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Teodora Traljic, UN Youth Volunteer Climate Action Officer, UNSOM

Teodora Traljic (in red shirt) is a UN Youth Volunteer Climate Action Officer with UNEP Somalia. Here, she attends a meeting with counterparts from the Programme for the Sustainable Reduction of Charcoal and Livelihood Assistance and Gulf State Ambassadors to discuss the environment and security impacts of charcoal production and consumption. © UNV, 2022

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Honing skills and delivering results in the fight against climate change

When it comes to supporting communities in becoming resilient to increasingly frequent climatic shocks, our role as UN Volunteers is just as important as any other. Teodora Traljic is a 23-year old Irish national who serves as a UN Youth Volunteer Climate Action Officer. She is assigned with the UN Environment and Climate Security Advisor to Somalia. Teodora’s assignment is one example of how young people and the power of their voice can have a huge impact in overcoming the challenges we face today, such as climate change.

I serve with the UN Environment and Climate Security Advisor to Somalia, whose position is under the UN Environment Programme, but who is seconded to the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). This way, I have the unique opportunity to serve with two agencies.
With the Climate Security Advisor, our overarching goal is to assist Somali communities in becoming resilient to increasingly recurrent and frequent climatic shocks, while also mitigating possible climate-related conflicts.

We aim to achieve this through firstly mainstreaming climate security as a concept to our UN and Somali government counterparts, as it is a relatively new and under-researched area. We try to ensure environmental sustainability with a long-term lens by providing technical support and expertise to ongoing UN and other projects and activities in Somalia.

“We play a major role in understanding and filling in the gaps that exist in understanding of how future climate projections in Somalia will impact the country, what we need to do about this, further research that is needed, and how the UN can support Somali communities as well as relevant counterparts in achieving climate and climate-conflict resilience. --Teodora Traljic, UN Youth Volunteer Climate Action Officer in Somalia

I am able to use this opportunity as a UN Volunteer to build my knowledge and awareness on climate change. Through my assignment, I am more aware about climate effects and best practices in terms of adaptation in Somalia. I disseminate this information to individuals who can utilize it on the ground, or who have larger platforms to promote messages on climate-change risks in Somalia, including the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary General (DSRSG).

I have been able to provide input into where my team thinks the UN and our Somali counterparts should focus on in tackling the urgent climate-crisis that Somalia is facing, and how we can best support on this.

“Serving as a UN Volunteer has given me the chance to realize and hone my professional strengths and
skills, while also giving me a hands-on and direct opportunity to work on what I find more challenging in a professional environment. --Teodora Traljic

This assignment has been an exceptional starting point in my career in climate-change and climate-security adaptation. It has also given me the chance to practically work on a topic that I care about; contributing in some way to the horrific climate shocks and effects that the average Somalis are facing directly in their everyday lives.

A recent study of 10,000 youth around the world found that over 50 per cent of young people felt sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless and/or guilty about climate change, and 45 per cent stated that their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life.

As young people, we are more likely to be concerned about climate change, and it is the youth who will live in the future climate scenario that we are shaping in this very moment. --Teodora Traljic

One way we can reduce our feeling of powerlessness is to use our voice and skills to get involved in creating the world that we want to live in.

The climate crisis is altering how we believe systems and structures need to work, we need innovation, new ideas and collective action to effectively tackle this global phenomenon. This is where it is absolutely vital that young people with passion and ideas work to create the future we want, and volunteerism is a great avenue through which this can be achieved. --Teodora Traljic
https://unsom.unmissions.org/interview-un-environmental-advisor-somalia-christophe-hodder

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SDG 13: Climate change SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals