



Spring 2022

Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations Newsletter

Bringing the United Nations to the Anglican Communion

Anglican women participate in key UN meeting on gender and environment



In March, the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN) welcomed eight women from across the Communion to participate in the 66th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW66). The session focused on the theme of *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*.

Taking place during a key period of global negotiations on issues of environmental justice, the Commission was an important opportunity for Anglican delegates to gather together and share their expertise with UN member states and civil society.

Meeting for a third consecutive year in a hybrid format, one of the key outcomes of the summit was the recognition of the role of faith-based communities in achieving gender equality in the context of climate change within the Agreed Conclusions, negotiated by UN member states over the two-week period.

Anglican delegates welcomed this achievement, with one, the Revd Dr Rachel Mash, welcoming the acknowledgement of "the prophetic role of women in promoting an environmental ethic, and their role as earth-keepers, safeguarding the natural environment and bio-diversity".

The Anglican delegation, which included women from South Africa, New Zealand, Brazil, the UK, the Philippines, the United States, Kenya and the Seychelles, participated in official meetings of the Commission, including speaking in side-events alongside government representatives.

One delegate who spoke at one such event, the Revd Jacynthia Murphy from the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia also represented the Anglican Consultative Council at a key UN conference on biodiversity. In these roles, Jacynthia has brought the incredibly important perspectives of the impact of environmental issues on indigenous communities. Ahead of CSW, she shared that her goal was to "be God's instrument in positively transforming attitudes that debilitate women from their expression of relationships with Mother Earth and all other living things in order that both may flourish".

ACOUN staff were delighted that she was able to do this in such a powerful way through her speaking roles!

Anglican Communion responds to the war in Ukraine



Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, the Chair of the Anglican Communion UN Reference Group, the Most Revd Dr Maimbo Mndolwa, and the Permanent Representative to the UN, Jack Palmer-White, released a statement condemning the hostilities and welcoming the work of the United Nations in responding to the conflict and the humanitarian needs that it has caused.

Archbishop Maimbo, the Archbishop of Tanzania, said: "I am particularly concerned that urgent action must be taken to support the more than one million people who have been displaced from their homes, particularly children, the elderly and those most vulnerable. I urge all UN Member States to do what they can to support the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in their vital work caring for those forced to flee." Jack Palmer-White highlighted the way in which the Anglican Communion was also responding to the need of those affected by the war: "The Anglican Communion is present in Kyiv and elsewhere in Ukraine; as well as many of the countries which border it. The Church of England's Diocese in Europe has joined forces with the Anglican Mission agency USPG to launch an emergency appeal to support Christian charities and churches carrying out humanitarian work both in Ukraine and responding to the arrival of refugees in neighbouring countries.

"The Diocese in Europe and USPG have partners on the ground providing food, medicine, shelter, care for children and people internally displaced in Ukraine. With refugees they are supplying care at the border and beyond, including attention to those from Africa and Asia as well as Ukrainians who are fleeing the war."

The Emergency Appeal continues to accept donations, and more information can be found here: <https://ukraine-emergency-appeal.raisely.com>

The Anglican Communion continues to support concerted action to address the conflict at the United Nations, and most recently joined with 11 other NGOs at the UN Human Rights Council in saying that international humanitarian law and human rights law "must be respected and protection of civilians, civilian infrastructures, as well as humanitarian aid workers guaranteed".

The ACOUN continues to monitor developments on Ukraine at the United Nations, and ensure that distinctive Anglican and faith messages are heard by UN member states and agencies.

"An historic moment for global cooperation on plastic pollution" – UN Environment Assembly



Dr Rachel Mash and Nicholas Pande beside the #TurnOffThePlasticTap sculpture

At the start of March, the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA), the world's overarching decision-making body on environmental issues, [reached an historic resolution](#) to tackle what they called the "epidemic" of single-use plastics. The resolution, proposed by Rwanda and Peru and reached at UNEA5 in Nairobi, commits signatories to reaching a legally-binding agreement on plastics by 2024.

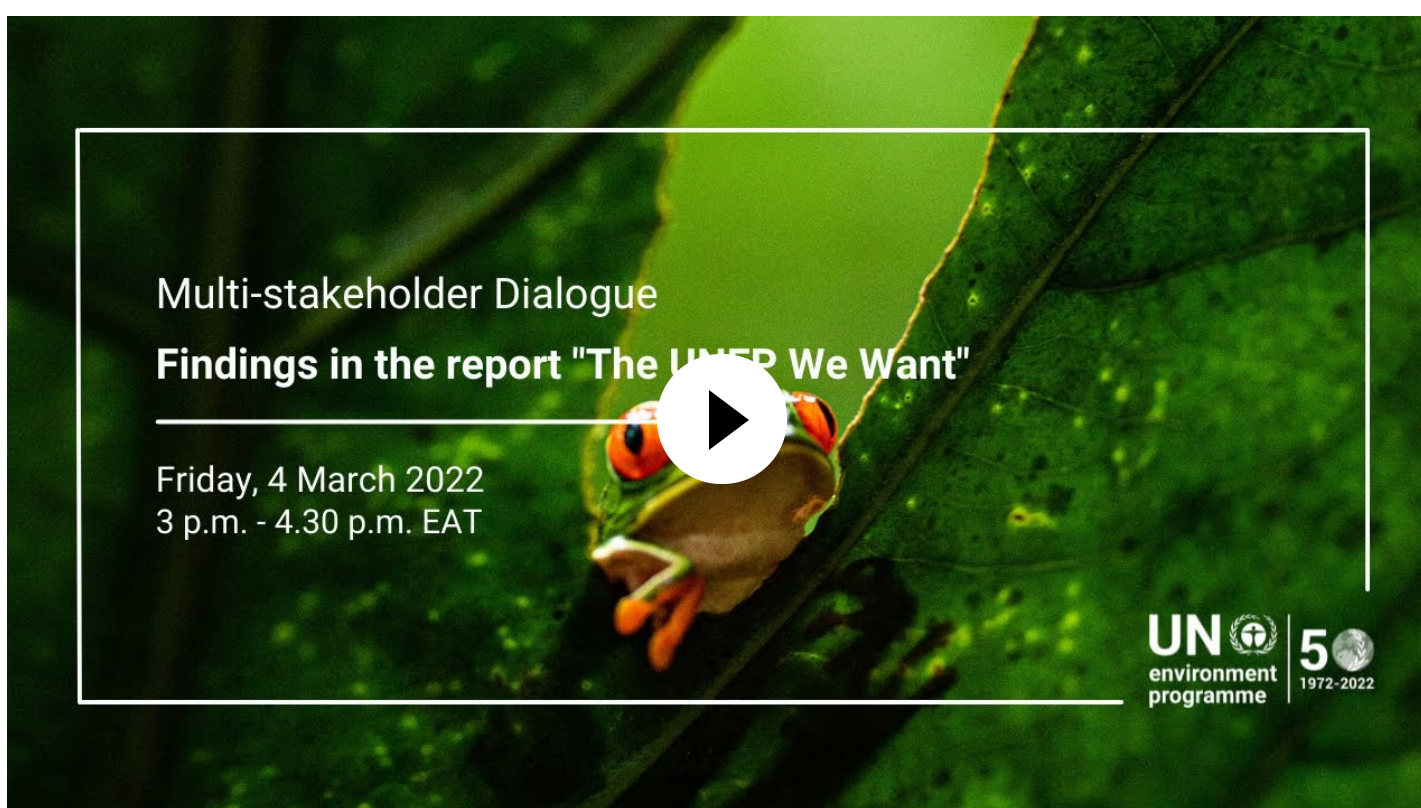
As an accredited observer at the UNEA, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) was able to play an important role to play in the negotiations, lobbying ministers and representatives from some of the 173 member nations on behalf of Anglicans.

The ACC drafted and co-signed a [letter from global faith communities](#) to the Assembly, warning that the world is "facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution" and calling on member states to recognise that plastic pollution is a "pervasive and escalating phenomenon" which requires urgent, co-ordinated global action.

The ACC delegates to the conference – who joined the conference in person and from around the Communion – were also active in pushing for greater recognition of the important role that faith actors play in motivating action in response to the wider environmental crises. The Revd Dr Rachel Mash, one of the delegates participating at UNHQ in Nairobi, said: "Faith voices are important because we offer values and reach. We have the science to solve all the environmental challenges we face – but we are hindered by greed and apathy. Faith offers motivation and values – to care for creation and to care for the health of those impacted by plastic."

Dr Mash was also invited to be a speaker at a key session during the meeting – speaking as a representative of faith voices during a multi-stakeholder dialogue celebrating the 50th anniversary of the UN Environment Programme. Her remarks – in front of a packed conference room full of UN delegates and broadcast live on UN WebTV – struck a chord with many who heard them.

You can watch the full dialogue below (Dr Mash's remarks begin at 0:22:30)



Looking Ahead

It has been a busy start to the year for the ACOUN team, but things won't be slowing down! Still to come in 2022:

- Participating in major meetings on global migration, a global plastics treaty, environmental governance and human rights
- Preparing the Anglican delegation for COP27 and related meetings
- Supporting seminars at the Lambeth Conference on sustainable development and indigenous rights
- Facilitating participation in UN discussions on the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- Collaborating with a number of Provinces to submit shadow reports to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism

Getting Involved

We are always looking for opportunities to work with dioceses, provinces and agencies around the Anglican Communion to support them in mission and ministry through the opportunities of the United Nations system. If you would like to arrange a conversation with us to discuss how we can support you, please get in touch by email: UNRep@anglicancommunion.org and don't forget to follow us on Twitter @AnglicanUN.

Check out our next newsletter for a roundup of ACOUN activity

Working on any of the issues listed in this edition of the newsletter? Contact us to discuss how we can work together!

Email us at un.rep@anglicancommunion.org or go to: bit.ly/acoun



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