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PRESS RELEASE

05 June 2023

CIASA joins the world to commemorate World Environment Day

The Citizens in Action Southern Africa joins the rest of the world in commemorating this year's World Environmental Day under the theme Solutions to Plastic Pollution "Beat Plastic Pollution".

As we commemorate this year's WED, we remind ourselves the world produces over 400 million tons of plastic every year and plastic pollution has become a complex issue affecting land, freshwater, and marine ecosystems. The complexity negatively impacts human health ecosystems, important economic activities and contributes to climate change. This is a worldwide problem, spreading far beyond national boundaries and affecting all ecosystems, and must be managed if efforts to eliminate it are to be effective and equitable.

Today the World has witnessed the development of numerous international multilateral environmental agreements to address plastic pollution, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Global Biodiversity Framework Target 7, the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, the preamble of the new High Seas Treaty, as well as multiple WTO trade agreements, nevertheless, the environment is in greater peril than before, signifying the importance of this day. Human lives are at greater risk and the growing frequency and severity of natural disasters put developing countries under greater strain as global warming continues to accelerate at an increasing rate. Within decades if there is no coordination across these commitments, biodiversity will be severely threatened, and more than one million species will face extinction.

CIASA applauds the international efforts to beat plastic pollution, as this is central to addressing the three interlinked planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. To help reduce the heavy load of plastic pollution from our everyday lives this year's World Environment Day theme, "Beat Plastic Pollution" must be taken very seriously.

CIASA welcomes the ongoing process by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to agree on a legally binding treaty to tackle plastic pollution and we believe this will create a platform for critical coalitions to contribute scientific knowledge and technical expertise throughout the INC process. The CIASA hopes that with further international and regional cooperation, chances for the protection of the environment and reduction of threats against it will come about.



As CIASA we are hopeful international and regional cooperation will help facilitate new national policies and plans to manage waste, and plastic pollution as well as foster alternative value chains and circular economic models. We hope a world free of plastic waste can thrive beyond World Environment Day.

Ecological degradation, pollution, and climate change affect us all; however, it disproportionately affects people living in conditions of vulnerability and marginalization, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities who are in fragile settings and developing countries and who contribute the least to climate change. As we commemorate this day, we remind each other that the impact is also distributed unequally across time, and future generations will cope with the consequences of present-day choices.

It is in these difficult circumstances that good governance and the rule of law are critical to safeguarding our Earth and its ecosystems, on which human communities and livelihoods directly depend. There is already ample evidence that the collapse of healthy and biodiverse ecosystems has widened inequalities and undermined the stability and prosperity of societies, especially those that are the worst equipped to resist such shocks.

CIASA in the spirit of commemoration, calls for reimagined and sustainable approaches to environmental preservation and climate-resilient development models that empower citizens and communities and balance the needs of the present with the rights of the future.

Ciasa Communications

1243 Hauna

Mutare Zimbabwe

www.ciasouthernafrica.org

Facebook: Citizens in Action Southern Africa

Twitter: Ciasa_Official



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