



Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 14, to protect 'life below water' has become more critical than ever. The recent boat trip of Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish environmental activist, to New York for the upcoming [UN climate summit](#) on 23 September, and big climate youth marches across Europe, show just how protecting our climate has clearly become a defining issue of our time.

"We are here because the world is facing a grave climate emergency. Climate disruption is happening now, and it is happening to all of us. (...) We are in a battle for our lives. But it is a battle we can win," underlined UN Secretary-General António Guterres last month.

Global emissions are reaching record levels and show no sign of slowing down. The last four years were the four hottest on record, and winter temperatures in the Arctic have risen by 3°C since 1990.

Beach clean-up at the global scale

Our oceans are also suffering. Every year millions of tons of trash end up in the ocean. Plastic waste — whether in a river, an ocean, or on land — can persist in the environment for centuries. If current trends continue, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish by 2050. In the EU alone, 80 to 85% of beach litter is made up of plastic.

The **#EUBeachCleanUp** campaign, launched by the European Union, the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC), the global network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) and the Smurfs, will increase global awareness on these issues. More than 80 EU delegations, representations and UNICs have already confirmed clean-up events all across the globe, from Belgium, Burundi, Fiji, Cabo Verde to Kyrgyzstan, together with local organisations, schools and youth organisations. The UN Youth Envoy has also joined the campaign as part of the one-month [#31daysofyouth](#) campaign to coincide with the [Youth Climate Summit](#) on the same day, September 21.

The campaign aims to inspire all EU delegations, UNICs and partners around the world to organise an activity on and around the International Coastal Clean-up Day/World Clean-up Day, on Saturday 21 September 2019, and for the Climate Action Summit, to empower those involved in local beach clean-up actions in their countries. In Belgium, UNRIC will support a beach clean-up activity organised by a network of 26 schools at the coastal town of Ostend.

Meanwhile, at the global level, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres is calling on all leaders to come to the Climate Summit with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 % over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050.

For more information, please visit the campaign [webpage](#)