

Caritas Australia represented at UN political forum on sustainable development.

Last week the [UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) was held in New York, with Caritas Australia in attendance.

The event focussed on five of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically the eradication of poverty (SDG 1), ending hunger (2), urgent action on climate change (13), the promotion of peace, inclusivity, and justice (16) and strengthening implementation through global partnership (17).

Alice Carwardine, Catholic Earthcare Animator at Caritas Australia, was in attendance and reflected on this focus, stating that, “On day one we discussed how our global society is not on track to meet the sustainable development goals by 2030. This is concerning as those goals are not an ‘end goal,’ they will require attention after 2030 and integration into everything we do - from the way we live as individuals, to future-proofed government policies.”

There was also discussion about how Small Island Developing Nations, such as those in the Pacific, are facing huge volumes of debt but looking keenly to the energy transition as an opportunity for development. With that in mind, Alice stated that, “participants agreed that localisation is also key to an effective response to the Sustainable Development Goals. Something that Caritas Australia’s programs team take very seriously.”

Alice also participated in a side event organised by Caritas Internationalis and ChildFund Alliance on the intersection of climate insecurity and violence against children. During the session attendees heard from children experiencing climate impacts, as well as learning from them about the actions they are already taking to protect themselves and their families.

The event aimed at promoting a greater understanding of the link between climate impacts and violence against children, and building awareness of the ways children are already acting to mitigate that. It is hoped organisations in attendance will go on to develop more child-sensitive solutions, and advocate for better research into ways to protect children globally.

Following this event Alice said, “I was able to share information about the climate-related non-economic loss and damage experienced by communities in Australia and the Pacific, including loss of culture and identity, which impacts mental health.”

“I was also able to offer the Catholic Earthcare program as a regional example of creating agency for young people, while also helping to combat climate anxiety. When children are outside caring for creation, they come to love and protect Earth.”

Catholic Earthcare is a Caritas Australia program that sees communities – through households, schools, Parishes, and organisations – being given the tools to advocate for actions that align with Laudato Si’.

To support climate vulnerable communities via Caritas Australia’s programs, visit www.caritas.org.au/climatecrisis or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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