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We are happy to share with you

UNEP Brussels' Quarterly Newsletter

Winter Edition

Dear Reader,

This issue of our newsletter covers the main activities of UNEP Brussels in the months of October, November and December 2023 and includes a selection of recently released UNEP reports.

Let me end by wishing you all the best in 2024!

Veronika
Head of UNEP Brussels Office

Hunt

Safrankova

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In Focus



COP28: New partnership with European Space Agency for a greener future

The [European Space Agency \(ESA\)](#) and UNEP have signed a Memorandum of Understanding at COP28 which will allow both partners to leverage space-based solutions to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The partnership will strengthen UNEP capacity to deliver science-based, data-driven early warning systems for the environment.

[Learn more](#)



COP28: Presentation of UNEP Flagship reports to European Commission

Ahead of the [UN Climate COP28 in Dubai](#), the Brussels Office co-hosted an event at [DG CLIMA](#) to present and discuss key findings from UNEP's flagship Emissions Gap Report 2023 and the Production Gap Report 2023 with officials from the European Commission. Both reports contribute to the global stock take at COP28 and will inform the next round of [Nationally](#)

[Determined Contributions](#). The Emissions Gap Report 2023 EGR should also inform the EU 2040 Climate targets.

[Learn more](#)



UN-EU Annual Meeting on Peace and Security

On 14 and 15 November, the UN and the EU held an Annual Meeting in Brussels on bridging policy and practice in the field of conflict prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding. As part of the high-level discussions chaired by UNEP Brussels Office Head, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, UNEP's Ecosystems Division Director, Susan Gardner stressed the need to cooperate to integrate the environment and climate change in our responses to security risks and conflict. Ms Gardner also took part in a panel discussion on Women, Peace and Security that brought together perspectives on the way forward to increase support for women's organizations in conflict areas.

[Learn more](#)



Human Rights 75 Regional Dialogue for Europe and Central Asia

On 20 October, UNEP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) held a [Human Rights at 75 Regional Dialogue](#) in Brussels, focusing on the right to a clean,

healthy and sustainable environment. The event aimed to inspire new global, regional and national commitments to implement this right. Over a hundred participants from the wider European and Central Asian region, including states, civil society representatives, academics and youth representatives took part in the discussions.

After opening video messages from [Volker Türk](#), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and [Elizabeth Maruma Mrema](#), UNEP Deputy Executive Director, the Dialogue featured two panel discussions. The first one, focusing on the institutional framework and best practices, was moderated by Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of UNEP Brussels and featured Arnold Kreilhuber, UNEP Regional Director for Europe, amongst the speakers. Mr Kreilhuber took stock of the positive developments in the region and assured that UNEP will continue to work with OHCHR and partners across the UN system to promote and advance the right to a healthy environment, including that of environmental defenders, both in the region and at global level.

[Watch the recording](#)

[UNEP on the ground](#)



WORKSHOP
**Regional Foresight
Workshop - Europe**
24 - 25 October 2023
Warsaw, Poland

Foresight Workshop
in Warsaw

As UNEP embarks on the development of an institutionalised approach to foresight, UNEP Brussels Office helped organise a regional Foresight Workshop in Warsaw, Poland, on 24 and 25 October to explore scenarios for planetary health and human wellbeing. This workshop was organised in partnership with [European Commission's Competence Centre on Foresight](#) with support from [GRID-Warsaw](#), and in collaboration with the [International Science Council](#), and [Centrum Nauki Kopernik](#).

[Learn more](#)



SDGs and the Food-climate-biodiversity-environment Nexus

At the [SDG Forum Belgium](#), on 19 October, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of UNEP Brussels Office, opened a panel discussion which was organised by [FAO](#) and UNEP, about the SDGs and the Food-Climates-Biodiversity-Environment Nexus. Speaking on behalf of UNEP and FAO, and in her capacity as co-chair of the UN EU Green Deal Taskforce, she summarized recent global developments related to the food-climate-environment nexus and made the case for achieving the SDGs through strong, resilient and sustainable food systems.

[Learn more](#)



Nature Dialogue Pledging for Nature: bridging EU's and global agendas

How the EU Green Deal and the global agenda can come together to generate systemic shifts in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and reach the ambitious targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework, was the focus of a Dialogue on Nature held in Brussels on 14 September. The event, co-organised by the European

Commission, UNDP and UEDP Offices in Brussels ahead of the [UN SDG Summit](#), was opened by Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General of DG Environment, and featured the presentation by UNDP of its [Nature Pledge](#).

Thierry Lucas, UNEP Coordinator for Biodiversity in Europe, joined representatives of DG INTPA, the Club of Rome, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Zambia, and UNDP's Nature Hub in a panel discussion that focused on how to bring about large-scale change and systemic shifts in the coming years. Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of UNEP Brussels Office, noted in her summarizing remarks that this requires nature to be considered a political priority, and that we need to rethink our economic models by looking deeper into addressing the drivers, both on the supply and demand sides. The dialogue emphasised the need for more global solidarity for nature, and the importance of both the internal and external dimensions of the EU Green Deal for nature and people beyond the EU context.

[Watch the recording](#)



Towards a more Sustainable EU Textile Sector

Ms. Bettina Heller, Programme Officer at the UNEP's Consumption and Production unit, participated in the discussions of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development', event "Extended Producer Responsibility for circularity: towards a more sustainable EU textile sector" that took place on the 29th November 2023 in Brussels. She reinforced the need for systemic change and a holistic approach. Ms Heller invited the audience to collaborate in a project that analyses the shipment of used textiles to four different countries, with the objective of quantifying what happens on the ground, looking at how much is being used, recycled, or ends up in landfills, in order to establish a set of global criteria involving all stakeholders.

[Learn more](#)

Campaigns



Human Rights 75 Tree Planting Initiative

On 15 December, UNEP's Brussels Office organised its annual tree planting event at the [Arboretum of Tervuren](#) in collaboration with [OHCHR](#), [FAO](#) and [UNRIC](#). In the spirit of the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this local community-driven initiative for ecosystem restoration underscored the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Ahead of the sixth UN Environment Assembly ([UNEA6](#)) the event saw UN staff from Brussels and representatives from the EU come together to plant 750 trees, supporting nature restoration efforts to counter the effects of climate change and environmental pollution on forests.

[Learn more](#)



Human Rights and the Environment Cine-ONU Film screening event

To mark the [75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), UNEP Brussels co-hosted with OHCHR, UNRIC, and [UNESCO](#), the Belgian premiere of [Dr. Jane Goodall's](#) documentary "Reasons for Hope" with the support of the British Embassy Brussels, the Embassy and Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and [Flagey](#). Speakers highlighted the links between human rights and the environment. The screening aimed to raise awareness and foster dialogue on the interconnectedness of human rights, environmental conservation, and biodiversity.

[Learn more](#)



Beat Plastic Pollution

At an event on microplastics organized by the [European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development'](#), UNEP's Janyl Moldalievva shared take aways from the World Environment Day campaign 2023 which inspired solutions to beat plastic pollution against the backdrop of negotiations of a global plastic pollution agreement.

[Learn more](#)



Women's Rights are Human Rights

One in three women experience violence at least once in their lifetime. To mark the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) on 25 November, the teams of UNEP and [UNEP FI](#) in Brussels joined the call to #EndViolenceAgainstWomen and announce 16 days of

activism, as a reminder that violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation worldwide. There is no excuse for gender-based violence!

[Learn more](#)



UN Day in Brussels In Nature

The United Nations (UN) Team in Brussels celebrated UN Day on 24 October with a tour of the [Sonian Forest](#) southeast of Brussels emphasizing once again the right to a healthy environment. Guided by a forest manager and a representative from the [Sonian Forest Foundation](#), staff from UNEP and UN offices in Brussels explored a UN Trail being developed by UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and UNRIC that will be launched for the public in 2024.

[Learn more](#)



Raising Awareness on Food Loss and Waste

On 29 September, UNEP and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Brussels Offices marked the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste with a thought-provoking [lunch debate](#) involving speakers from the United Nations, the European Commission, the City of Brussels, a Member of the Belgian Federal Parliament, and representatives from civil society and the private sector. The discussions spotlighted the critical issue of food waste and its impact on environmental and food security.

The talks were followed by a visit of local sustainably produced food stores and caterers at the BE-HERE sustainable village in Brussels. The event also featured the presentation of a [123 Pledge to Halve Food Loss and Waste by the Scottish government](#) to reduce food loss and waste by at least 25% by 2030.

[Learn more](#)

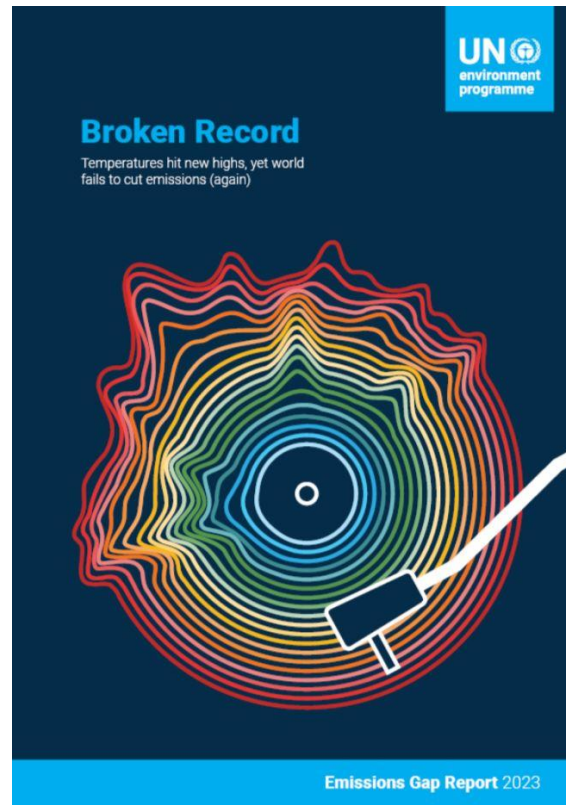
Later that day, Veronika Hunt Safrankova, Head of UNEP Brussels Office, and Raschad Al-Khafaji, Director of FAO Brussels, also addressed an event organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Belgium and [UNRIC](#) at the BIGH Aquaponic Farm in Brussels. BIGH's Aquaponic Farm. This EU-UN event included a debate, film screening and a cooking masterclass on reducing cooking waste to mark the international day.

[Learn more](#)

[Key Reports](#)

Broken Record - Temperatures hit new highs, yet world fails to cut emissions (again)

[UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2023](#) finds that the world is heading for a temperature rise far above the Paris Agreement goals unless countries deliver more than they have promised. In addition to providing an update on where global greenhouse gas emissions are heading and where they should be, the report focuses on energy transitions in low- and middle-income countries and looks at the role of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) in bridging the emissions gap.



[Download the full report](#)



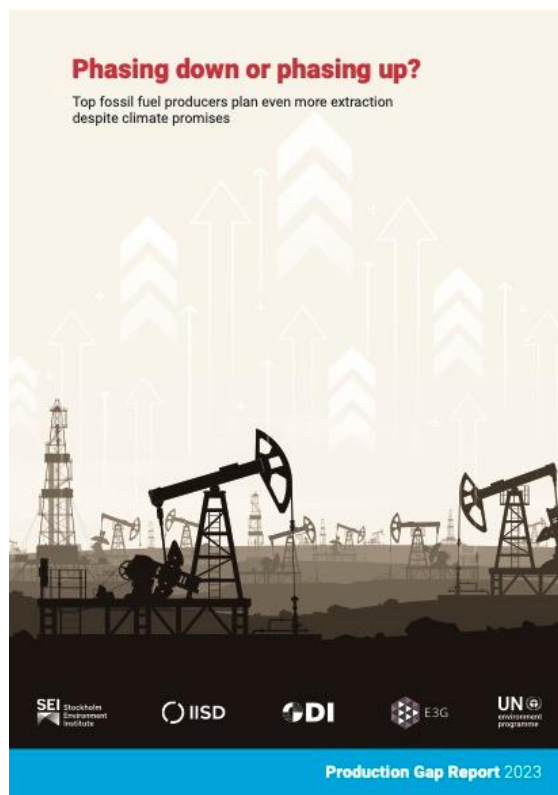
Adaptation Gap Report 2023 Underfinanced. Underprepared.

Insufficient funding and preparation for climate adaptation are leaving the global community vulnerable. The [Adaptation Gap Report](#) released on November 2, indicates that efforts to adapt to climate change are decelerating at a time when they should be intensifying to catch up with these rising climate change impacts.

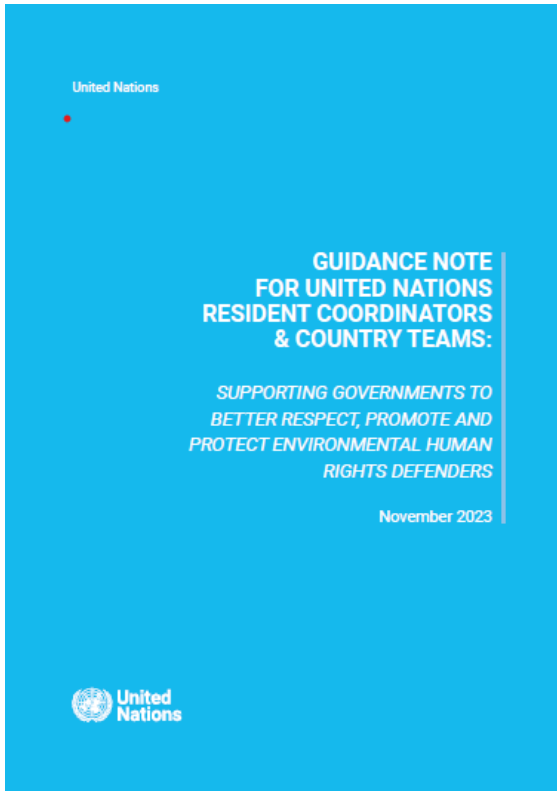
[Download the full report](#)

Production Gap Report 2023: Phasing down or phasing up? Top fossil fuel producers plan even more extraction despite climate promises

Published on 8 November 2023, [The Production Gap Report](#) shows that despite 151 national governments committing to net-zero emissions, 20 major fossil fuel-producing countries persist in offering substantial policy and financial support for fossil fuel extraction. To maintain global warming within 1.5°C, nations need to target an almost complete phase-out of coal production and usage by 2040, and a reduction in oil and gas production and usage by 75% from the levels recorded in 2020, by the year 2050.



[Download the full report](#)



United Nations Guidance Note on Environmental Human Rights Defenders

The United Nations, responding to the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, has released a [Guidance Note to bolster support for Environmental Human Rights Defenders \(EHRDs\)](#). This strategic directive encourages UN Country Teams to enhance EHRD participation in decision-making, increase their protection, promote safer civic spaces, strengthen access to justice, and foster engagement with businesses.

[Download the full report](#)

Global Cooling Watch report: Keeping it Chill: How to meet cooling demands while cutting emissions

Launched at COP28, [the Report](#) details strategies for reducing emissions in the cooling industry, a crucial step in response to the escalating climate crisis and increasing global temperatures. The Report presents pathways to get to near-zero emissions in the key cooling sectors and provides a call to action for countries to pursue the policies and strategies that have the greatest impact in reducing cooling-related emissions and advancing sustainable cooling for all.



[Download the full report](#)



Greening the Blue Report

The [Greening the Blue report](#) is a UNEP initiative to engage and support the UN system in the transition towards greater environmental sustainability in the management of its facilities and operations. It provides information on the United Nations (UN) system's environmental footprint and efforts to reduce it and intends to determine if the UN system's facilities and operations are "on the right track" with their environmental objectives.

[Download the full report](#)



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