



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

UN Migration Agency Stands with Partners to Combat Plastic Waste and Environmental Degradation

Geneva –This World Environment Day (05/06), IOM, the UN Migration Agency, adds its voice to the chorus of global actors seeking to combat plastic pollution and environmental degradation around the world.

The theme of this year’s World Environment Day (WED) is “Beat Plastic Pollution” — a simple phrase which underscores huge implications for our planet. Single-use or disposable plastic has become one of the greatest challenges to our natural environment; up to 13 million tons of this plastic also leak into our oceans each year, threatening marine life, ecosystems, and our health as it enters our drinking supply.

IOM recognizes that a healthy environment is intrinsically linked to the well-being and resilience of migrants and their host communities. “If we invest in protecting our environment today, we can reduce the risks of displacement due to climate change and environmental degradation for future generations,” said Dina Ionesco, Head of IOM’s Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division. “It will mean reducing losses and damages that occur when migration is a tragedy and a last resort.”

Understanding that swift action is needed to protect our environment, IOM joined the United Nations Environment Management Group and established its institutional environmental sustainability programme in line with United Nations’ sustainability standards in 2017.

The commitment to reduce waste also extends to the organization’s offices; IOM Egypt recently established Green Egypt, an internal environmental working group that aims to mainstream environmental sustainability in procurement and programmes. Green Egypt comprises of staff from each unit who act as focal points within their respective teams as they work towards achieving a list of waste management goals for 2018.

In Madagascar, a country facing multiple environmental challenges including deforestation and soil erosion, IOM partnered with a private company to treat the office’s paper waste — separating it from the rest so that it can be recycled for use in new commercial products.

Such local initiatives align with the “Beat Plastic Pollution” theme, chosen by WED 2018 host India as a means to “[invite] us all to consider how we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of



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plastic pollution on our natural places, our wildlife – and our own health.” But beyond its own facilities, IOM has been contributing to policy-level discussions to highlight the significance of environmentally sustainable practices in migration management and governance.

“We have to look at migration policy and practice with innovative eyes, to see how safe and orderly migration can provide solutions and opportunities for people who are affected by climate change and environmental degradation to move in dignified matter,” Ionesco added.

Read more about IOM’s environment and climate change initiatives [here](#).

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