



United Nations Association of Australia WA Division



UN Matters

November 2023 – February 2024



SDG Forum on Space Innovation at the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre



Past President attending UN Forum for Business & Human Rights in Geneva



UNAAWA President with members of WA Consular Corps

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From the President

The UNAAWA starts 2024 with much to look forward to. Our Executive committee has met and formulated plans for events over this span of this year. It always heartens me to reflect upon the quality of the people whom I serve alongside with, all of whom altruistically set aside their precious time and effort to do good for society.

2024 will see continuance and expansion of the UNAAWA's engagement for matters on Human Rights, Environment, Gender Equality, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Young Professionals, with events to be announced as they approach. Much thought has gone into planning, logistics and organisation of speakers and topics, which is a glowing testament to the abilities of the committee's Convenors.

These include events involving Digital Transformation, with topics taken up by the SDG Forum as well as Human Rights. These cutting-edge topics are very relevant to how our society is presently transforming itself, how it affects and influences people's lives in so many ways, and to raise the profile of the subtleties of these topics to wider society. Certainly very valuable topics and well worth attending.

Beyond organising events, our members continue their engagement with local government officers from Town Councils and foreign representatives within WA, continuing their efforts to build bonds and foster long-term relationships.

As we read the news of around the world, we see expansion of conflict and international tension, increase in worldwide hunger, deterioration of climate and environment and degradation of human rights. In light of these distressing developments, the UNAAWA's work to build bonds and foster long-term relationships becomes especially significant. It is through precisely such efforts that can alleviate misunderstanding and conflict, by showing that no matter how different we may all be in our beliefs and identification, we undeniably share far more in common than what divides us.

The UNAAWA seeks to do a greater good for society, and of each of us freely volunteer our time and effort to achieve those goals in our own way. This is the spirit the UNAAWA seeks to develop and build, to Inform, Inspire and Engage, for the betterment of all.

Randhir Amoganathan
President of the UNAAWA



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UN Day 2023

The UNAAWA celebrated the 78th founding of the United Nations on the 20th October 2023 at the Duxton Hotel.



We are proud to showcase the beautiful diversity and cultures of our community, be inspired by our keynote speakers, and shine a spotlight on the local champions who made a difference in human rights, environment and gender equality.

Big thanks to our amazing volunteers, sponsors, community partners and guests for showing their support and solidarity with us this year.

We look forward to your continued support in 2024. Peace and joy to everyone for celebrating the United Nations Day with us.

Space Innovation and Achieving SDGs

In partnership with the UNAAWA Young Professionals, the SDG Forum hosted a successful event at the [Pawsey Supercomputing Research Centre](#), sponsored by [Woodside Energy](#) earlier this month.



Zaina DeBouch
Chair of UN Day Event

The event was graced by the Hon. Minister [Stephen Dawson](#) MLC and [Linda Dawson](#), Deputy Director of General Industry, Science, Innovation at JTSI, with an overwhelming support from members of science

community, civil societies, public, private and education sectors.



Moderated by Dr Sandy Chong, Founding Chair of the SDG Forums, the panel comprised of amazing speakers - former National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) scientist [Dawn McIntosh](#), [AROSE](#) lead [Michelle Keegan](#), JTSI's [James Yuen](#) and ICRAR (International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research)'s Dr Clancy James. They shed light on the importance of space exploration, the impact it has on the achievement of SDGs and the benefits be extended to all inhabitants on this planet.

Big thanks to our sponsors, partners including the US Consulate in Perth for obtaining a short video from [NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#), our awesome members and volunteers for organising yet another successful event. To learn more about our work, come join us.



To join our Young Professionals team, contact us at: young.professionals@unaa-wa.org.au



Charlotte Moss
Convener of Young Professionals Committee

Attendance of 12th UN Forum for Business and Human Rights

It was great attending the 12th United Nations Business & Human Rights Forum in Geneva. The largest annual gathering on business and human

rights, the attendance of the forum doubled from last year's record with nearly 4000 participants from

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government, private sector, civil society, international organisations, trade unions, academia and media.



Over three days, we listened to multistakeholders discuss trends, challenges and progress of key human rights issues in business.

Few notable takeaways include:

- Human rights have leaped to the top of the ESG agenda for many multinational enterprises with a focus on just transition and capacity building.
- Voices of human rights defenders and communities is crucial, yet their participation remains limited.
- There's a call for integrating evolving social and environmental challenges, including recent standards like the Paris Agreement and forthcoming EU CS3D.
- Financial institutions and investors are responding to increasing pressure by establishing human rights due diligence procedures and grievance mechanisms, and using their leverage to encourage clients to do the same.
- Technologies like AI and blockchain may help address challenges by identifying the source of

raw materials, verifying social audit and preventing forced labour.



During the week of the forum, it was great to be working with stakeholders from the UN, experts and industry participants on key issues of human rights affecting businesses worldwide. Look forward to contributing and advancing the progress of SDGs locally and internationally.

Dr Sandy Chong
Founding Chair, SDG Forum



Remembrance Day 2024

It is an honourable duty to continue representing the UNAAWA on Remembrance Day, reflecting upon the importance and history it represents. On this important commemorative day, we should reflect and pay our respect and remembrance to our fallen soldiers.

History has etched into the archives of global conflict the indispensable fact that many Australian lives were lost in the line of their duty, though their valour and love of country never departs us.

We pay solace to the 11th hour of the 11th month in November 1918 when the First World War (WWI) was finally ended, an occasion that to this day marks the supreme relevance of the ongoing anniversary to Remembrance Day.



However, following both World Wars, Australians have been called time and again to arms to defend Australian soil and neighbouring lands. Distant lands such as Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf region, and Afghanistan have all been theatres of conflict.

The chapters of conflict sadly continue in this new millennium. Its pages are written with horrific international headlines and devastating humanitarian

crises, as societies and lives are thrown into turmoil and essential life supporting infrastructure destroyed.



As ambassadors, we must always strive for peace further instil into our young the lessons of the barbaric actions of conflict and weapons that serve no purpose. Arms are not the answer rather amicable dialogue.



Joseph Caruso, UNAAWA Global Representative, awarded RSL honorary life membership

Joseph Caruso
UNAAWA Global Representative

GameChanger Awards to Promote STEM Education

On Thursday, 2nd November 2023, the Game Changer Awards State Finals and Awards Ceremony was held at the Edith Cowan University Sport and Fitness Centre in Joondalup. Student teams set up their project display in science fair and the teams presented their STEM projects to a panel of judges.



As the Ambassador for Game Changer Awards and representative of the UNAAWA, the biggest highlight of my duty is seeing how children's faces lit up at the wonders of science and when their ideas are celebrated. Even more thrilled was to see so many winners to be girls this year.



In today's rapidly evolving world, where advancements in technology and science shape our daily lives, nurturing a STEMM-focused mindset is more important than ever. Embracing STEMM education at a young age is key to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Especially with skills and knowledge needed to tackle the pressing issues of poverty, climate change, and healthcare access, embracing STEMM education at a young age will be key to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It brings immense joy to me, knowing that we are not just promoting academic success but also cultivating a generation capable of driving meaningful change.

Let's continue to support initiatives like the Game Changer Awards and invest in education that shapes a sustainable future for Australia.



Dr Sandy Chong
Founding Chair – SDG Forum
Ambassador of the Game Changer Awards

SDG Forum Team Year-End Gathering

As the year draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared together at UNAANA. This year has been filled with memorable moments, impactful forums, and invaluable contributions from our dedicated volunteers.



It is with both a sense of gratitude and bittersweet emotion that we come together for our end-of-year gathering, combined with a heartfelt farewell to three remarkable volunteers who have been an integral part of our SDG Forum family.



Special thanks to Shannon Blott, Hayden Hunt, and Alex Dorrell for their passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to our mission. We are grateful for the time

and effort they've invested in making a difference in our community.

As we congratulate them for their new careers and bid farewell to their future endeavours, we look forward to the new year with much excitement and enthusiasm as we did when we founded the Forum series 6 years ago.

As we embark on the journey that lies ahead, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, unity and resilience that defines our UNAANA community. Together, we have the power to create positive change and build a brighter future for all.

So here's to the memories we've made, the challenges we've overcome, and the friendships we've forged along the way. Thank you, Shannon, Hayden and Alex for your invaluable contributions the past 4 years.

Cheers to a new year filled with endless possibilities, exciting opportunities, and continued growth. Let's make 2024 our best year yet!



For more information on how to join our SDG Forum team or enquire about any sponsorship opportunities, feel free to reach us at: sandy.chong@unaa.org.au

Lily Jovic
Vice-Chair of SDG Forum

<http://www.unaa.org.au/divisions/western-australia/>

Including Children and Young People in Decision Making

UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Principles for Child Safe Organisations recommend that children are informed of their rights, are involved in decision making and are taken seriously.

Recently, the Valuing Children Initiative in partnership with Curtin University, Murdoch University, Early Childhood Australia, and the Play Matters Collective, invited children aged 4- 17 years old to participate in a workshop all about play in the City of Perth!

The children created play structures, drew designs and explored the city to share their ideas and wishes for a more playful and inclusive city. Here we share their capture report with you and hope you consider how you can also include children in decision making across all areas.

<https://valuingchildreninitiative.com.au/childrens-advisory-workshops/>

How do you include children in decision making?

For more information and support on best practice in children's advisory contact the Valuing Children Initiative: info@valuingchildreninitiative.com.au

You can also download a copy of their Child and Youth Impact Assessment Tool for your business or workplace, which will help you to assess how your projects and policies may affect your children and young people:

<https://valuingchildreninitiative.com.au/child-and-youth-impact-assessment-tool/>

Recommendations our young people shared for the 'Come Play In The City' Project.



Lauren Valentine Communications and Promotion Officer
Centrecare Inc.
UNAAWA Member



The Valuing Children Initiative Survey 2023: Exploring Australian Adults' Attitudes Towards Children for a Better Future

The 'Exploring Australian Adults' Attitudes Towards Children for a Better Future 2023' which surveyed 1008 adults across Australia was commissioned by the Valuing Children Initiative and conducted by The University of Western Australia, Edith Cowan University and Curtin University compared results from the same survey conducted in 2016.

This attitude survey provides a pathway to action to value children.

By understanding how adults see children, we can challenge or amplify those ideas with information campaigns and mechanisms such as the Child and Youth Impact Assessment Tool that empower children in our decision-making processes.

This ensures that we construct their world 'with them', not 'to them'.

Adults' attitudes about children have changed to 'fortunate', 'tech savvy' and 'honest' and less 'selfish', 'lazy' or 'spoilt' according to ground-breaking new research into adults' attitudes towards children.

Australian adults also believe that governments give 'too little' consideration to children when making decisions while 75 per cent of adults agreed the best interests of children should be considered in all decision making.

The report made six recommendations including new mechanisms to amplify children's voices, greater support for families to facilitate children's development, school-based programs that empower children, better advocacy for children's rights and further research that impact children's lives.

Click [here](#) to view the full survey.

Ecologists discover rare marsupial at threatened ecological site in Western Australia

The rare marsupial Woolley's False Antechinus (scientific name *Pseudantechinus woolleyae*) has been spotted on night cameras at Hughes Block in the northern wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

Consultant ecologists Dr Nic Dunlop and Alison Goundrey were amazed to see the rarely sighted marsupial on the motion-sensitive cameras in October, 2023.

"This is an unexpected and wonderful outcome," says Ms Goundrey.

The ecologists are part of a volunteer team from the Carbon Neutral Citizen Science Program operating within the Yarra Yarra Biodiversity Corridor—a Carbon Neutral plantation region designed to sequester carbon and part of the first project in Australia to achieve premium [Gold Standard](#) certification.

Animal "Virtually Unstudied"

So rarely sighted since its recognition in 1988, the Woolley's False Antechinus has not yet been given a common name or conservation status. The discovery

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is thought to be the first record of the marsupial in the wheatbelt region.

“As far as we know this may be the first time it has been recorded in the wheatbelt. They were found at Karara prior to mining activity and it is thought to be present in the Mungada Ridge National Park some 65 kms further inland from the Perenjori Hills.,” said Dr Dunlop.

The marsupial was captured on camera in the Hughes Block area, which recently became one of 58 areas listed as a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) in Western Australia under the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Woolley’s False Antechinus is a small, carnivorous marsupial, eating; insects, scorpions, centipedes and small lizards.

They are found in small, isolated populations in the arid zone of the Mid-west in the rangelands at Jack Hills, Mt Jackson and Bungalbin Hill.

Additionally, we have also confirmed the presence of the threatened species, Mallee Fowl (scientific name *Leipoa ocellata*), in the Hughes Block area. This is a significant finding as it adds another layer of ecological importance to this region.



Species to be protected

The rarely spotted marsupial is thought to be likely a threatened species due to the destruction of its

natural habitat from extensive iron ore mining in the region.

Ray Wilson, Chief Commercial Officer at Carbon Neutral, said the image captured of the rare species has motivated the organisation to act.

“Carbon Neutral owns and has a stewardship responsibility to manage 1,000 ha of remnant vegetation on Hughes Block adjoining parts of its extensive biodiverse carbon sink plantings in the north-eastern wheatbelt,” he said.

“The area has been declared a critically endangered ecological community and the intention is to create a sanctuary to protect the Woolley’s Pseudantechinus and other threatened species.”

Bill to protect and restore diversity

The news comes on the heels of the newly struck natural repair scheme between the Federal Government and Greens party earlier this month.

The nature repair bill looks to create a market to encourage private spending on projects that protect and restore biodiversity.

“Carbon Neutral will look to the newly legislated Nature Repair Market framework to mobilise funding through biodiversity credits to cover the sanctuary conservation works,” said Mr Wilson.

Minister for the Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek, called the bill an exciting change to see extra investment in protecting our environment. “Our nature repair market will make it easier to invest in restoring nature. It will support landholders to do things like replanting koala habitat, excluding livestock to repair natural marshland or eradicating feral species,” she said.

Carbon Neutral UNAAWA Member

City of Melville: Community asked to shape local climate action plan

The City of Melville is calling for community input to shape its first Community Climate Action Plan, which aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions across the local government area by December 2050.

A community survey launched Monday, 22 January 2024 and asks community members to provide feedback on how the City can support local climate action in homes, businesses, workplaces, schools, local sporting and community groups and throughout daily life.

Participants who complete the survey by midnight Sunday, 11 February 2024 will go in the running to win one of five \$100 VISA gift cards.



The draft Community Climate Action Plan will also be informed by feedback from the City's Climate Action Reference Group (CARG) - a group of 24 passionate people from across the City who met monthly since November 2022 to help develop ideas and voice priorities for climate action.

Priority action areas identified by CARG include energy, water, built environment, greening spaces, transport, waste and the circular economy, food and diet, and education and awareness.

The development of a Community Climate Action Plan follows the release of the City's Corporate Climate Action Plan in July 2023.

The Corporate Climate Action Plan is a comprehensive strategy to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint and

achieve its ambitious target of carbon neutrality by December 2030.

Feedback gathered through the current Community Climate Action Plan engagement will be reviewed by CARG and used to create a draft plan.

The draft Community Climate Action Plan will be advertised for public comment before being finalised and presented to Council for adoption and implementation.

To find out more about the engagement and to complete the survey before midnight Sunday, 11 February 2024, visit www.melvillecity.com.au/ccap

Participants can also arrange to complete the survey over the phone 1300 635 845 or in person at the City of Melville Civic Centre during business hours.

To find out more about CARG and climate action in the community, visit www.melvillecity.com.au/climateaction

Comments attributed to City of Melville Mayor Katy Mair:

"In recognition of the broad scope and impact of climate change on our community, Council declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions city-wide by December 2050," said Mayor Mair.

"By working with our community, we have the opportunity to harness local knowledge and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change in our City.

"It has been especially inspiring to see the dedication and passion CARG members have brought to developing ideas and priority areas for climate action.

"I encourage everyone to get involved and help shape how the City supports local climate action for sustainable, biodiverse and climate resilient communities into the future."

Aaron Corlett
Media Contact

Humans in Space – The Kessler Syndrome

A modified ballistic missile is launched at 10:26pm from USS Lake Erie, a US Navy cruiser location north of Hawaii. Only a few minutes later, it collides with its target – USA-193, a malfunctioning reconnaissance satellite in a relatively low orbit at risk of falling into an uncontrolled re-entry. The satellite could fall on anyone living between 58.5 degrees north and 58.5 degrees south latitude, which included most of the world's population. Yet it was not the satellite itself that was the danger, but its nearly-500 kilograms of hydrazine fuel, fatal to humans at higher concentrations. Months of analysis and planning had concluded that interception was the only solution, and on 20 February 2008, Operation Burnt Frost entered its final stages. The missile was launched, the satellite destroyed, the mission a success.



Launch of USA-193, December 2006: The Space Review

Yet the operation, as much as it had prevented a greater catastrophe, was not without its consequences. Amidst the political fallout and global condemnation, the breakup of the satellite created a debris field 250 kilometres above the Earth's surface. The hazard of space debris had been a major consideration in Burnt Frost, and care had been taken to minimize the impact of space debris. Even so, it took more than a month for the last of the debris to re-enter the atmosphere.

Burnt Frost was not the first anti-satellite (ASAT) operation, nor will it be the last. U.S. and Soviet tests during the Cold War are well-known, but they are joined by similar tests in the 21st century. In March 2019, India launched an ASAT missile as part of a weapons test. Like Burnt Frost, it resulted in a debris field of roughly 400 fragments, which would take weeks to months to decay. In November 2021, Russia too tested a missile against a defunct Russian satellite, resulting in 1,500 pieces of traceable debris.

In January 2007, mere months before Burnt Frost, China launched an ASAT missile targeting the weather satellite Fengyun 1C. This event alone created an estimated 5,500 distinct pieces of debris, the largest debris field caused by a single event to date.

The Kessler Syndrome – A warning then and now

The threat of space debris is one that has been understood for decades. Space debris does not have to come from weapons testing or the deliberate destruction of satellites, nor from abandoned or defunct satellites and subsystems. In 2009, a defunct satellite collided with an active communications satellite, creating thousands of debris pieces that still remain in Earth's orbits. This event, together with

China's 2007 ASAT operation, accounts for more than one-third of all catalogued debris in space. While warnings could be given for space debris, they are not always detected, predicted, or avoided. This was one such time.

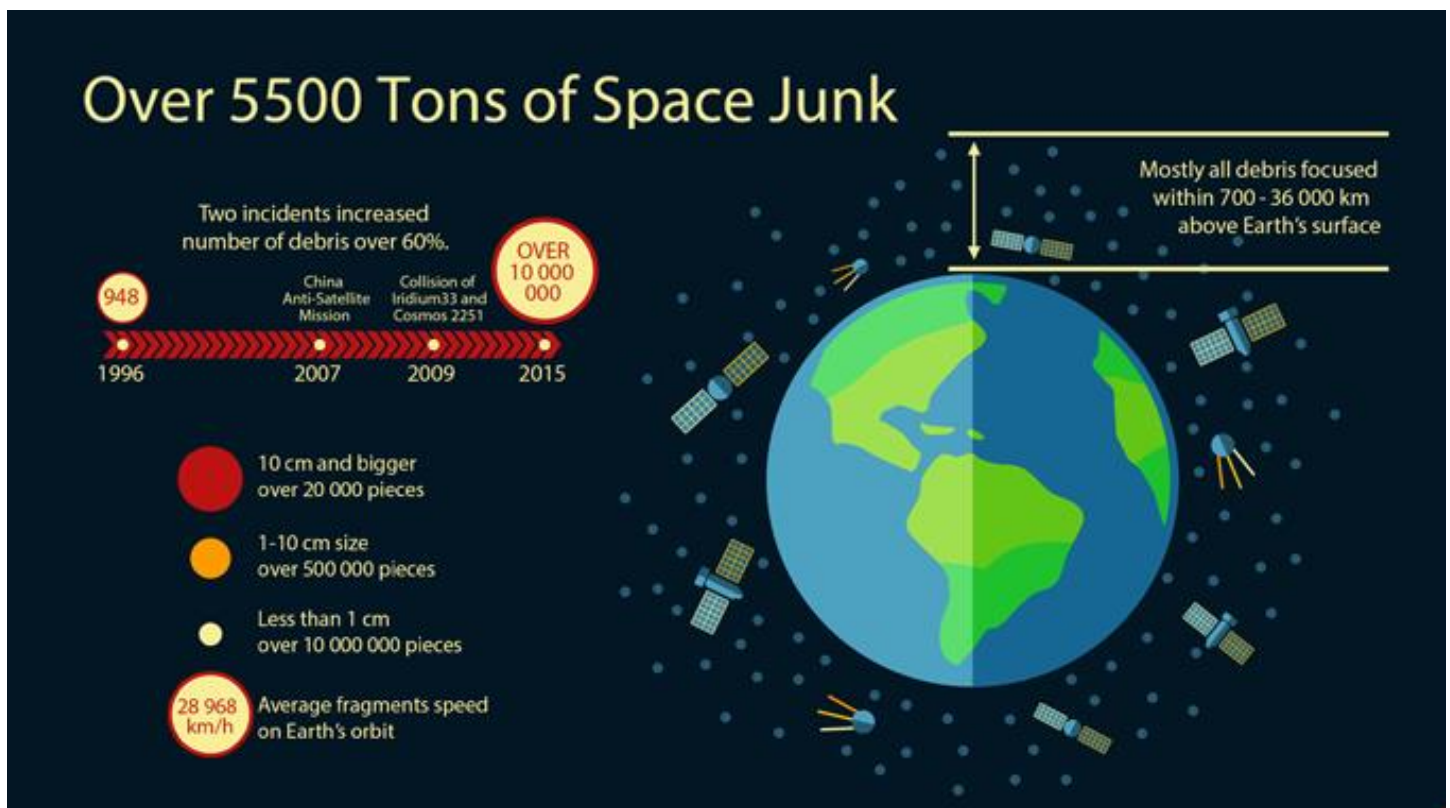
The threat of space debris was described as far back as 1978, when NASA scientist Donald Kessler proposed a scenario in which the density of objects in low-Earth orbit is numerous enough that collisions between objects could cause a cascade in which each collision generates space debris that increases the likelihood of further collisions. This is the Kessler Syndrome, a scenario that reflects the logical conclusion of the threat of hypervelocity objects filling an environment containing thousands of satellites – a number that is ever increasing. At such speeds, even

the smallest piece of debris presents a real danger to satellites, the risk of a cascade of breakups and destruction, and an exponentially growing and self-sustaining field of debris that could render space unuseable. Increasingly, accidents and deliberate, careless operations have made this theoretical scenario more likely.

The International Day of Human Space Flight falls on the 12th of April, where the pioneers of humanity's first steps out of Earth are celebrated. In celebrating our achievements, we should also not forget that, as humanity's reach expands, so too does the environment we inhabit and should work to preserve.

Amorith Tan

UNAANA Chief Editor



UN Observances

March

- 1: World Seagrass Day
- 1: Zero Discrimination Day
- 3: World Wildlife Day
- 5: International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness
- 8: International Women's Day
- 10: International Day of Women Judges
- 15: International Day to Combat Islamophobia
- 20: International Day of Happiness
- 20: French Language Day
- 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21: World Poetry Day
- 21: International Day of Nowruz
- 21: World Down Syndrome Day
- 21: International Day of Forests
- 21-27: Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination
- 22: World Water Day
- 23: World Meteorological Day
- 24: World Tuberculosis Day
- 24: International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims
- 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- 25: International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members
- 30: International Day of Zero Waste

April

- 2: World Autism Awareness Day
- 4: International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
- 5: International Day of Conscience
- 6: International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
- 7: World Health Day
- 7: International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda
- 12: International Day of Human Space Flight
- 14: World Chagas Disease Day
- 20: Chinese Language Day
- 21: World Creativity and Innovation Day
- 22: International Mother Earth Day
- 23: World Book and Copyright Day
- 23: English Language Day
- 23: Spanish Language Day
- 24: International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace
- 24-30: World Immunization Week
- 25: International Girls in ICT Day
- 25: World Malaria Day
- 25: International Delegate's Day
- 26: International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day
- 26: World Intellectual Property Day
- 28: World Day for Safety and Health at Work
- 30: International Jazz Day



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY 	2 ZERO HUNGER 	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION 	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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