

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY

22 April 2014

Each year, on Mother Earth Day, we reflect on our relationship with the planet that supports us. The air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil that grows our food are part of a delicate global ecosystem that is increasingly under pressure from human activities. From tropical deforestation to depleted ocean fisheries, from growing freshwater shortages to the rapid decline of biodiversity and increasingly polluted skies and seas in many parts of the world, we see the heavy hand of humankind.

As our population grows we have to recognize that our consumption of the planet's resources is unsustainable. We need a global transformation of attitude and practice. It is especially urgent to address how we generate the energy that drives our progress. Burning fossil fuels is the principal cause of climate change, which increasingly threatens prosperity and stability in all regions. That is why world leaders have pledged to reach a global legal climate agreement in 2015.

Action on climate change presents multiple opportunities to reset our relationship with Mother Earth and improve human well-being, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable. Sustainable energy for all can increase health, wealth and opportunity for billions of people, as can climate-smart agriculture, more efficient cities and better managed and protected forests.

To generate ambitious action on the ground and raise momentum for a new climate treaty in 2015, I am convening a Climate Summit in New York on 23 September this year. I am inviting Heads of State and Government along with private sector and civil society leaders to showcase initiatives and forge alliances that can help launch a sustainable future. But they need support and encouragement, for change is never easy. So today, on International Mother Earth Day, I appeal to all people everywhere to raise their voices. Speak out on behalf of this planet, our only home. Let us care for Mother Earth so she can continue to care for us as she has done for millennia.