



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM**  
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Website [www.iefworld.org](http://www.iefworld.org)  
Article submission [newsletter@iefworld.org](mailto:newsletter@iefworld.org)  
Secretariat Email [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org)  
President Email [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org)  
Postal address 12B Chemin de Maisonneuve,  
Switzerland

Article Deadline February 10

Christine Muller, General Secretary  
Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.  
CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva,

**From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters**

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change, and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to [newsletter@ief.org](mailto:newsletter@ief.org). Please share the Leaves newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

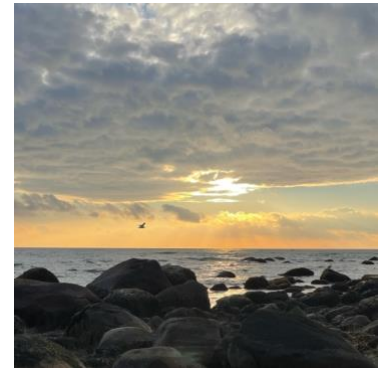
**Members Corner**

**The IEF warmly welcomes the following new Associates:**

Aroosa Fatima, Pakistan  
Andrea Torrey, Canada  
Dr. Sanjiv Pal Singh Hanjraw, India

**We regret the passing of long-time IEF member  
Dr. Beth Bowen on 22 December 2022.**

*Photo by Edie Rose, IEF Associate*



**IEF Webinars**

**By Khela Baskett**

**17th IEF Webinar, Saturday, 4 February 2023 with Robin Kimmerer**  
**"Book Club" Webinar: Council of Pecans, from *Braiding Sweetgrass***

Beginning this month, we're going to start having more frequent discussion-based webinars. This new format will be focused on member participation, discussion, and principles we can implement in our lives to live in harmony with our natural world.

We will listen to Robin Kimmerer read the chapter "Council of Pecans" from her book "*Braiding Sweetgrass*." This chapter discusses how pecan trees use the principle of unity and collective action as a strategy to thrive and reproduce. You do not need to read ahead, as we will listen to the audiobook chapter together, but for your reference, this is the [link to the book](#).

This webinar will take place **Saturday, 4 February 2023:**

10am PST California  
1pm EST New York  
6pm GMT  
19:00 CET Central Europe

In order to encourage maximum participation and discussion, "Book Club" Webinars are not recorded.

To register for this webinar, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/Sweetgrass-CouncilOfPecans>

## New IEF Youth Task Force



We are excited to report that the IEF has a youth task force!

Their first action is an **IEF Youth Study of One Planet One Habitation on Jan. 28, 19:00 CET / 1pm EST**

Join us for a study of the Baha'i International Community's statement [One Planet One Habitation](#). Let's learn how to recast humanity's relationship with the natural world!

**Registration link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAof--qrDluGNSJWc4yeunw0Z2xG2Vd2b-8>

This study group is open to all youth, not only IEF members. Help spread the word among young people in your communities!

If you would like to participate in such a study group but are no longer young – let us know. The IEF is planning one or more study groups, potentially in different time zones. Send an email to [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org) by 22 January.

## Agriculture and the International Order Webinar with Daniel Perell on 29 January

The Association for Baha'i Studies Agriculture Group will offer a webinar with Daniel Perell from the Baha'i International Community (and IEF member) on

**Sunday, January 29**

10am PST California, 1pm EST New York, 6pm GMT, 19:00 CET Central Europe

Like never before, crises are global, impacts are linked, systems are interconnected, and our destiny is shared.

The importance of the agriculture sector is well established in the Baha'i writings, and its importance at the international level is getting increased attention as well. Geopolitical events aside, it is seen as an important contributing factor for everything from the eradication of hunger and poverty to the curbing of climate change and retention of biodiversity. This presentation will attempt to articulate some of the ways in which the BIC United Nations Office is trying to contribute to these discourses at the international level.

“The period of transition humanity is undergoing can be likened to the passage from a stage of collective childhood to the threshold of maturity. Systems developed in previous ages are showing their limitations and humankind is being challenged to develop arrangements more reflective of the wisdom and responsibility befitting adulthood. This calls not just for addressing current ecological ills, but something much more profound: learning how to build a global civilization in which such challenges do not arise in the first place.”



“Bahá'í efforts toward environmental sustainability are grounded in the conviction that humanity is organic with the natural world—that the human heart cannot be separated from the environment around it. For Bahá'ís, advancing a materially and spiritually flourishing civilization in harmony with the natural world is central to the human sense of meaning and purpose.” <https://opoh.bic.org/>

Daniel Perell joined the Baha'i International Community's United Nations Office as a Representative in 2011. His areas of work include social and sustainable development, climate change and the environment, global citizenship, human rights, and the role of religion in society. He is formerly a Global Organizing Partner of the NGO Major Group and Chair of the NGO Committee for Social Development. In 2010, Mr. Perell received a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law and an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University and was admitted to the New York State Bar Association. Mr. Perell has worked with the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva, the UN in Aceh, Indonesia and other organizations in the Marshall Islands and Chile

**How to join the webinar:** Subscribers to the ABS Agriculture Group Mailchimp page will receive an announcement with the link the week before presentations. People are free to unsubscribe at any time. Sign up here to receive a link: <https://agriculture-working-group.mailchimpsites.com/>

### **Suggested Resources:**

[Working Toward One Planet and One Habitation](#)

[One Planet, One Habitation: A Baha'i Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World The First Active Agent in Human Society](#)

[Video-Daniel Perell at Stockholm Conference June, 2022](#)

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## **One Planet, One Habitation A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World**

### **Statement of the Bahá'í International Community**

At Stockholm on 1 June 2022, at an [event in the Swedish Parliament](#) in association with the UN Stockholm+50 International Meeting, the Bahá'í International Community launched a new statement [One Planet, One Habitation - A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship](#)

[with the Natural World](#) (OPOH). The statement was relaunched at the UN Climate Change COP27 in Egypt in November 2022.

The BIC has also created a new website [Working Toward One Planet, One Habitation](#), Sustainability and Environmental Efforts by Bahá'í Communities Around the World, which offers narratives on what the principles of OPOH could look like in practice.

The statement is available with the Bahá'í International Community [statements](#) on the IEF website, and can be downloaded in a [beautiful PDF version](#).

The IEF has also prepared a simplified version of the OPOH statement suitable for older children and junior youth, in seven classes, with or without pictures of nature as illustrations, now available on a new "[Materials for children and junior youth](#)" page on the e-learning part of the IEF website.

### **Do you want to participate in a study of this wonderful statement?**

Send an email indicating your interest and your time zone by 22 January to [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org) and we will keep you informed about the formation of study groups.

If you are a **youth**, you are welcome to participate in a first youth group study on 28 January. For more information, see the article with orange title above or go here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAof--qrDluGNSJWc4yeunw0Z2xG2Vd2b-8>

## **IEF Board Member Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen attended COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

### **Report by Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen**

Representatives from most of the world's countries gathered in Montreal in December for the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Four years earlier they had started negotiating a new strategic plan for implementing the convention, a plan that would run from 2021 until 2030. A pandemic came in between and put meetings to a halt until 2022. Finally, after a few feeble attempts to negotiate in online meetings, diplomats and experts could meet again and move the work forward. The delay had not made things easier, and disunity on many issues made the prospect of agreement on a new plan uncertain.

The IEF has been accredited as an observer organisation to the CBD which made it possible for me and Arthur Dahl to attend negotiations in Geneva in March 2022, and for me to attend the meeting in Montreal. While my research tasks for my university took most of my time, I could also contribute on behalf of the Baha'i International Community to a side-event in the meeting place of Faith organisations and had many conversations with people from around the world. I find it always encouraging to see how much energy and commitment thousands of people put into something aiming to make this world a better place, in this case for both nature and people. Yes, there is also distrust and self-interest and negotiating tactics in the rooms – but there is also a strong will to compromise and agree. Finally, even one day ahead of the end of the meeting, the Global Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted. You can read it yourself here in the six UN languages: <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>

There are many evaluations of the GBF already out there – some lamenting what is missing but many highlighting what is valuable. And there is a lot that is valuable. In the end, however, it is what governments – and we – make with the document that matters. Turning text into reality is something we practice on a daily basis. In this case, it is a text that lays out elements of a pathway to achieve a world where we live in harmony with nature by 2050. What can we contribute as individuals and communities?

## Global Biodiversity Framework Adopted

Montreal, Canada  
18 December 2022

### Nations Adopt Four Goals, 23 Targets for 2030 In Landmark UN Biodiversity Agreement

The 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, convened under UN auspices, chaired by China, and hosted by Canada, adopted the “**Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**” (GBF), including four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030, deemed critical to addressing the dangerous loss of biodiversity and restoring natural ecosystems.

Meeting in Montreal 7-19 December 2022, representatives of 188 governments on site (95% of all 196 Parties to the UN CBD, as well as two non-Parties – the United States and The Vatican), finalized and approved measures to arrest the ongoing loss of terrestrial and marine biodiversity and set humanity in the direction of a sustainable relationship with nature, with clear indicators to measure progress.

Among the global targets for 2030:

- Effective conservation and management of at least 30% of the world’s lands, inland waters, coastal areas and oceans, with emphasis on areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services. The GBF prioritizes ecologically-representative, well-connected and equitably-governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories and practices. Currently 17% and 10% of the world’s terrestrial and marine areas respectively are under protection.
- Have restoration completed or underway on at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland waters, and coastal and marine ecosystems.
- Reduce to near zero the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity.
- Cut global food waste in half and significantly reduce overconsumption and waste generation.
- Reduce by half both excess nutrients and the overall risk posed by pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals.
- Progressively phase out or reform by 2030 subsidies that harm biodiversity by at least \$500 billion per year, while scaling up positive incentives for biodiversity’s conservation and sustainable use.
- Mobilize by 2030 at least \$200 billion per year in domestic and international biodiversity-related funding from all sources – public and private.
- Raise international financial flows from developed to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition, to at least US\$ 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least US\$ 30 billion per year by 2030.
- Prevent the introduction of priority invasive alien species, and reduce by at least half the introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species, and eradicate or control invasive alien species on islands and other priority sites.
- Require large and transnational companies and financial institutions to monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity through their operations, supply and value chains and portfolios.

Warns the GBF: “Without such action, there will be a further acceleration in the global rate of species extinction, which is already at least tens to hundreds of times higher than it has averaged over the past 10 million years.”

The framework's four overarching global goals:

### **GOAL A**

The integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050;

Human induced extinction of known threatened species is halted, and, by 2050, extinction rate and risk of all species are reduced tenfold, and the abundance of native wild species is increased to healthy and resilient levels;

The genetic diversity within populations of wild and domesticated species, is maintained, safeguarding their adaptive potential.

### **GOAL B**

Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued, maintained and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development, for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050.

### **GOAL C**

The monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, and digital sequence information on genetic resources, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as applicable, are shared fairly and equitably, including, as appropriate with indigenous peoples and local communities, and substantially increased by 2050, while ensuring traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is appropriately protected, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in accordance with internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments.

### **GOAL D**

Adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework are secured and equitably accessible to all Parties, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, progressively closing the biodiversity finance gap of \$700 billion per year, and aligning financial flows with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

In addition to the GBF, the meeting approved a series of related agreements on its implementation, including planning, monitoring, reporting and review; resource mobilization; helping nations to build their capacity to meet the obligations; and digital sequence information on genetic resources.

For example, The Global Environment Facility was requested to establish, as soon as possible, a Special Trust Fund to support the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework ("GBF Fund"). The fund would complement existing support and scale up financing to ensure the timely implementation of the GBF with adequate, predictable and timely flow of funds.

Digital sequence information on genetic resources – a dominant topic at COP15 – has many commercial and non-commercial applications, including pharmaceutical product development, improved crop breeding, taxonomy, and the monitoring of invasive species.

COP15 delegates agreed to establish within the GBF a multilateral fund for the equitable sharing of benefits between providers and users of DSI, to be finalized at COP16 in Türkiye in 2024.

The agreement also obligates countries to monitor and report every five years or less on a large set of "headline" and other indicators related to progress against the GBF's goals and targets.

Headline indicators include the percent of land and seas effectively conserved, the number of companies disclosing their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, and many others.

The CBD will combine national information submitted by late February 2026 and late June 2029 into global trend and progress reports.

Emphasized throughout the approved documents are the needs to foster the full and effective contributions of women, persons of diverse gender identities, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society organizations, the private and financial sectors, and stakeholders from all other sectors.

Also emphasized: the need for a “whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach” to implementing the GBF.

**Source:** GBF-Final release.pdf at <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19dec2022>

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## Faiths at COP15 Coordination Team

The Faiths at COP15 Coordination Team shares the following resources:

1. Faiths Press Statement on the GBF: <https://www.biodiversity.faith/media/faith-communities-celebrate-a-global-deal-to-protect-nature-while-calling-for-governments-and-civil-society-to-ratchet-up-ambition>
2. Faiths Press Briefing on the GBF: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl72B\\_KJnA0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl72B_KJnA0)
3. Youtube Channel with our COP15 events: <https://www.youtube.com/@faithsatcop15/streams>

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## Beyond GDP Examples

*... now is the time to correct a glaring blind spot in how we measure economic prosperity and progress. When profits come at the expense of people and our planet, we are left with an incomplete picture of the true cost of economic growth. As currently measured, gross domestic product (GDP) fails to capture the human and environmental destruction of some business activities. I call for new measures to complement GDP, so that people can gain a full understanding of the impacts of business activities and how we can and must do better to support people and our planet.*

(UN Secretary-General, 2021, Our Common Agenda, Summary, <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/summary.shtml>)

IEF President Arthur Dahl compiled examples that describe efforts by the United Nations, various international organisations and research groups, to replace the dominant measure of economic progress, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which considers only the flow of money through the economy, by other accounting measures or indicators that more directly measure human and environmental well-being. A number of countries have also created their own alternative national accounting in the same direction. These examples can serve as inspiration for our own efforts to develop [Global Solidarity Accounting](#) and [Community Conversations](#) about well-being, public discourse about our future, and social action to address problems identified.

You can access this very enlightening compilation of examples here:

<https://www.iefworld.org/beyondGDPexamples>

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## Items of Interest

### RESTOR

By IEF Member Austin Bowden-Kerby

Among the members of IEF, we have various efforts on the ground working with nature-based solutions. Our own organization, Corals for Conservation, is focused on nature-based coral reef adaptation to climate change, and we have recently connected to RESTOR, which is becoming a huge network of restoration ecologists and people at the grassroots working on nature-based solutions to habitat degradation on land and sea. I encourage all restoration efforts of any sort to connect to RESTOR: <https://restor.eco/>

### Vancouver youth promote higher meaning than materialism with song

Source: *Baha'i World News: Vancouver youth embrace power of music to awaken high aspirations*  
<https://news.bahai.org/story/1635/>

Young people in Vancouver have been exploring how music can awaken noble sentiments and provide comfort and inspiration to their peers.

One of the songs made by the youth, *Listen Closer*, explores the idea of overcoming the pressures of materialism:

*This voice is telling me to live for pleasure  
Strive for leisure, give into pressure  
But we need something of meaning to measure  
When we hear truth, that's the real treasure*

You can listen to the song here: [Listen Closer](#)

### IRENA's new report Off-grid Renewable Energy Statistics 2022 shows that off-grid renewables continue to grow despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

IRENA 03 January 2023, Press Release

The report provides statistics for the period 2012–2021 covering mini-grids, biogas for cooking and lighting, off-grid solar lights, pumps, and home solar systems across Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Oceania, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.

Off-grid electricity production from renewables, although largely unrecorded in most countries, is believed to be expanding rapidly. By combining information from surveys, administrative data and desk research, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has attempted to illuminate major trends in off-grid renewable energy deployment around the world.

You can read the entire article [here](#) or download a copy of the report [here](#).