



When musician Pharrell Williams sang the song “Happy” he hit the nail on the head: “Happiness is your birth right, and you should have access to it as long as you are breathing”.

The pursuit of happiness is a common human aspiration and sustainable development is one way to create happiness and well-being for everyone. For this reason, the world has celebrated the International Day of Happiness every year, on March 20th, since 2013.

This year, 2017, the International Day of Happiness is highlighting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals, which include good health and well-being, reduced inequalities and climate action, are building blocks of happiness. The United Nations, UNICEF and the Smurfs have joined forces to rally behind the 17 interlinked Goals through the [“Small Smurfs, Big Goals” campaign](#)

“This inspirational campaign highlights the fact that each and every one of us, no matter how young or old, small or big, can make our world a happier place,” said Cristina Gallach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and the Department of Public

Information.

Although the campaign is targeted at children and young people in particular, but it's no surprise that it reaches people of all ages. We can encourage and convince everyone that they can contribute to a happy and peaceful future.

As part of the celebrations at the UN Headquarters in New York, the stars of the [new Smurfs movie](#) Demi Lovato (Smurfette), Joe Manganiello (Hefty), Mandy Patinkin (Papa Smurf), and director Kelly Asbury presented three young students with the key to Smurfs Village, highlighting their work in advancing the SDGs. Their actions in furthering gender equality, the protection of our planet, and standing against social justice serve as an example for others to join "Team Smurfs" in their pursuit of happiness.

"We hope the campaign will help us all think about how our actions impact the planet," explained Demi Lovato. "Every one of us, even a Small Smurf, can accomplish big goals."

In Belgium, home of the Smurfs' and the artist Peyo, two elementary schools were honoured with a visit from Papa Smurf, Smurfette and Brainy Smurf, praising them for their outstanding efforts to promote the SDGs.

The Smurfs visited the Saint-Joseph school Boondael in Ixelles and Sint-Joost-aan-Zee in Sint-Joost-ten-Node. They were accompanied by the Belgian Minister of Sustainable Development, Marie-Christine Marghem. She questioned the pupils about their contributions to a sustainable planet, and was impressed by their knowledge. The children advocated for behavioural changes such as switching off lights, taking a shower instead of a bath and going to school by bike.

The children's ideas are also being put into practice in many initiatives taken by the schools themselves. The two school principals proudly presented a multitude of measures, including innovative steps to reduce food and other waste, the installation of solar panels and the organisation of intergenerational activities.

The Director of the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, Deborah Seward, asked the young audience if they were happy, and the whole room resounded with a big “Yes”. Mrs. Seward underlined that “many children around the world do not have this opportunity to be happy, because they do not have a home, do not have access to healthy food and cannot go to school”.

Want to join “Team Smurfs” as well? Find out how to contribute to achieving the Goals, discover which goals are best suited to your interests, raise your voice for a better world for all, and share information, ideas and images on social media at: <http://www.smurfsbiggoals.com/>