

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Message from ESRAG Chair, Michael Terrelonge

By Michael Terrelonge on Saturday, November 22, 2025



Welcome to this December 2025 edition of the ESRAG newsletter. As Chair of the Board of Directors, it is a pleasure to connect with you.

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) is an international association of Rotarians and friends—a dedicated community committed to **eco-action**. Our vision is a world where people unite and take effective action to protect the environment for a sustainable future.

We serve the Rotary Family by inspiring, assisting, and empowering them with extensive expertise, global networks, education, and best practices. ESRAG helps Rotary clubs, districts, and multi-districts in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of environmental service projects, ultimately building awareness and inspiring action across the world.

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GLOBAL NEWS

Dr. Jane Goodall: Science, Strength, and the Will to Change the World

By Christopher Nial on Friday, November 21, 2025

In October 2025, the world lost Dr. Jane Goodall, a visionary scientist, communicator, and advocate whose courage and conviction reshaped how we understand animals, humanity, and the planet we all share.

Dr. Goodall passed away at 91 in California during a speaking tour. She was still sharing the message that had defined her career and that lives on in her legacy: that empathy and knowledge can together form the foundation of true understanding. Her death marks the close of a chapter in modern science and activism. Yet her influence endures in the millions of scientists, conservationists, and citizens who are guided by her examples of integrity, humility, and hope.

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UNICEF's Approach to Disaster Preparedness and Response

By Christopher Nial on Monday, November 10, 2025



When Hurricane Melissa struck the Caribbean in October 2025, UNICEF's preparedness systems were already in place: emergency supplies were pre-positioned, early-warning messages shared with communities, and vulnerable households supported ahead of the impact. Once the storm landed, UNICEF moved rapidly to respond – distributing emergency kits, restoring critical child-centered services (education, WASH, health, protection), and working with national and local partners to reach children and families in crisis.

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Summary of ESRAG and Earthshot 2025

By George Spiteri on Tuesday, December 2, 2025

In November 2023, George Spiteri succeeded in getting ESRAG (Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group) selected as one of the official nominators for The Earthshot Prize. This recognition places ESRAG among a select group trusted to spotlight impactful climate and environmental innovations.

Continuing into 2025, this sustained role highlights ESRAG's credibility and commitment to advancing climate solutions.

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Recognizing Innovation for Planetary Health: The Galien Foundation Eco Health Award

By ANGELA TenBroeck on Friday, November 14, 2025



By Angela TenBroeck, Founder, THF Hubery | Aqua Hortus Farm | ESRAG Agriculture Task Force Co-Chair

Standing at the United Nations for the Galien Foundation's inaugural Prix Galien Eco Health Award was a humbling experience. To see our work's THF Hubery's Aqua Hortus Farm and Recirculating Agriculture Systems (RAS) recognized alongside the world's foremost scientific innovators reaffirmed a truth we've witnessed in communities across the globe: the health of people and the health of the planet are one and the same.

For more than 50 years, the Galien Foundation has honored excellence in pharmaceutical research, biotechnology, and medical technology, celebrating pioneers whose breakthroughs have saved and improved millions of lives. The addition of the Eco Health category marks a profound evolution acknowledging that food systems, environmental stewardship, and planetary resilience are integral to human wellness. This year's honorees included institutions such as McGill, Harvard, and Global Coalition on Aging, signaling a new era where health innovation extends beyond medicine to the

soil, the seed, and the farmer.

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Bangladesh Recognized Earthshot award on Holistic Climate Adaptation Solution

By Christopher Nial on Monday, December 1, 2025

Friendship has been awarded the prestigious global environmental prize - Earthshot, often referred to as the environmental equivalent of the Nobel Prize, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince William, who founded it with 10-year universal goals for 2030 to drive a significant paradigm shift in repairing the planet.

It is a great pride and inspiration for the Friendship team, partners and community, as well as all grassroots organizations and the government of Bangladesh, towards accelerating Climate Action. The prize was given in the "Fix Our Climate" Category immediately before the "COP30", three decades of Climate Summit. A great reflection indeed from Crisis to Creativity with Compassion and Confidence to fix Climate! There are four other categories are Protect and Restore Nature, Clean Our Air, Revive Our Oceans, and Build a Waste-Free World.

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COP30: Belém Forced the Climate World Out of Its Comfort Zone

By Christopher Nial on Monday, December 1, 2025



COP30 didn't unfold like a polished diplomatic ritual. It unfolded like Belém itself — humid, unruly, deeply human, and impossible to ignore. For once, the location wasn't just a backdrop. The Amazon became the truth serum.

From the very beginning, the rainforest set the tone. Delegates rushed between sessions drenched from storms or frozen by overzealous air-conditioning, discovering that COP30 was the only climate summit where you could experience extreme heat and mild hypothermia at the same time. But the chaos was more than meteorological. Debit card failures, shuttle snafus, and long queues underscored a less comfortable reality: climate diplomacy remains structurally inequitable. If lower-income delegates can't even afford accommodation or a sandwich,

what chance do they have of shaping the text?

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Bring Rotary's Impact to Life with New Areas of Focus Videos

By Hannah Collins on Monday, December 1, 2025

Photo Credit: Rotary International
New videos showcasing Rotary's transformative work across our areas of focus are now available for you to share with potential members, partners, and supporters.

In addition to 30- and 60-second versions for each cause, we also have an overview that highlights the scope of our work. Each video ends with an invitation for viewers to find their cause and take action with Rotary, making it ideal for both members and non-Rotary member audiences alike.

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ESRAG at RICON Taipei 2026

By Judith Diment on Monday, December 1, 2025



ESRAG is planning on having a booth in the House of Friendship at RICON in Taipei and to share the Environment Hub with other Rotary Action Groups.

ESRAG members attending the Rotary International Convention 2026, to be held between 13th-17th June, are requested to inform their participation to Board Director Caroline Dewiit for the purpose of better planning:

newsletter@esrag.org

ROTARY PROJECTS

Focus On - Circular Economy - Saviour of Humanity

By S K Agarwal on Monday, December 1, 2025

Every country has unique features, including the availability of natural resources and geographic challenges. That way, India as a country holds a special position in terms of its availability of sunlight, percentage-wise maximum fertile land, and adequate water bodies for irrigation purposes. That's the reason why, for a long time, India has been fundamentally an agrarian economy. When we discuss an agrarian economy, unfortunately, we have forgotten one critical component: we produce biomass, which amounts to almost 500 million metric tons per year. Additionally, we have another source, which is animal waste. India has 512.05 million livestock producing 1095 MMT of manure.

As we know, energy is a crucial factor in modern urban development. Every development has its side effects. That's the reason cities play a crucial role in climate change, as they use 2/3rds of the world's energy. Globally, the major base of this generation of energy is dependent on fossil fuels, which in turn cause the generation of 70% of greenhouse gases. This is similar to the case of our country when considering global energy consumption data.

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CHAPTERS & TASK FORCES

Africa's Voice Joins ESRAG's Global Climate Solutions Leadership

By Reem Abd El Meguid on Monday, December 1, 2025



By Dr Reem Abd El Meguid, PP RC Sphinx, D 2451 Egypt, Regional Team Leader Africa of the ESRAG Climate Solutions Task Force

Rotary's global climate action gains strength from the diversity of regions, ecosystems, and perspectives. Under the leadership of Dr Michael Koch, ESRAG Board Director, and Dr Ludwig Kalthoff, the ESRAG Climate Solutions Task Force uses a regional structure to bring together dedicated representatives from across the world. Each region now has a voice at the table to translate Rotary's sustainability goals into local action and impact.

In this spirit, I am deeply honored to have been appointed Regional Team Leader for Africa in October 2025, representing our continent within ESRAG's Climate Solutions Task Force. Currently, our continent has nine Rotary regions, 12 Districts, and 1,200 Rotary Clubs, with approximately 40,000 members in total.

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Solar Cookers Save Darfur Refugees and Reduce Carbon Emissions

By Roger Haines on Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Hot, arid refugee camps in eastern Chad are home to 1.5 million refugees from the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. The UN provides no wood for cooking, so many women leave the camp and trek for miles to gather scarce firewood—risking assaults and injuries. One woman was attacked while gathering wood and had all her teeth knocked out. Others have been raped. Lack of firewood means having to sell food rations to buy wood for cooking.

Living conditions are desperate, but there is hope. San Diego Rotarian Roger Haines has joined with Fair Climate Fund, based in the Netherlands, and the NGO, ADES, to distribute 6,000 Haines Pop Open Solar Cookers in the camps.

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RECOMMENDED READING

From Vision to Action – The 7 Steps Toward a Sustainable Rotary Club

By Michael Koch on Wednesday, November 19, 2025



By Dr. Michael Koch, ESRAG Board Director 2025 and Co-Lead ESRAG Climate Solutions Task Force

Rotary’s environmental work has gained new momentum and direction through the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG). Founded to translate Rotary’s principle of Service Above Self into tangible environmental action, ESRAG now unites more than 1,800 members on all continents. Since December 2024, the Climate Solutions Task Force inspires and coordinates climate-related action worldwide helping clubs to implement practical solutions and measure their environmental impact and move Rotary step by step closer to a vision of Net Zero by 2040 and Rotary Climate action in every community with a Rotary Club.

The Task Force offers training, tools, and support so that every Rotary Club can easily increase its environmental impact. The Task Force structure reflects Rotary’s global reach: four regions – The Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia & Oceania – each led by a Regional Team Leader. Within these regions, Ambassadors inspire clubs, Impact Analysts assist in calculating both footprint and handprint, Solution Supporters share best practice for impactful projects, and a dedicated Communication Team ensures visibility across ESRAG and Rotary channels.

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Gates Notes: Three tough truths about climate: A new way to look at the problem

By Judith Diment on Thursday, November 27, 2025

Photo Credit: Wikipedia Archive:Bill_Gates_2017_(cropped).jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

- Three tough truths about climate: Climate change is serious, but we’ve made great progress. We need to keep backing the breakthroughs that will help the world reach zero emissions.
- But we can’t cut funding for health and development programs that help people stay resilient in the face of climate change to do it.
- It’s time to put human welfare at the center of our climate strategies, which includes reducing the Green Premium to zero and improving agriculture and health in poor countries.

More! [A new approach for the world’s climate strategy | Bill Gates](#)



ESRAG NEWS

JOIN ESRAG!

By Judith Diment on Friday, November 21, 2025



Membership Information

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group assists Rotary clubs, districts and multi-districts in:

- Planning and implementing impactful and environmentally sustainable service projects
- Educating and building awareness
- Building global and local networks
- Inspiring sustainable

living/action

- Supporting Rotary International's environmental initiatives.

ESRAG inspires and empowers the Rotary family with extensive expertise, networks, education, and best practices to help implement sustainable and impactful environmental projects, informed by our six themes: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Food Systems, Pollution, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Living.

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December Webinars and Events

By Caroline DeWitt on Friday, November 21, 2025

Upcoming Speakers at ESRAG Seminars & Webinars - Advancing Rotary's Environmental Leadership

ESRAG is pleased to announce two inspiring environmental sessions this December - designed to inform, empower, and energize ESRAG members and Rotarians committed to protecting our planet.

December 10th at 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. EST/2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. UTC

Join us for a dynamic seminar series featuring ESRAG Board member, Carlos Montoya, who will share practical solutions and Rotary-ready project ideas for climate resilience and sustainability.

December 17th at 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. EST/2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. UTC

Topic - Takeaways from COP 30 in Belém: We are honored to welcome [Mário César Martins de Camargo](#), who has shaped Rotary's vision for climate action and sustainability; ESRAG Membership Director Alberto Palombo, ESRAG COP Leader Observer; and Salvador Rico - Rotary District International Service Chair & UNEP Community Action for Fresh Water Advisory Member. Three renowned leaders in environmental action, policy, and community impact. Their insights will help strengthen our shared mission to create healthier, more sustainable communities.

Your participation strengthens our collective impact.

All ESRAG members, Rotarians, and Rotaractors are warmly invited.

Connect with us on social media

Follow us & join the conversation.



The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.
