

GREENPEACE



# UMOJA

SUPPORTER  
NEWSLETTER

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# A Congo Journey

Victorine is the project leader of the Congo Forest Campaign

By Victorine Che Thöner

*“Emphasising the importance of the forest is the recent discovery that the Congo Basin harbours the largest tropical peatland complex in the world.”*

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**A** muddy carpet of water rolls out hundreds of miles into the ocean from the Congo River, the second largest in the world. The Greenpeace ship, Esperanza, is touched by the Congo Basin long before land is sighted.

Approaching the forest in the Congo, we are met with an overwhelming wall of green. Sailing closer to it, we see the meandering rivers merging together. We see animals drinking from the rivers, frolicking with joy in the water. We hear a chorus of teeming life – birds, lowland and mountain gorillas, forest elephants, bonobos – many of which are now endangered.

But, we are not here to see chimpanzees, bonobos and mountain gorillas, or to enjoy the Congo Basin's music, dance and diversity. We are here because of one unsettling fact that puts all nationalities under one roof: climate change.

Greenpeace Africa and partner organizations have been defending the Congo Basin forest because of what it means to Africa and the indigenous communities it houses and feeds, including its vital significance to the entire planet. But the Congo Basin has not been given the due attention and protection it deserves. To change that, we brought the Esperanza to the Congo Basin, and for several weeks during October and November 2017, we will travel through Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

We were lucky enough to have spent time with local and indigenous communities who live here. This forest is their source of water, food, medicine, and shelter. It is their physical and spiritual home. Approximately 30 million people, representing more than 150 indigenous groups, live in the Congo

Basin. Nearly 250 distinct ethnic groups call the Congo Basin their home; their lives and well-being are intimately linked with the forest. If the forest disappears, it will bring devastation to their lives.

Emphasising the importance of the forest is the recent discovery that the Congo Basin harbours the largest tropical peatland complex in the world. This is what drew our ship to Central Africa in the first place. Peatlands, areas with partially decayed plant material in the soil, have existed in this forest for a long time. The peat swamp forest is a unique ecosystem which stores vast quantities of carbon, helping to cool our planet. This means it locks away massive amounts of carbon and is an important part of our fight against climate change. If left intact, it will be instrumental in keeping the worst effects of climate change at bay. Scientists and journalists are coming on board to join us on an expedition into the peatland to find out how far it stretches. We can't wait to keep you posted on our findings from the ground.

However, logging and exploitative agribusiness are threatening the Congo

Basin. The Congo Basin Forest is being lost at a rate of 0.5 million hectares per year. Agriculture and logging are major drivers of forest destruction, threatening the habitat of hundreds of endangered species. Intact parts of the forests are being fragmented. Large areas are being clear-cut for palm oil and rubber plantations. This has already had devastating effects, reducing the amount of carbon the forest can store, losing biodiversity, increasing forest fires, and damaging the forest's resilience to climate change.

Who will stand for the peatlands? Who will stand with the Chimpanzee, the African Grey Parrot and the Mahogany tree? Who will stand for the Congo Basin forest?

It is all too easy to shake our heads in resignation at a challenge so tremendous, and play the ostrich by burying our heads in the sand. And so we ask you all to act now. Come on board - be part of the solutions to safeguarding the forest that sustains life on the Good Ship Earth. ●

We can't win this on our own.  
**The forest needs you!**



# Climate March at the UN Climate Conference COP23 in Bonn



## Climate March at the UN Climate Conference COP23 in Bonn

This is what it looks like when 25 000 people take to the streets calling for an end to the age of fossil fuels; Greenpeace activists at the climate march in Bonn. The environmental activists display a balloon with the message “Planet Earth First!” Banners and signs demand to act for climate protection and coal phase-out. Greenpeace International Executive Director Jennifer Morgan (second from right behind the banner) took part in the climate march and gave a speech at the final rally. The twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) took place from 6-17 November 2017 in Bonn and was presided over by the Government of Fiji. ●



© Grzegorz Broniatowski / Greenpeace, reenpeace activists at the climate march in Bonn, 2017



## Climate Change Is Complex: Here are answers to some of your Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Climate change? Global warming? What do we call it?

You can think of global warming as one type of climate change. The broader term, climate change, covers changes beyond warmer temperatures, such as shifting rainfall patterns.

### 2. How much is the Earth heating up?

As of early 2017, the Earth had warmed by roughly two-degrees Fahrenheit (more than one-degree Celsius) since 1880, when records began at a global scale.

The number may sound low, but as an average over the surface of an entire planet, it is actually high, which explains why much of the world's land ice is starting to melt and the oceans are rising at an accelerating pace.

### 3. What is the greenhouse effect, and how does it cause global warming?

The greenhouse effect is when certain gases in the air trap and slow down heat that would otherwise escape to space. Carbon dioxide is a major player.

### 4. How do we know humans are responsible for the increase in carbon dioxide?

Studies that use radioactivity to distinguish industrial emissions from natural emissions show that the extra gas is coming from human activity. Natural sources include decomposition, ocean release and respiration. Human sources come from activities like cement production, deforestation as well as the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. Carbon dioxide levels rose and fell naturally in the long-ago past, but those changes took thousands of years. Geologists say that humans are now pumping the gas into the air much faster than nature has ever done.

### 5. How much trouble are we in?

Over the coming 25 or 30 years, scientists say, the climate is likely to gradually warm, with more extreme weather. Coral reefs and other sensitive habitats are already starting to die. Longer term, if emissions rise unchecked, scientists fear climate effects so severe that they might destabilize governments, produce waves of refugees, precipitate the sixth mass extinction of plants and animals in the Earth's history, and melt the polar ice caps, causing the seas to rise high enough to flood most of the world's coastal cities. The emissions that create those risks are happening now, raising deep moral questions for our generation.

### 6. Is recent crazy weather tied to climate change?

Some of it is. Scientists have published strong evidence that the warming climate

is making heat waves more frequent and intense. It is also causing heavier rainstorms, and coastal flooding is getting worse as the oceans rise because of human emissions. Global warming has intensified droughts in regions like Africa and the Middle East.

### 7. Does clean energy help or hurt the economy?

The energy sources with the lowest emissions include wind turbines, solar panels, and hydroelectric dams. Converting to these cleaner sources may be somewhat costlier in the short term, but they could ultimately pay for themselves by heading off climate damages and reducing health problems associated with dirty air. And the expansion of the market is driving down the costs of renewable energy so fast that it may ultimately beat dirty energy on price alone — it already does in some areas.

### 8. Climate change seems so overwhelming, what can I personally do about it?

The most important thing you can do is to exercise your rights as a citizen, by speaking up and demanding change. You can also take direct personal action to reduce your carbon footprint in simple ways that will save you money. Switch to more energy efficient appliances and light bulbs, turn on your geyser only when necessary, switch off unused lights, drive fewer kilometres by consolidating trips, eat locally produced and organic food, re-use and recycle, lower household water consumption, support clean energy sources and go solar wherever possible, waste less food. ●

Picking up Plastics for International Coastal  
Clean-up Day

# Picking up Plastics for International Coastal Clean-up Day

Melanie is one of  
our passionate  
volunteers, based  
in Durban, South  
Africa

By Melanie Sember

It has been estimated that more than 8 billion metric tons of virgin plastic has been produced since the material was first manufactured at a large scale in the 1950s. This is equivalent to a billion elephants! An astonishing and shocking figure! Sadly, most of the plastic products produced are for single-use and even more heart-breaking is the fact that a lot of this ends up in our oceans. In fact, more than 8.5 billion kilograms of plastic pollutes our oceans yearly, with this figure set to double by 2025.

Plastic pollution is responsible for destroying marine ecosystems, and huge numbers of seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and other creatures have been killed by the ocean plastic crisis.

For International Coastal Clean-up Day, commemorated on Saturday 16 September 2017, the Greenpeace Durban local volunteer group teamed up with the Bluff Boardriders Association, eThekweni Municipality and Durban Solid Waste (DSW), to host a Bluff Beaches Clean-up at Treasure and Brighton beaches in KwaZulu-Natal. Our main aim was to clean Treasure Beach as it is not easily accessible by the Municipality. However, due to the large number of volunteers that joined the day of action, we decided to split those attending with some from Brighton Beach too.

Approximately 100 community members, scholars and volunteers joined the event, and together we collected 142 bags of plastic trash which predominately consisted of single-use plastic items as well as discarded fishing lines, some of which were attached to spark plugs.

I joined the team that cleaned Treasure Beach and was alarmed to notice the vast amount of micro-plastics found on the shoreline. Micro-plastics form as a result of the continuous breakdown of uncollected discarded plastic products. Although unbelievably voluminous, these tiny bits of plastic debris were virtually impossible to pick up and unfortunately were literally everywhere.

Apart from regular beach clean-ups that we support, this was the first beach clean-up that the Greenpeace Africa Durban volunteers have hosted in recent years, and we couldn't help but bear witness to the immense bulk of the overwhelming plastic pollution crisis.

International Coastal Clean-up Day is considered one of the world's biggest volunteer efforts that endeavours to conserve our oceans. Approximately 12 million people (and counting) globally have joined this initiative. This is very encouraging since a problem as big as plastics in the ocean requires a big and constant response. Plastic is being found in various types of marine life, including turtles, whales, seals, seabirds and fish.

This year many of the beach clean-ups that took place along the KwaZulu-Natal coastline were sponsored by some of plastic pollution's greatest contributors, including Coca-Cola, Sasol, SA Plastics and SA Polystyrene, amongst others. Thus we did not register our clean-up with the official ICC organisers, and distanced ourselves from these events as we refused, in good consciousness, to be a part of these companies' perceived 'green-washing' practices.

We decided to start the clean-up a little earlier than usual, as high tide was due to happen from 10 am on the day, and DSW (who supplied us with bags and gloves) would not have been able to collect our bags once completed. Upon returning to the Treasure Beach carpark, a few Greenpeace volunteers walked along the shoreline for a bit, to wet our sandy feet, and were absolutely horrified to discover that the tide was bringing in even more plastic with it, but we had a few spare bags on us and cleaned up as much as we could on our journey back.

As mentioned, due to its location the City of Durban does not often clean Treasure Beach which is a hidden gem on the Durban coastline. For this reason we have subsequently decided to undertake regular and ongoing clean-ups in the area going forward.

Although I do feel every straw picked up potentially stops it from ending up in a sea turtle, I honestly don't think we will ever be able to remove all the plastic on this beach and restore it to its former glory no matter

how often we hold clean-ups. As such I strongly believe that the only solution we have is to tackle this problem at its source by educating and encouraging offenders to do the right thing.

However, beach clean-ups are not solely about cleaning up after litterbugs though, as Judy Baikie, our event volunteer coordinator on the day, explains; "I feel the success of the beach clean-up, besides the approximately 250kgs of plastics that were removed from the shoreline, is the awareness it creates amongst the participants. It highlights how our everyday consumer choices contribute to the plastic pollution in our oceans. The positive influences of the clean-up, therefore, extend beyond the actual event as it has the potential to change people's perspectives and lifestyle choices."

Please join us at the next clean-up, and together we can create some positive mind-set changes while doing what we can to prevent this pollution from entering the ocean. See you there! **#NoPlastic #EndOceanPlastics.** ●



© Chankiang Kanthong / Greenpeace, Greenpeace volunteer conducts a waste audit of Suva, Son beach, Rayong province, 2017

## Let's Grab Lunch: Plastic Ban, more can be done towards waste management

Phyllis is a Communications Intern based in Kenya

By Phyllis Ng'ang'a



**W**e meet for a quick take-away lunch. I get the chicken wings and fries combo with a cold Coke. You get a chicken burger, fries and fresh passion fruit juice. Additionally, we get small sized cups of ice cream to cool off and extra dipping for my wings. The food is packed in paper boxes, the drinks, ice-cream and dipping in plastic bottles and cups and the extra ketchup in hard plastic paper. After our meal, we dispose the boxes into a bin, fully satisfied we have played our role as citizens inefficiently managing our waste.

This year Kenya joined Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia and others in banning plastic shopping bags. Though a number of us perform an important role in ensuring the waste we use goes into the right place, there is so much more that can be done in managing this waste. Recycling is one of the best processes that work inclusively to ensure that such waste is reused and our environment remains clean and conducive for our habitation.

In 2015, the World Bank Urban Development Series reported that Africa

produces about 70 million tons of waste every year while 300 million tons is produced worldwide. With rapid development, growth and expansion, Kenya has made a bold move against the manufacturing of plastic bags to reduce dumping in their country. Though not everyone is a fan of the ban, creative alternatives to comply with the plastic ban that was enacted on the 28th of August 2017.

Khaki bags and eco-friendly bags have replaced the plastic bags in the supermarkets and most business. Habib El-Habr, an expert on marine litter working with the UN environment programme in Kenya, says plastic bags also enter the human food chain through fish and other animals, therefore drawing emphasis on the importance of the plastic ban.

However, more can be done. The food and beverage industry has highly contributed to the increase of waste production because of the high demand to produce take away accessories for a profitable business. Some restaurants like KFC, serve an eat-in customer with the same takeaway boxes they would for one who would eat out. To ensure efficient waste management, the beautifully branded carton take away boxes, plastic soda bottles, ice-cream cups, forks and straws can all be recycled, rather than ending up as litter and causing more harm to our already ailing environment.

Sadly, the manufacturers of these plastics are not playing their role responsibly in ensuring that their produce is environmentally friendly or

at least being recycled. Coca-Cola UK was recently asked to increase the amount of recycled plastic in its bottles to 50% following pressure from Greenpeace as smaller companies were already doing more than them.

More people should be encouraged to venture into the recycling business rather than the production sector of plastics and similar non-biodegradable products.

In fact, this is already happening as we occasionally hear of different individuals who start small-scale recycling businesses that later grow and increase in productivity. A good example is Lorna Rutto, the founder of Ecopost, one of Kenya's biggest plastic recycling businesses. Her business has saved over 250 acres of forest that would have been destroyed to cater for construction needs of Kenya's fast-growing urban sector. She is just one of the many individuals who have tapped into this profitable market that works hand in hand in protecting our environment.

We can all take part in recycling. It can be easily done at home, by separating biodegradable from non-biodegradable garbage, opting for reusable shopping bags instead of plastic bags, buying products that can be recycled as well as buying products that have been made from recycled material. These small deeds may look unnecessary but in the wise words of Desmond Tutu, "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Hopefully, next time we grab lunch, we can peacefully enjoy it in recycled takeaway boxes, yes? ●

# Collaboratively Building Greenpeace's Vision for Africa

Toko has been heading our Engagement Team since October 2016 and brings an immense wealth of mobilisation experiences from all corners of the world

By Toko Tomita

On 26-29 September, the Greenpeace Africa staff gathered in Pretoria for our annual staff retreat. Our workforce is spread across the continent and beyond. Usually, our meetings happen virtually over unstable internet connections, language barriers and time differences – which make it really challenging to create a collaborative and innovative space. And that makes the annual staff retreat, the only occasion in the year where all staff meet face to face, an exciting opportunity to bring everyone's creativity together.

This year, we decided to focus on dissecting the three-year strategy that we spent months elaborating on and which was approved in June of this year. The strategy covers our growth ambitions in Africa during 2017-19. It includes building three regional hubs; one in Johannesburg, one in Nairobi, and one in Dakar, to make our operations more responsive on the ground and building a much wider and more vibrant supporter base to bring our actions to more corners on the continent. The ambitious strategy looks at taking the first of the crucial steps towards growing Greenpeace Africa into a truly continental environmental movement.

But what does that really mean? What will our successes look like when we arrive at the end of 2019? How do we tell our stories of past successes and future struggles in order to inspire many more people to join us? These were some of the questions we set out to answer during our four-day retreat.

It was really about bringing pieces of the puzzle together to visualize what each department in the organisation envisioned for 2019 – so that is exactly what we decided to do. Each department was given a piece of the puzzle. They were then given a box full of seemingly silly, kiddie, crafty materials, and asked to present what the world around us will look or feel like when

we champion all the goals we set for 2019.

Results - see it for yourself! There are elements of the strategy that really came to life – which we would not have seen in 80 pages of writing. Collaboration, community, web of networks, innovations, and actions for one Africa were some of the common themes arising. And many pieces had our supporters and volunteers as drivers of the change – as hands that lift up our actions, as people in communities voicing their concerns, to the people with strings in their hands pulling others into the movement.

It will be our test to see how closely we can come to realising this vibrant looking continent in the next two-years. ●



Above:  
Our vision for the next two-years: A vibrant-looking Africa.

# Global Victories



**Canada: East Energy TarSands Pipeline cancelled**

East Energy Tar Sands pipeline is officially dead, with TransCanada announcing the cancellation of the project and a resulting billion dollar loss. This marks the end of a five-year campaign for Greenpeace Canada and their allies.

**Austria: Austria commits to anti-glyphosate position**

After a two-year campaign against the EU re-approval of glyphosate, we achieved a massive win in Austria. On October 3rd, the Austrian Parliament passed a motion that firmly states, that Austria will vote against any re-approval of glyphosate on EU-level. This is also binding to any future government. We have been heavily involved in pushing the Austrian parties for this decision both in front of the scene (media work, actions, etc.) and behind the scene (lots of lobbying).

**Switzerland: Nuclear operators must be transparent about radiation emissions**

In a ground-breaking verdict, the highest court of Switzerland grants access to detailed radioactive emissions data from the Swiss nuclear reactors. GP Switzerland requested them in 2014 in the frame of the Freedom of Information Law, but the publication was denied by the nuclear operators. This verdict is very important because the court discussed in depth the relationship between Freedom of Information, trade secret and privacy. And the judges clearly attached greater significance to the right of accessing environmentally relevant information than to private interests and reputation risks of private companies. This applies to the specific case of radioactivity and NPPs but now also apply to other polluting industries. The judges referred to the Aarhus Convention (for transparency and participation), arguments that could be used in other countries.

**Brazil: Amazon Mining Decree revoked**

After a lot of pressure and several mobilizations by environmental organizations- including Greenpeace Brazilian artists, indigenous leaders and civil society, the Brazilian President Michel Temer stepped back: he revoked the decree that allowed commercial mining in the Amazon reserve. A major win!"

**Scotland: Scotland to ban fracking**

Following a four-month consultation, the Scottish government announced that it would ban fracking. Of the 60,000 public consultants who responded to the consultation, 99% were opposed to fracking. Greenpeace supporters were responsible for 5% of responses to the consultation. The Conservative government in Westminster now looks very isolated.

# Greenpeace Supporter Says



Falatsi Lephuting is a passionate environmentalist and long-time supporter of Greenpeace. Candice Meyer spent some time getting to know him better.

## 1. What brought about your passion for the environment, and environmental issues?

*To be honest, I was very young. I grew up in a small township called Ratanda near Heidelberg in Gauteng. My 1st encounter with the care and love for nature was when I planted my first tree in primary school on the annual Arbour Day observation.*

*My then Natural Science/Geography teacher, Mrs. van Heerden, made an elementary presentation that blew my pikinini (small) mind. I understood what the ecosystem was and how trees are so important to the sustenance of the environment. So with that seed planted in my brain, my natural awareness expanded and vowed to be the change from then on.*

## 2. What inspires your monthly donations to Greenpeace Africa?

*Well, there are a lot of environmental organisations out there, but Greenpeace speaks to the most common human trait and biggest fault, negligence. The world over has leaders who make decisions that compromise the greater ecosystem, this*

*with all the environmental information at their disposal. I wanted to have a voice that is powerful and audible to world leaders including my own country South Africa. Greenpeace related with my desire to make a stand and affect socio-political decisions around issues such as fracking in the Cape and the introduction of nuclear energy into the South African energy spectrum; both of which are replaceable by clean and renewable alternatives that will ensure a sustainable generational solution to an otherwise short-term and plainly narrow-minded outlook.*

## 3. What do you believe is Africa's greatest strength?

*The abundant natural resources make Africa a sleeping giant; its global geographical location makes it easy for economic trading including imports and exports, but the greatest strength of Africa is its abundant sunshine. Solar energy has the potential to solve most, if not all, of the energy needs within the continent. Personally, I believe energy fuels a nation's economic well-being, without it or the shortage thereof, most economies will not*

*thrive. Therefore, a renewable source(s) of energy will create an environment capable of carrying the entire continent's natural resource mining and manufacturing, open technologies that enable global market access and positive global engagement.*

## 4. What environmental work would you like to see more of taking place on the African continent?

*I would love to see more solar integrated power grids, this will attract academia*

*to focus on the advancement of the renewable energy studies and whole new industries will emerge. In theory, more jobs will be created and a direct stimulus into the economy of the African continent is eminent.*

## 5. What are your top two environmental concerns for the future?

*A nuclear energy take over and the effects of global warming on the marine life cycle.*

*"Solar energy has the potential to solve most, if not all, of the energy needs within the continent."*



# Supporter Questions

© Anne Barth / Greenpeace. Members of the Greenteams demonstrate for more climate protection under the motto "Kids for Earth" at the COP23 in Bonn, 2017

## Where does Greenpeace get its funding from?

To maintain absolute independence, we don't accept money from companies, governments or political parties. We're serious about that! We depend on the donations of individual supporters to carry on our campaigns for a greener, more peaceful world.

Our accounts are audited every year, and we publish Annual Reports so you can see exactly how much money we're given and how it gets spent.

If you'd like to become a Greenpeace supporter and help fund our campaigns, please join us. Monthly donations from supporters are especially helpful as they enable us to continue our campaigns.

## How many supporters does Greenpeace have?

We have roughly 10,000 financial supporters in South Africa and 2.8 million around the world. Through making donations, campaigning locally, taking non-violent direct action and taking action online, our supporters play a pivotal role in every one of our campaign successes.

## I have signed up to become a financial supporter. How does the monthly debit order work?

Thank you for your valued donation to Greenpeace. Your support will help us to end illegal and destructive logging of the worlds' ancient forests, defend the worlds' oceans by working for global marine reserves and continue to promote clean, efficient and renewable energy to help stop catastrophic climate change.

A debit order is a way for a third party, that you have given permission, to collect money from your bank account. It's used to collect your monthly donation. There are many benefits to using a debit order. It's convenient and provides you with a payment history, making it easier to track and trace payments. It also removes the stress of having to remember to make a manual payment and ensures that the payment is made on the correct day of every month.

## Who do I contact if I've been charged in error?

If you find any donations were taken from you in error, then please contact Supporter Services on email at [samohono@greenpeace.org](mailto:samohono@greenpeace.org) or tel: +27 (0)11 482 4692 and we will be happy to assist you.

## How can I volunteer for Greenpeace?

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Greenpeace. More than 15,000 passionate people around the world dedicate time, energy and skills to Greenpeace's core values and campaigns. You can join the network of volunteers across the African continent by visiting our website. [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

## What can I do to help if I am under 18 years old?

There are plenty of things you can do to help if you're under 18. You can sign up to join our cyber-activists and help lobby decision makers and power holders online. You can also help spread the word about Greenpeace by joining us on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks.

# There are so many ways you can keep in touch!

**Our team is always here to chat, answer your questions and generally support you.**

So whether you want to talk on the phone about how you are making a difference, or want to share your thoughts on Twitter, you can!



Log on to our website to get the latest news, read blogs and campaign updates – as well as information about petitions, events, volunteering and fundraising.  
[greenpeace.org/africa/en/](http://greenpeace.org/africa/en/)



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Questions, comments or need to chat? You can call us on 011 726 2404, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm



If you prefer writing to talking that's fine too. You can email us at [info.africa@greenpeace.org](mailto:info.africa@greenpeace.org)



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