



Media Update

4 June 2017

United Nations

Message of the Secretary-General

World Environment Day-2017

5 June 2017

Oceans.
Land.
Forests.
Water.
The air that we breathe.
This is our environment.

It is the keystone of a sustainable future. Without a healthy environment we cannot end poverty or build prosperity. We all have a role to play in protecting our only home.

We can use less plastics.
Drive less.
Waste less food.
And teach each other to care.
On World Environment Day – and every day – let us reconnect with nature.
Let us cherish the planet that protects us.

Background:

The year 1972 marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics: the first major conference on environmental issues, convened under the auspices of the United Nations, was held from June 5-16 in Stockholm (Sweden). Known as the [Conference on the Human Environment](#), or the Stockholm Conference, its goal was to forge a basic



common outlook on how to address the challenge of preserving and enhancing the human environment.

Later that year, on 15 December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution ([A/RES/2994 \(XXVII\)](#)) designating June 5 as World Environment Day and urging “Governments and the organizations in the United Nations system to undertake on that day every year world-wide activities reaffirming their concern for the preservation and enhancement of the environment, with a view to deepening environmental awareness and to pursuing the determination expressed at the Conference.” The date coincides with the first day of the landmark Conference.

Also on 15 December, the General Assembly adopted another resolution ([A/RES/3000 \(XXVII\)](#)) that led to the creation of the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP), the specialized agency on environmental issues.

Since the first celebration in 1974, the World Environment Day has helped UNEP to raise awareness and generate political momentum around growing concerns such as the depletion of the ozone layer, toxic chemicals, desertification and global warming. The Day has developed into a global platform for taking action on urgent environmental issues. Millions of people have taken part over the years, helping drive change in our consumption habits, as well as in national and international environmental policy.

This is the [history of World Environment Day](#).

Theme 2017: “Connecting People to Nature”

Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for 2017, ‘Connecting People to Nature’, urges us to get outdoors and into nature, to appreciate its beauty and to think about how we are part of nature and how intimately we depend on it. It challenges us to find fun and exciting ways to experience and cherish this vital relationship.

Billions of rural people around the world spend every working day ‘connected to nature’ and appreciate full well their dependence on natural water supplies and how nature provides their livelihoods in the form of fertile soil. They are



among the first to suffer when ecosystems are threatened, whether by pollution, climate change or over-exploitation.

Nature's gifts are often hard to value in monetary terms. Like clean air, they are often taken for granted, at least until they become scarce. However, economists are developing ways to measure the multi-trillion-dollar worth of many so-called 'ecosystem services', from insects pollinating fruit trees to the leisure, health and spiritual benefits of a hike up a valley.

Learn more about [this year's theme](#)
