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The Middle East and North Africa is the world's most water-scarce region. Climate change contributes to worsening the situation.
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UN Volunteers stepping in for the global race against climate change

UN Volunteers are engaging governments, business leaders and community-based organizations to expand partnerships with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for climate action. They take part in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery by encouraging partners' support for conservation and circularity – the movement addressing climate change and safeguarding economic growth. On this World Humanitarian Day, every action counts to get the world racing against the climate crisis.

Paolo Marengo (38, Italy) is a UN Volunteer Project Associate supporting the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia, in Manama, Bahrain. Paolo began serving with UNEP in February of this year and is already contributing to the implementation of the [Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals](#) (GO4SDGs) initiative.

Paolo's support to GO4SDGs involves ensuring that stakeholders come

together to share expertise, resources and strategies towards reducing carbon emissions, promoting alternative energy and expanding the circular economy. This is especially important for countries undergoing political transition or [COVID-19 recovery](#) because of the potential for greater stability and economic growth.

Moreover, outreach is underway to government agencies, non-profit organizations and private sector partners in the plastics and construction sectors to increase repurposing and encourage sustainable fashion.

“ It is vital to develop more sustainable consumption and production practices - for instance, decreasing the demand for raw materials and increasing the demand for used materials that can be repurposed, recycled or upcycled. We aim to build a diverse community focused on sustainable lifestyles, and to replicate successful initiatives.” -- Paolo Marengo, UN Volunteer Project Associate, UNEP Regional Office for West Asia

In addition, Paolo contributed to a special project aiming to reduce the disposal of [unwanted food](#) during the month of Ramadan, and supported the development of UNEP's report on the [State of Food Waste in West Asia](#). Follow-on activities are in the planning stages to build upon the success of national awareness campaigns and embed food waste in the public dialogue on food security year-round.



Serving with UNEP in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UN Volunteers Ahmed Mudawi (30, Sudan) and Lama* (25, Egypt) are helping localize activities and ensure projects meet the needs on the ground.

As a Program Support Officer, Ahmed is UNEP's focal point to the Ministry of

Environment, Water and Agriculture, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders.

Ahmed is keen to conduct outreach for UNEP's newly established office in Riyadh, determine training needs and capacities, and plan consultations and events with new partners. In particular, he is an advocate for green spaces and urban parks. He is committed to increasing support for environmental protection as he understands how it can impact health and be a resource for children and families looking for safe spaces to play.

“ The environment is connected to everything in life – recreation, health and mental health. And as we care for it, we care for each other.” -- Ahmed Mudawi, UN Volunteer Program Support Officer, UNEP, Saudi Arabia

A youth coalition to protect wildlife, increase air quality and foster responsible waste management is also forming. In support of these activities, UN Volunteer Lama is mapping local organizations and leading UNEP's coordination with the UN Country Team in Saudi Arabia.

As a Programme Support Associate, Lama also supported the production of a film for World Environment Day. The film was derived from a collection of videos submitted by local youth - many of whom were learning about the ecosystem and the human cost of climate change for the first time.

“ This is meaningful to me because I am an early career professional. Work at UNEP has increased my knowledge and skills and it has been a nurturing place for people like me, who are new to the workforce and learning about environmental matters for the first time.” -- Lama, UN Volunteer Programme Support Associate, UNEP, Saudi Arabia

In the context of the pandemic, these UN Volunteers are embedding green growth into national and regional dialogues and promoting broad-based support for climate action.

** For privacy reasons and upon the request of the UN Volunteer, she is not referred to by her real name.*



• [Climate Change](#) • [COVID-19](#) • [Coronavirus](#) • [Saudi Arabia](#) • [World Humanitarian Day](#)

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 13: Climate change](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)