



## NGO SUSTAINABILITY

# GLOBAL WARNING

*LATEST NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY*

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PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET

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Consultative Status, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)  
Observer Status, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

*“No Water. No Life. No Blue. No Green.”*

*-Sylvia Earle*

## **Rena Lee**

Rena Lee is Singapore's Ambassador for Oceans and Law of the Sea Issues and the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Public International Law. She is also currently the Executive Director of Singapore's Intellectual Property Office. Lee was elected president of the UN Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) in 2018. As president of the BBNJ, she had the opportunity to sign the historic agreement to protect the world's oceans on March 4, 2023, after more than 15 years of negotiations. This historical UN treaty protects biodiversity in open international waters and is a promising sign as the international community scrambles to address growing environmental emergencies.



**“Inheritance” by John Agard**

If we, the children of the meek,  
should inherit an earth  
whose rainforest lungs  
breathe a tale of waste –  
an earth where the ailing sea  
shudders in its own slick

If we, the children of the meek,  
should inherit an earth  
where the grass goes nostalgic  
at the mere mention of green  
and the sky looks out of its depth  
when reminded of blue

If we, the children of the meek,  
should inherit such an earth,  
then we ask of the future  
one question: Should we dance  
or break into gnashing of teeth  
at the news of our inheritance?

## “UN Agency Provides Path to 80 Percent Reduction in Plastic Waste. Recycling Alone Won’t Cut It.”

By: David Stanway, *Reuters*



Photo: Tony Karumba/AFP

Delegates are meeting in Paris to discuss how to best reduce global plastic pollution. A new United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report is being discussed at the conference. To achieve its goal of reducing plastic waste by 80% by 2040, UNEP recommends promoting plastic reuse, recycling existing plastic, enforcing new guidelines, and replacing plastic packaging with other materials. Plastic pollution costs hundreds of billions of dollars annually, and harms tourism, the environment, and human health. The U.S. is calling for individual action, and for finding ways to repurpose our plastics since it would be economically beneficial and is set to create many jobs by 2040. The European Union, among other countries, are hoping to reduce plastic production and reach zero plastic pollution by 2040. Eliminating plastic waste will also improve human health as hazardous chemicals are found in many plastics.

[Full Article](#)

## “Developing Countries Voices Will Be Excluded at UN Plastic Talks, Say NGOs”

By: Karen McVeigh, *The Guardian*



Photo: Danil Irungu/EPA

At the upcoming plastic negotiations in Paris hosted by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), many developing countries will not be present, even though they face most of the negative impacts. This negotiation is seemingly excluding communities that are negatively impacted from dumping and burning of plastic waste, as well as marginalized by waste pickers. UNEP was recently criticized for their recent report that did not accurately depict the health and environmental impacts on plastic waste. Many groups feel as though UNEP is not listening to or taking their thoughts into consideration. Many argue it is critical that developing countries play a larger role in these negotiations, especially the communities of waste pickers. A main concern for these negotiations is the use of chemicals in plastic and how the chemicals are recycled. UNEP’s plan only focuses on waste reduction, and not other elements such as greenhouse gas emissions from plastic production.

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## “What the data says about Americans’ views of climate change”

By: Alec Tyson, Cary Funk, and Brian Kennedy,  
*Pew Research Center*



*Photo: Gemunu Amarasinghe/AP File*

A United Nations report has released new data that shows the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has underestimated the need for international action against the climate crisis. Steps in the report surface around the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from sectors such as energy production and transportation. However, the U.N. is curious to know what Americans think about reaching climate goals in the future. According to Pew Research Center surveys, most Americans support the United States becoming carbon neutral by 2050. Another survey concluded that Americans are still reluctant to phase out fossil fuels altogether, but younger adults are more inclined to make the transition to renewables possible. The survey also stated that the public supports the federal government incentivizing wind and solar energy production. However, Americans view climate change as a lower priority than other pending national issues.

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## “Biden Administration to Restrict Cancer-Causing ‘Forever Chemicals’”

By: Lisa Friedman, *The New York Times*



*Photo: Pexels*

For the first time, the U.S. government will require utilities to remove two toxic chemicals from drinking water. Michael S. Regan, the administrator of the EPA, announced that the government hopes to obtain near-zero levels of perfluoroalkyl and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, part of a class of chemicals known as PFAS. Regan expressed the importance of mitigating toxic chemicals from drinking water as they are linked to many underlying conditions and illnesses, such as cancer, liver damage, fertility and thyroid problems, asthma, and other health conditions. “This is very significant,” Mr. Regan said in an interview. “This is the first time in U.S. history that we’ve set enforceable limits for PFAS pollution.”

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## “Green industrial age’ can be sustainable development breakthrough”

By: *UN News*



*Photo: ADB/Eric Sales*

The United Nations on Wednesday called for a "sustainable industrial transformation" in the midst of a food and energy crisis, an uncertain global economy, and the growing effects of climate change. The 2023 Financing for Sustainable Development Report states that “urgent, massive investment” is needed to speed up sustainable development while ensuring that developing countries aren’t left behind. The possibilities for a rapid transition to sustainable industrialization and growth are suggested by the fast adoption of new technologies. The report warns that sustainable development will not be possible if reforms do not take into account the U.N. SDGs as international institutions work to adapt to countries' rapidly changing needs. There are indications of long-term growth that could be beneficial to all nations and provide a realistic platform for achieving the SDGs. For instance, investments in the global energy transition have increased as a result of the energy crisis brought on by the war in Ukraine.

[Full Article](#)

## “In major milestone, wind power was Britain’s largest source of electricity in the first quarter”

By: Anmar Frangoul, *CNBC*



*Photo: Ben Birchall/PA Images/Getty Images*

Wind power accounted for 24 terawatt hours of electricity in the first quarter of 2022, accounting for 32% of Britain's electricity. Gas had the second highest percentage with 31.7% and other sources like nuclear, biomass, solar and hydro accounted for 22% combined. The U.K. is looking to grow its offshore wind farms in the future to generate even more electricity and become less reliant on fossil fuels with a goal of combined 50 gigawatt capacity from offshore wind farms by 2030. To put this in perspective, Hornsea 2, located off the coast of the UK, is considered the world's largest offshore wind farm and has a capacity of only 1.3 gigawatts. Wind out-producing gas is a major milestone on the road to carbon neutrality.

[Full Article](#)

**“Global warming likely to exceed 1.5°C within five years, says weather agency”**

By: Camilla Hodgson, *The Financial Times*



*Photo: Getty Images*

Scientists say there is a 66% chance that annual mean global surface temperatures will temporarily surpass 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in at least one year by 2027. There is a 98% chance that one of the next five years will exceed the record high temperature rise of 1.28°C reached in 2016, and that the next half-decade as a whole would be the warmest on record. The anticipated return of the El Niño weather phenomenon, a warming of the eastern Pacific Ocean’s surface, by the end of 2023 is expected to raise global temperatures. Arctic temperatures are expected to rise more than three times faster than the global average, as melting of snow and ice reduces the ability to reflect sunlight and causes greater warming than elsewhere.

[Full Article](#)

**“Fasten Your Seatbelts: What You Need to Know About Turbulence”**

By: Christine Chung, *The New York Times*



*Photo: Getty Images*

Research suggests the white-knuckle phenomenon we know as turbulence may become more common due to climate change. Turbulence is formed by shaky air vortices from alterations in wind direction and speed. It’s primarily generated by weather systems including thunderstorms, jet streams, or warm and cold fronts. Turbulence is also related to higher carbon dioxide emissions altering air currents. It is so impactful that clear air turbulence may triple by 2100. Current aviation technology, including satellite and ground radar systems, can help pilots avoid large patches of turbulence. However, these altered flight routes often burn more fuel. While awaiting a long-term solution, the best advice for most people is to stay seated with your seatbelt securely fastened.

[Full Article](#)

## **IISD Summary of 28th Annual Session of the International Seabed Authority (First Part): 16-31 March 2023**

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) is a UN organization tasked with controlling, organizing and regulating all mineral-related activities in the world's seabeds, ocean floor, and oceanic subsoil beyond national jurisdiction. The ISA has recently drawn international attention after polymetallic nodules containing nickel, cobalt, manganese and copper, which are used for battery and renewable energy production, were targeted for exploitation by mining companies. Proponents of deep sea mining argue it will allow the world to transition away from fossil fuels faster, but scientists claim that doing so would destroy a unique and vital ecosystem we know little about.



From March 16th to 31st of this year, the ISA held the first part of its 28th annual session. Discussions were centered around the possibility of deep sea mining after the small island nation of Nauru applied for a planned approval of deep sea mining operations in the Pacific Ocean. Nauru's actions forced the ISA to try and develop deep sea mining regulations in the two years before Nauru is legally allowed to mine its national waters. The two year deadline is July 9th, 2023.

The ISA's future regulations on deep sea mining come at a crucial time for global biodiversity. International progress has been made at other high level meetings, including COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the Treaty of the High Seas. Some ISA delegates put emphasis on requiring high environmental standards and safeguards for deep sea mining. Some countries stated that mining should only occur if marine environment protection is ensured, regulations are in place, and the precautionary principle is used at all times. Less popular were applying the polluter pays principle and benefit-sharing provisions. Activists and even some heads of state have gone further and called for a complete moratorium.

Problems arose around the protection and preservation of the marine environment, the need to protect all forms of marine life, the jurisdiction of the ISA to regulate inland mineral processing facilities, and on including indirect harmful effects from deep sea mining. Ecological restoration is not yet possible in the deep sea, causing disagreement over the inclusion of biologically significant areas for exploitation (EBSAs), making any damage from mining potentially irreversible.

## BOOK REPORT: **Nowhere Left to Go**

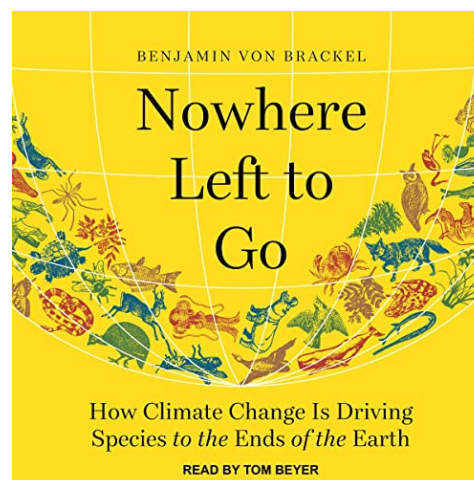
Benjamin von Brackel

Report by: Andrew Miller

A climate refugee is an individual that has been forcibly displaced by the impacts of climate change. This term is applied to humans in reports and news articles, but one broad category of climate refugee is often overlooked by policymakers: the rest of life on Earth. As the climate continues to change, species are beginning to move in search of their optimal habitat, a creeping migration with the potential to alter life on Earth as we know it.

“Nowhere Left to Go” is a chronicle of life’s response to a warming world documented by German environmental journalist Benjamin von Brackel. Brackel stumbled upon a handful of studies from some scientists with a simple yet terrifying conclusion: with rising temperatures and more erratic weather events, species are migrating towards the poles. Such a significant, but chronically underreported, crisis is finally given the attention it deserves in this gripping and well written account of the biosphere’s plea for help. Brackel travels the globe, visiting a diverse array of locations from the Siberian Arctic to the Andes Mountains tracking the movements of a myriad variety of terrestrial and aquatic species. In all of these locations Brackel talks with local experts and the residents most affected by changes in species distribution.

Mass species redistribution might seem like a problem only for biologists and nature lovers, but Brackel clearly outlines the stakes for humanity. Staple crops the world relies on for most of its calories will die, tropical diseases will spread to higher latitudes, and pollinators will die off as their host plants flee faster than them. Those impacts and more will alter our traditions, food security, public health, and life as we know it. So far species redistribution has been too subtle for the general public to notice, but now it is accelerating to a dangerous level if we don’t act now.



Unfortunately, the redistribution of life on Earth polewards has already begun and is going to continue as the climate continues to react to past and current greenhouse gas emissions. But there are solutions to prevent this crisis from worsening. Creating habitat corridors between current protected areas and new ones would facilitate the safe migration of species to suitable refuges. Protecting safe havens, or microrefugia, that have so far resisted the impacts of climate change could help preserve species less likely to move. But most importantly countries and international organizations need to recognize that life on Earth is on the move, and discuss the issue at the international level.

Conservation policy can no longer be centered around creating isolated protected areas and restoring former habitat that was suitable for endangered species in pre-industrial times. In the same way that nations develop policies to manage human migrants, we need to develop policies for their nonhuman counterparts. Failing to do so will not only be catastrophic for biodiversity, but also for humanity for millenia to come.



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