

THE HAMBURG CALL TO ACTION

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Today we stand at the crossroads of human history. Our actions – and our failures to act – will decide the future of life on earth for thousands of years, if not forever.

Our generation will be scrutinized with exceptional fierceness by those coming after us, for decisions taken now will have profound consequences for them in terms of lives saved or lost.

The World Future Council identifies necessary policies and works to develop a new political realism, based on ethics and science and freed from dogmas which sacrifice our real wealth – our climate, water, soil, air and the health of our communities.

We seek to promote systems and institutions based on equity and justice, replacing those that perpetuate inequity and injustice. We seek equally to overturn policies that violate our future and promote best policies to safeguard our future.

We have decided to focus first on climate change, because this is no longer just an environmental issue. It touches every area of our lives: peace, security, human rights, poverty, hunger, health, mass migration, economics.

We all know what needs to be done. We have unprecedented skills and resources. Our earth receives ample energy from renewable sources, which we can no longer afford to waste, for the sunshine and wind of today cannot be harnessed tomorrow!

Natural laws supersede all others because they determine the conditions of our existence. If we do not succeed in limiting climate chaos, our earth will no longer be habitable for most of its inhabitants. Already the global water crisis is the leading cause of death in many poor countries.

It is not possible to negotiate with melting glaciers or to re-schedule environmental debts. The protection of the earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is not only a matter of political choice. It is a sacred trust.

The World Future Council is committed to protecting present and future generations from war crimes and crimes against humanity. Depleted uranium, cluster ammunition and landmines, among other weapons, are already damaging and threatening lives now and in the future. We support the initiatives working to ensure that they are universally banned.

Nuclear weapons remain humanity's most immediate catastrophic threat. These weapons would destroy cities, countries, civilization and possibly humanity itself. The danger posed by nuclear weapons in any hands must be confronted directly and urgently through a new initiative for the elimination of these instruments of annihilation.

The World Future Council speaks up for and acts to protect the interests of future generations. It will work with policy-makers and civil society worldwide to identify, draft and help implement model policies, laws and agreements to:

- rapidly phase in renewable energy technologies in all relevant areas
- protect our forests and oceans
- secure healthy food and water supplies while minimizing environmental impacts
- shift funds from military to environmental security, healthcare, education and shelter
- shift taxation from labour to resource use, pollution and waste
- build a sustainable production, trade, financial and monetary system
- revive local democracies and economies
- reform global governance within a strengthened, democratized and revitalized UN system, capable of preventing war, genocide and crimes against humanity

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- safeguard traditional indigenous tribal rights, including land rights
- contribute to reforming education in accordance with these purposes

History reminds us that, in times of crisis, humans can take giant steps in a very short time. For example, when attacked, countries have managed to convert their entire production within months to serve the needs of the war economy. When environmental disasters struck, some peoples quickly adapted and changed their ways of life – while others failed and perished.

Our political and economic goals will from now on have to aim for the maximum of present well-being compatible with our obligations to future generations. The alternative is ethically and humanly unacceptable. For one common value has always united humanity: respecting the birthright of our children to a healthy planet.

Decisions by governments determine rules and influence our values. They enable the private sector and all of us to act more effectively. The World Future Council calls on the G8 and EU and other upcoming summits to face up to their unique responsibilities by responding actively and immediately to the planetary ultimatum we have all been given. Outdated rules and economic dogmas must not be allowed to endanger our common future. The challenge of climate change will only be overcome by global sharing of access to vital resources and technologies, ensuring clean energy, water, nutrition and education for all.

The duty of caring for our environment and future is stressed in all human faiths. From time to time our ancestors created institutions, sometimes called Councils Of Seers Into The Future, to guide their decisions. Today we again need such councils on all levels.

With its broad membership from governments, parliaments, civil society, business, science and the arts, the World Future Council will be a global voice highlighting our responsibilities as citizens of the earth and supporting the many growing initiatives working to support the planet. It does not claim to represent anyone else. It is mandated only by the conscience and integrity of its members who have joined together to fill a vital gap among global institutions.

Today there is no alternative to an ethics of global responsibility for we are entering an era of consequences. We must share, co-operate and innovate together in building a world worthy of our highest aspirations. The decision lies with each one of us!

We, the Councillors and Advisors of the World Future Council, invite everyone to participate in fulfilling the commitment we have made here in Hamburg to all children living now and in the future:

We promise to do everything in our power to help sustain life on earth with all its beauty and diversity for future generations, and to speak up for comprehensive peace and true justice between the world's peoples and countries.