

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 Civil Society Platform at UNEA-6. 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 6 week, kindly visit this link:

<https://www.unep.org/events/green-room/unea-6-green-room-events>

1- Climate & Disaster-Induced Human Mobility Within National Strategies & Policies.

Date: 29.02.2024

Time: 11.00-12.30 EAT

The Human Environmental Association for Development organized a side event during the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA6) in Nairobi, focusing on "Climate & Disaster-Induced Human Mobility Within National Strategies & Policies." The session was moderated by Mr. Mohamed Abdelraouf, Chair, Major Groups and Stakeholders at UNEP, with the participation of speakers from West Asia region, league of Arab States, Latin America, UK, and Lebanon.



Communities, especially in the Arab region,

are increasingly exposed and vulnerable to various hazards and pressures that lead to stresses and shocks impacting their everyday lives. These setbacks hinder sustainable development gains and slow down progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) is a crucial node in global and regional networks, serving as an origin, destination, and transit region for those on the move. The region is experiencing the effects of climate change at an alarming rate, heating up twice as fast as the global average. Additionally, it is prone to various natural disasters, exacerbating the challenges faced by communities already dealing with political conflicts. The climate crisis amplifies existing disadvantages, making the lives of threatened communities even harder and pushing more people onto human mobility pathways.

Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah, Director of Environmental and Meteorological Affairs (EMA) in the League of Arab States, highlighted the consequences of climate change and limited natural resources, such as drinking water, becoming scarce in many areas hosting refugees. He presented Lebanon

as a case study, identifying the effects of the Syrian crisis on the solid waste sector, water and wastewater sectors, air quality, and land use and ecosystems. The displacement resulting from these crises leads to trauma and mental health issues among displaced populations, further complicating their situation.

Mr. Doug Weir explored the intersecting environmental and security drivers of human mobility in the MENA region, emphasizing the need to address climate change, environmental degradation, displacement, and conflict holistically.

Mr. Manuel discussed how climate change is displacing communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, increasing the vulnerability of those who depend on natural resources. He highlighted those hurricanes, floods, and drought force people to leave their homes in search of safety and sustenance, posing challenges in protection and human rights. Urgent measures are crucial to ensure the safety and dignity of those affected.

Mrs. Marie Therese Seif provided recommendations, emphasizing the need to protect nature as the key to securing a livable future. She stressed the importance of ecosystem restoration on a large scale, involving all stakeholders, including states, governments, associations, and individuals. She called for abandoning material and political ambitions and establishing a rescue unit to protect and rationalize the consumption of natural resources, making environmental protection a lifestyle rather than a social luxury. She also highlighted the importance of using technology for pollution reduction and treatment.

2- Plastics poison and Women's Health

Date: 29.02.2024

Time: 15.30-16.45 EAT

On February 29 the Women's Major group in partnership with WECF, Juventud Unida en Acción and Mahibere Hiwot for social development developed a side event called "Plastics poison and Women's Health". The event was moderated by Dalia Márquez, co-chair of the Women's Major Group.



Toxicity throughout the life cycle of plastics affects our health, leading to infertility and irreversible disorders. For example, Bisphenol A, one of the most extensively used monomers, is identified as an endocrine disruptor and has been linked to breast and ovarian cancer, as well as immune, thyroid and metabolic problems. Exposure to PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) has been associated with adverse effects on women's health, including potential impacts on fertility, pregnancy outcomes, and hormonal balance, too.

There is science-based data about the negative impacts of plastics and its chemicals on women's health and experiences from communities affected by plastics. Therefore, during the side event we had an exchange to inform people correctly about the importance of achieving international agreements to reduce the use of plastics, ensure transparency, and avoid the use of toxic chemicals.

The thematic focus of this side event was to highlight the impacts of plastics on women's health to create awareness and interest in

addressing plastic pollution with an ambitious agreement.

With the support of the speakers we:

- identified, shared and highlighted the impacts of plastics on women's health.
- Identified the most dangerous chemicals in plastics to inform women.
- Promoted transparency about the chemicals in products.



Article

Addressing the Environmental Impacts of War at UNEA-6

At UNEA-6 in Nairobi, the issue of devastating impacts of wars on people's lives, livelihoods and the planet has been one of the cross-cutting themes in the discussions over multilateral actions to tackle global environmental challenges. The previous UNEA in February 2022 was happening against the background of the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine; two years on, the number of major armed conflicts had only risen, with annihilating fighting in Gaza, Sudan, and other places around the world. Amid such a grim international security outlook, the need to address environmental

dimensions of armed conflicts has become more urgent than ever.

Armed conflicts and military activities result in conflict-pollution, leave a trail of toxic remnants of war, destroy ecosystems and worsen biodiversity loss. They lead to degradation and overexploitation of natural resources, contribute to extensive military GHG emissions, and induce human displacement that often comes along with unsustainable coping strategies. Furthermore, fragility and conflict undermine environmental governance, which weakens systems of environmental protection and sustainable resource use, and hamper States' abilities for climate adaptation.

Civil society at UNEA-6 has been actively advocating to strengthen international responses to conflicts' contributions to the triple planetary crisis in our interventions, policy recommendations and through the silent solidarity protest. We have been also strongly supportive of the draft resolution on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflicts, with six Major Groups and Stakeholders, four Regional Facilitators, along with over 30 non-governmental organizations calling on States to adopt it.

Adoption of this resolution has become a crucial deliverable of UNEA-6. It is a logical continuation of two previous UNEA resolutions on the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflicts and on conflict-pollution, as it calls on States to adhere to the rules of international law in relation to the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict, explores ways to improve international efforts around environmental assistance and recovery from the impacts of armed conflicts; and initiates the development of technical guidance on the

collection and sharing of environmental data associated with armed conflicts.

Although the text has been watered down in the course of negotiations, this resolution remains a vehicle for progress on supporting conflict-affected states and communities with environmental recovery and contributes to the strengthening of UNEP's operational activities in this field. It was a relief to see that despite the observed attempts of some States to politicize the negotiating process or sabotage the resolution, in the end States managed to set their political differences aside and demonstrate much-needed flexibility.

While there are still no grounds for complacency about the international efforts to effectively tackle the environmental destruction of war (and to prevent it in the first place), UNEA-6 resolution on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict is clearly a step in the right direction. Next steps? The resolution's effective implementation, and continuous advocacy for further strengthening of international norms around the protection of the environment in armed conflict, and people dependent on it.

By Christina Parandii, PAX (NGO MG)

MGos at UNEA 6



Farwell thank you moment for Aurora Cheung from CSU at UNEP



MGos Capacity Building Certificates



MGos meeting with H E Paula Narváez, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council



MGFC Family Picture at the closing of UNEA 6



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