WE DO NOT ACT. THAT’S WHY I SAY, LET’S BE BOLD AND FEARLESS BECAUSE WE ARE FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING GREATER THAN US.”**

[Italian chef and UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Massimo Bottura](#) snaps for more sustainable food systems.

RIDING THE MOMENTUM – WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE GLOBAL MISSION TO RESTORE THE EARTH?

World Environment Day 2021 has been a resounding success. Not only did it see the highest reach and engagement in history but the campaign catapulted an urgent topic from the realm of political and scientific debate to global public attention.

The UN Decade's guiding strategy identifies three pathways towards achieving global restoration goals by 2030: political will, technical and financial capacity, and a global movement.

As we emerge from a devastating pandemic, World Environment Day 2021 has shown that the world is ready to move from commitments to action when it comes to restoring our planet. The movement has only just started.

