



United Nations Activity Report

The event “Families and Climate Action: Focus on SDG 13” was held on 16 May 2019 in the [Economic and Social Council](#) chamber, United Nations headquarters in New York, NY, United States.

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This event highlighted examples of progress from diverse groups while addressing the need for greater action and leadership to find global solutions to global problems of climate action and family commitment and action toward achieving these goals.

The focus of this event was in observance of [International Day of Families](#). The theme was families, family-oriented policies, and [Sustainable Development Goal #13](#) targets. Families are vital for achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The targets of SDG 13 include improving education and awareness reasoning, human and institutional capacity for climate action, climate mitigation, adaption, and impact reduction and early warning with aims to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning. An intergenerational approach to sustainability and ways to empower families (as well as communities and cities) to take action was addressed.

Climate change is affecting health around the world whether through climate disasters that drastically change living conditions, by facilitating the spread of communicable disease, or creating hazardous conditions for human life such as increased temperatures in previously cold climates that create conditions for heat stroke due to inadequate ventilation or exacerbation of respiratory illnesses. A meaningful way to make differences in the world at a local level comes from what is valued and transmitted within families. From an intergenerational perspective, adults must consider and commit to the “impact of our action (adults) on their future (children).” Some take-away messages were: Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Worldwide, 60% of the world’s hungry are women and children. 783 million people are living in poverty, less than \$1.90 per day. These groups contribute least to the problem but are most impacted by the results of action or inaction that is contributing to climate change. Here is a message from the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres: <https://youtu.be/VNe-jBVij-g>

Here are some individual conservation and environmental protection actions that can make a difference in daily life and can be taught within families:

[SDG #7 Affordable and Clean Energy](#): 60% of global greenhouse gas is generated by the actions of people. Turn off the lights, reduce computer monitor brightness, use solar energy, and monitor the thermostat.

[SDG #12 Responsible Consumption and Production](#): Buy from sustainable companies, reduce the purchase of disposable items, seek opportunities to reuse and repurpose disposable items.

[SDG #13 Climate Action](#): Each degree Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) of increase in global mean temperature is estimated to reduce average global yields of wheat by 6%, rice by 3.2%, and corn by 7.4%. Green your commute, eat more meat-free meals, and offset your remaining carbon emissions through Climate Neutral Now.

[SDG #14 Life Below Water](#): More than eight million tons of plastics leak into the ocean each year, equal to a garbage truck of plastic every minute. “Break Up with Plastic.” Drink from reusable bottles, reduce the purchase of plastic, clean and properly recycle all plastic.

[SDG #15 Life on Land](#): Due to drought and desertification, 12 million hectares of arable land are lost each year (23 hectares per minute; one hectare = 2.47 acres or 10,000 square meters). Within one year, 20 million tons of grain could have been grown. Support forest restoring efforts, go paperless, and look for Forest Stewardship Council certification on wood and wood products.

In order to transform apathy into action, stepping stones help people understand that climate change is not an abstract concept, but one that is affecting them now and more so in the future as the change accelerates. One must first understand self in the context of environment, then family, community, and the world in order to develop a positive and protective relationship with nature. Climate disasters can drastically change lives in a moment. Global citizens recognize and act as part of a global community. The more people act, the more impact we will have. The [United Nations Department of Global Communication](#) is developing an “AI Bot” called [ActNow](#) which is being piloted on Facebook Messenger. The interactive “bot” describes ten actions to take every day to combat climate change. There is a focus on the fashion industry and the food industry...what you choose to put on your plate, what you choose to wear, and what you buy. The websites and these main points should be shared with members to increase awareness of the impact of climate change and personal actions they can take to reverse or slow down the process that is affecting our health and destroying our planet.

The individual actions suggested in this meeting have universal application to our members and our mission of advocacy and advancing world health, and the information should be shared. Here is a link to the archived briefing: <http://webtv.un.org/search/families-and-climate-action-focus-on-sdg-13/6037769739001/?term=families%20and%20climate%20action&lan=english&sort=date>