

# Mother Earth Day 2016

## Message of the UN Secretary-General for 2016

International Mother Earth Day is an opportunity to highlight the interdependence between people and the astonishing variety of species with which we share this planet. This year's observance brings hope of a better future for all.



On this day, representatives of more than 170 countries are gathering at UN Headquarters in New York to sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This landmark pact, in conjunction with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, holds the power to transform our world. The momentum achieved by so many signatures on one day sends a clear signal of solidarity and resolve.

Now we must unleash the full force of human ingenuity and ensure low-emission growth and improved climate resilience.

Leadership from the top is crucial. But each of us has a role to play. We can make energy-efficient choices, stop wasting food, reduce our carbon footprints and increase our sustainable investments. Small actions, multiplied by billions, will bring about dramatic change, bolstering the Paris Agreement and setting us on a trajectory to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The theme of Earth Day 2016 — Trees for the Earth — highlights this perfectly. One tree on its own may not seem much, but the Earth Day Network plans to plant 7.8 billion trees over the next five years—each one absorbing harmful CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, storing water and filtering pollutants for the benefit of all humanity.

As each tree plays its part in the biosphere, so should we as individuals who care about our planet and every living creature on it. A new future can be ours if we respect and invest in Mother Earth.