



Celebrate World Environment Day 2022 by joining the rights of Nature movement

On 5 June 2022, the United Nations celebrates World Environment Day. It is a day aimed at raising awareness and encouraging action to protect the environment. Almost 50 years since its inception, and coinciding with the Stockholm+50 event which is currently taking place, this day provides an opportunity to reflect back on the past 50 years, how far we have come, and what we have achieved.

Unfortunately, there is little cause for celebration: we are in the midst of catastrophic loss of biodiversity, ongoing degradation to the environment, accelerating climate change, and a barrage of environmental and social injustices.

While this has been known for decades, existing governance approaches have failed to adequately address, or even slow down, these tragedies. In fact, many continue to endorse, legitimise and authorise the ongoing destruction of the planet in the name of economic growth, profit-making and private property rights. In order to address this, we need transformative change; change that gets to the heart of the issues to radically alter our societies. We need a new guiding vision: one that recognises humanity's role within the great web of life, not separate from it.

We must recognise that we are part of an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings and that we each have a responsibility to contribute to the health and integrity of the whole Earth community, including future generations. We must recognise that the destruction of Nature is the destruction of ourselves. We aim for societies where we can live in harmonious coexistence within Nature, in socially just and spiritually fulfilling ways.

This way of living is not new. Indigenous peoples and cultures around the world, including in Africa, have a diversity and wealth of knowledge on how this can be achieved. However, this knowledge continues to be invalidated, delegitimised, and even criminalised. In order to achieve our vision, we need to foreground these knowledge systems and cultures, integrate practices and rituals into our work that strengthen our connection to, and respect for, the Earth community, be grateful and humble regarding our place in the world, and work in solidarity with one another.

One vital step in achieving this vision is to recognise that all beings are subjects with rights, to ensure that humans respect and uphold those rights, and to defend the rights of all beings. This is the work of the [Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature \(GARN\)](#). GARN is a world network of individuals and organisations, from a variety of fields and backgrounds, who are working to change humanity's disastrous trajectory through active cooperation, collective action and legal tools based on Rights of Nature.

GARN is organised into regional hubs that work on achieving this vision in different parts of the world. As the newly established African Hub, we are committed to advancing this vision across the continent. We invite all readers to join the Alliance, and be part of a movement that is ensuring the protection of all beings. [Click here to join the African Hub](#), or [here](#) to join the global movement.