

# NEWSLETTER

## NGO Sustainability

In Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council

**May 2019**



### **Dr. Palitha Kohona**

#### Honorary Board Member of the Month:



Ambassador Palitha Kohona, Sri Lanka, was in 2009 one of the early founding Board Members of NGO Sustainability. He was at that time the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations (2009 to 2015). The President of NGO Sustainability had the pleasure of working with Dr. Kohona when he was Chief of the United Nations Treaty Section in New York from 1995 to 2006. During that time, he managed the computerization of the UN treaty database. Among others, he also initiated UN treaty training programme as part of a UN outreach for familiarizing countries with the UN treaty collection.

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## "Thousands of Seaweed Pods Replaced Single-Use Plastics at the London Marathon."

Sophie Lewis



Photo Credit: Charlie Crowhurst

The aftermath of a marathon is usually a sea of plastic waste, but in an effort to make the event more sustainable the London Marathon replaced thousands of plastic bottles with edible seaweed pouches this year. The Ooho seaweed capsules are small pods, made by the London-based startup Skipping Rocks Lab, designed to be both edible and biodegradable if not consumed within six weeks.

Link to Article: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/london-marathon-thousands-of-seaweed-pods-will-replace-single-use-plastics/>

## "Westport, Connecticut, Bans Plastic Straws, Cups and Styrofoam at Eateries."

Jarret Liotta

The Representative Town Meeting unanimously passed a groundbreaking town ordinance May 7th, banning single-use plastics and Styrofoam at foodservice businesses. Six months from now, all food-service businesses will be required to find

alternatives for single-use plastic containers, straws, stirrers and cups. "We took a giant step and a leap for our earth, our environment and future generations.

Straw ban legislations are already in place in parts of California, Washington, New Jersey, and Florida and there is pending legislation in New York City, Hawaii, and California.



Photo Credit: Jarret Liotta

Link to Article:

<https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Westport-bans-plastic-straws-cups-Styrofoam-at-13828399.php#photo-17370042>

## "Poor Nations Lose as Planet Warms, Study Finds."

Somini Sengupta

Climate change creates winners and losers.

Norway is among the winners, Nigeria among the losers.



Photo Credit: Nwakalor Kenechukwa

Global temperatures have risen nearly 1 degree Celsius, or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, since the start of the industrial age, and the study aimed at quantifying what affect that increase has had on national economies and the global wealth gap. Poor countries lost out, while rich countries, especially those who have racked up a lot of emission over the last 50 years, the study found, have "benefitted from the global warming."

Link to Article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/22/climate/climate-change-global-wealth-gap.html>

## "Connecticut, New England, Have Electricity for Summer Ahead."

Luther Turmelle

There is a decline in electricity demand due to energy efficiency and conservation initiatives as well as the significantly increasing role of behind-the-meter photovoltaic resources in New England and New York.



Photo Credit: Getty Images

The impending shutdown of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant in Massachusetts will leave New England with just two nuclear power generation facilities: Millstone in Waterford, Connecticut and Seabrook on the New Hampshire coast. Among the generation increases is the new natural gas-fired power plant New Jersey-based PSEG is

building on the site of the old Bridgeport Harbor generating station.

Link to Article:

<https://www.nhregister.com/business/article/No-Sweat-Connecticut-New-England-have-enough-13817117.php>

## "Little Appetite for Climate Tech in Silicon Valley."

Nathaniel Popper

Matt Rogers, one of the founders of then digital thermostat company Nest, has put millions of dollars into start-ups whose goal is to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon-removal technology, as it is known, is something that scientists have said will probably be necessary to avert an extreme increase in global temperatures.



Photo Credit: Alana Paterson

It is common wisdom in tech industry that it is much easier to raise money for a software company than it is for a start-up that wants to work in biotechnology or energy, however, "sitting on your pile of money while the oceans are rising may not help you stay dry," Matt Rogers said.

Link to Article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/business/carbon-removal-technology-start-ups.html>

## **“Legislative efforts to block raiding of Green Bank funds.”**

Luther Turmelle

After \$54 million was raided from Connecticut funds surrounding renewable energy and efficiency programs last year. There is a call to raid another \$54 in 2019 with the idea of allocating this money to balance the state's budget. The calls for raids were met with backlash, as many citizens and government officials acknowledge how important these funds are for cleaner energy and thousands of people's jobs.

Link to Article:

<https://www.nhregister.com/business/article/Groups-turn-up-the-heat-on-efforts-to-block-13818049.php>

## **“House Passes Disaster Aid Bill, Raising Pressure on Senate and President.”**

Emily Cochrane



Photo Credit: Tim Gruber

A new emergency relief bill was passed to send \$19.1 billion of relief towards communities affected by hurricanes, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters within the United States. Passing 257 to 150 in the House of Representatives, this bill received more

Republican support than expected. With the bill being passed, attention is now drawn to President Trump, who has been criticized over his lack of aid towards Puerto Rico after the 2017 hurricane.

Link to Article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/us/politics/disaster-relief-house-trump-puerto-rico.html>

## **“Hard Lessons Learned on the Long Road Back From a Powerful Flood.”**

John Schwartz

A flood in June 2008 at the University of Iowa resulted in nearly \$800 million of damage as 22 major buildings and a quarter of classroom space were destroyed. Flooding along the Mississippi River has affected parts of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and surrounding Native American reservations. Climate change has been linked to these events, and flooding is expected to increase in frequency in upcoming years.



Photo Credit: Sue Ogrocki

Link to Article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/climate/iowa-floods-disasters-lessons-learned.html>

## "Bundled Loans Offer Boost to Green Bond Expansion Drive."

Kate Allen

Green bonds are debt issued with a promise to use the proceedings to do environmental good. The market for green bonds is in its 'difficult teenage years', as their rate of expansion slowed slightly in 2018. Greater transparency to where the money goes is being demanded, as investors want to know how their money is translating directly to environmental work. There is an unfortunate trend of companies using green bond funding for unrelated allocations.

Link to Article: <https://www.ft.com/content/d9fe268a-39d9-11e9-9988-28303f70fcff>

## "Investors call for clarity on 'green' credentials."

Jennifer Thompson



Photo Credit: Matt Kenyon

Greenwashing is a concern for many investors, as some companies are found to have falsely promoted Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles. A new range of ESG data specialists are being utilized to verify a

company's climate policies, with algorithms used to scour all company press releases and sustainability reports. In addition, regulations are to be put in place in the EU to define an environmentally-friendly sustainable investment. This should help investors avoid putting money into greenwashing companies.

Link to Article: <https://www.ft.com/content/644c1ec4-39d9-11e9-9988-28303f70fcff>

## "Renewable Power Production in Germany hit Record High."

Julian Wettengel

Power production from renewable sources hit a record high in Germany on April 22, when 77 percent of Germany's net public power supply was generated by renewable energy sources (40% wind; 20% solar; 10% biomass).



Photo Credit: Pixabay

Link to Article: <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/news/renewables-hit-record-77-percent-german-power-easter-monday>

## "Ban on Polystyrene Trays."

Henry Chisholm

Legislation to ban Styrofoam trays in schools, introduced by State Senator James Maroney, was passed by the Connecticut State Senate on March 18th. This bill prohibits school districts and regional school districts from entering into purchasing contracts for trays made of expanded polystyrene. Polystyrene trays are not biodegradable and contain harmful chemicals that can leach into food presenting serious health risks or wreak havoc on animals and sea life that might confuse the material for food or shelter after it has been discarded. Since passing through the state senate, the bill now awaits action by the state House of Representatives, where if passed it will move on to Governor Ned Lamont.



Photo Credit: Debbie Lee Cohen

Link to Article: <http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/maroney-news/2501-maroney-190509#sthash.eG6X3N5d.m7qusuSs.dpbs>

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