



## **Roundtable on the Human Future**

Online, July 2024

# **A World Call to Action**

**on the multiple crises now enfolding humanity.**

Hosted by:

The Club of Rome

The Council for the Human Future

# Participating organisations and world thought leaders:

Climate Foundation  
Climate Majority Project  
Club of Rome  
Common Home of Humanity  
Council for the Human Future  
Engage, Connect, Protect  
Extinction Rebellion  
Future Earth Australia  
Future Design Research Centre  
Greening Youth Foundation  
Global Challenges Foundation  
Global Evergreening Alliance  
Global Governance Forum  
Global Restoration Collaborative  
Global Youth Security Council  
Healthy Planet Action Coalition  
InterAction Council  
Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere  
Natural Capitalism Solutions  
Post Carbon Institute  
Revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
The Third Act  
Transition Earth  
World Academy of Arts and Sciences  
Dr Brian Walker  
Breaking Together – Prof. Jem Bendell

Roundtable Facilitator: Molly Harriss Olson

RT co-ordinator: Julian Cribb AM

Hosted by: [The Club of Rome](#) and

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# 1. Summary

## 1. The Human Predicament

Humanity is facing its greatest emergency, a crisis consisting of many, interlinked, catastrophic risks.

The crisis is already here, and will get worse. Its combined scale and impact are so great that few grasp it. Together, these risks endanger our ability to maintain a civilization, possibly even to survive as a species. Global solutions are now urgent. To act later will be too late.

The crisis is vast, complex and interconnected. It will affect everyone on Earth, for generations to come. There is at present no plan of action to resolve it, nor even a concerted effort to develop one.

Dimensions of the human predicament highlighted by leading international organisations who took part in the Roundtable on the Human Future on July 27/28 include:

- Humanity faces multiple global catastrophic risks, now arriving together. These pose a mounting security threat to all nations and to every person.
- Global risks call for global solutions.
- There is currently no World Plan of Action for dealing with all these risks, or even agreement to form one.
- There is a universal failure of leadership and governance to address the global problems we face. The current system of international cooperation is clearly not fit to meet the unprecedented challenges humanity confronts. Stronger international governance is becoming essential.
- This “polycrisis” is an interconnected web of challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, global poisoning, food insecurity, resource depletion, retreat from democracy, nuclear proliferation, spread of war, uncontrolled use of AI, misinformation, economic social and gender inequality, rising inequity, failing healthcare systems and geopolitical instability. These spell greater insecurity for all.
- There is a growing world scientific consensus that human civilization is in trouble and faces potential collapse in the mid-late C21st. Under certain climate and war scenarios, humans could become extinct.
- A driving cause of the crisis is the overshoot of the human enterprise beyond the Earth’s capacity to sustain: overpopulation, overconsumption, an extractive mindset, rising inequality and inequity, poor choice of technologies, poor social arrangements and inability to work together. These multiply all the existing threats.
- There is a grave lack of awareness, worldwide, among governments and ordinary citizens about the looming crisis, its dangers, scale, speed and what to do about it.
- Young people and women, especially, are being excluded from the decision-making and leadership needed to remedy the emergency.

## 2. Key solutions discussed

The Roundtable canvassed a very wide range of potential solutions and measures. The following is a selection of them. It demonstrates that practical answers to our global problems do indeed exist. More are contained in Section 2 of this report.

### Understanding the threats:

- Develop a World Plan of Action to combat the crisis posed by the range of existential threats which have the potential to destroy humanity and a habitable planet.
- Create fresh hope among the world's people by setting out clear narratives for resolving our dangers and practical actions they can take to build a safer, healthier and brighter future.
- Foster a dialogue between world leaders, researchers, policymakers to help them better understand the risks we face and the solutions at all levels of society.

### Governance:

- Reconstruct the architecture of our governance systems worldwide.
- Strengthen global governance by creating a People's Assembly within the United Nations, and create new ways to fund the UN.
- Create an Earth System Council, giving the UN system the capacity to pass binding legislation to protect our planetary environment, as part of the recognition of the Common Heritage of Humankind.
- Develop an [Earth System Treaty](#), under the UN, which legally commits all signatories to work together to prevent the ten major threats. All nations and all Earth citizens must be free to sign, and pledge themselves to a safer future.
- Ensure the responsible and smooth transition of governance to coming generations.

### Specific Actions:

- Act urgently to prevent planetary 'tipping points' from escalating into irreversible crises. Consider direct climate cooling through ecosystem restoration and other means to prevent tipping points from taking the Earth system out of humanity's hands.
- Train a new generation of young leaders able to understand, confront and resolve catastrophic threats.
- Establish an Alliance of Partners for the Planet, People and Peace.
- End all use of fossil fuels and replace them with renewable energy within the next few years: restore forests and wilderness everywhere. Accelerate moves to net zero.
- Transform to renewable food and energy systems, reduce inequity and inequality, eliminate poverty, empower women and the young, to help ensure a secure Earth for All.
- Implement a global awareness campaign to inform and empower individuals to make better personal choices affecting our common future, and hold leaders accountable.

- Develop deeper scientific understanding of the Earth's life support systems. Enable, train, equip and empower the young to regenerate the planet and its systems.
- Build a 'restoration economy' and civilization from the grassroots up, via: ecosystem restoration, climate restoration, biodiversity conservation, rewilding, social reconnection, youth leadership, women's leadership and indigenous participation.
- Develop better voluntary family planning to help limit future human population growth.
- Develop a more harmonious balance between people, the land, water, air, biota and other Earth resources essential to life.
- Develop a society that mimics nature in its use and sharing of all resources. Use 'Future Designs' principles to enable all decision-making bodies to take better decisions from a future perspective. Implement sustainable decision-making.
- A global plan for large-scale land and sea restoration/rewilding across millions of hectares, particularly in the tropics, supporting the work of small-scale farmers, fishers and rural communities. Help them transition to renewable energy and regenerative food systems.
- Mobilize millions of people, at grassroots level, to implement the changes needed to solve the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, the toxicity crisis and the other threats, through distributed leadership in local communities across the globe.
- Form a worldwide 'network of regenerators' to help repair the planet
- Regulate all new technologies according to ethical, environmental and social justice principles. Avoid endlessly repeating past mistakes.

**Note:** Many other solutions were also proposed by participants in the Roundtable. These are to be found in their individual statements in Section 2, on their websites and in public statements.

### 3. Conclusions

The Roundtable on the Human Future was an online gathering of the world's most influential thought-leaders on what is to be done about the human predicament. Recognising that a wide diversity of opinion and advice exists globally, which is confusing to governments and citizens alike, it sought common understandings of the nature of the crisis and the solutions it demands.

The Roundtable concluded that multiple human-generated threats are now combining to jeopardize our planet, people, peace, and prosperity. They are a major security risk to every person, society and country, now and well into the future. There is a foreseeable danger this will result in the collapse of human civilisation, maybe worse.

The Roundtable found the effort by governments, corporates and other powerful players to prevent the polycrisis is far from sufficient. Indeed, many actions being taken are making it worse.

It found that global awareness of the true nature and extent of our jeopardy is alarmingly low.

It also found there is a very great deal that can practically and inexpensively be done to mitigate or avert the multiple crises now engulfing us. However, the global effort is nowhere near enough.

**It supported** the idea of an [Earth System Treaty](#) as the first step in a pathway to tackle the crisis. It strongly endorsed the development of an *Earth Plan of Action* to do so.

**It condemned** governments which are now using the law and policing to persecute and punish non-violent people who want to save a habitable Earth for our grandchildren.

**It concluded** that fresh hope, positivity, wellbeing and inspiration are all to be gained from working together to restore our world.

The Roundtable found that there needs to be urgent, worldwide agreement – both among leaders and at grassroots citizen level – to take real action to save ourselves and our grandchildren on a habitable Earth.

➤ Read on for Participants Reports.

## 3. Participants Reports

### Climate Foundation – *Dr Brian von Herzen*

**The Problem:** Today, humanity faces modern incarnations of the “four horsemen of the apocalypse”: famine from climate disruption; pestilence from natural and human-induced plagues; war fuelled by centralized governments, large corporations and even universities; and conquest via AI and autonomous weapons. Stark inequities between nations exacerbate these problems. Overcentralization of political, financial, social and natural capital intensifies these disparities.

The economics of scarcity fosters fear and competition. This scarcity thinking, driven by overcentralization and fear, contrasts with the "tribe of abundance" mentality observed in nature.

**Pathways:** Inspired by decentralized structures in ant colonies, beehives, and bonobo communities, we propose a biomimetic governance approach. These natural systems prioritize cooperation and shared resources. This aligns with the Global EverGreening Alliance's focus on ecosystem restoration and the Common Home of Humanity's emphasis on recognizing our shared planetary resources.

The Climate Foundation advocates for cellular, decentralized organizations resistant to bullying, and prioritizing resilience. Transitioning from autocracy and majority rule towards consent-based governance empowers individuals and communities, resonating with the World Academy of Science and the Arts' proposal for citizen debate and referenda on critical issues.

This decentralized model aligns with Bill McKibben's emphasis on grassroots empowerment and the Post Carbon Institute's focus on community resilience. It also echoes the sociocratic circle method, building consensus through inclusive dialogue and shared decision-making.

In summary, decentralized, biomimetic governance can address our interconnected challenges. While occasionally necessitating centralized action for common defense, we aim to minimize such instances. Localized governance inspires and cultivates a thousand points of light, empowering communities to innovate and adapt.

This approach contrasts sharply with current centralized governance models, which often exacerbate inequalities and environmental degradation. By embracing nature-inspired, decentralized structures, we can create a more harmonious relationship between humanity and Planet Earth's living systems.

Our proposal directly:

1. Addresses the root causes of global inequity and environmental degradation
2. Empowers local communities to develop context-specific solutions in an abundance mindset
3. Fosters a more resilient, adaptive global system
4. Promotes diverse thought and problem-solving approaches
5. Aligns human systems with natural processes

This approach offers a path to transcend the limitations of nation-states and creates a governance model that reflects the interconnected, diverse nature of life on Earth. As we face the challenges of the 21st century, let us draw inspiration from the wisdom of nature and indigenous cultures to forge a resilient, harmonious future for all inhabitants of our shared ocean planet.

## The Climate Majority Project - *Emeritus Professor Rupert Read*

### **The more-than-problem:**

In our assessment, the human predicament, at this moment, is pretty severe. An essential point is that, unless people are in touch with the truth, they are never going to do enough in response to the multiple problems we are facing. For example, it is now quite clear that the +1.5 degree Celsius global limit for average global overheating, to keep us within a safe zone, is now being breached in real time.

Once people understand that we are deep into the danger zone, then they will start to respond accordingly, provided they are given the resources to do so. Also, it is crucial to help people to handle the difficult emotional truth about our situation. When we unleash the power of that grief fear, anger and shame, then we will get into a much stronger position (to act effectively) than we are in at the moment.

So it is essential to provide people with pathways for action. They must not be left feeling alone and without agency. In the Climate Majority Project we offer help to especially promising organisations. We incubate and collaborate with them, as well as doing our own campaigning and thought leadership.

It is vital to help people understand this is already happening, at scale, and more and more people are rising up in response to the climate and overall risk situation, which is much bigger than just climate. People need to see there are a whole slew of planetary boundaries that are being breached, that the nature crisis and the climate crisis are two sides of the same coin. That wars, the energy crisis, the cost of living crisis, the equality crisis are all aspects of the same phenomenon. We need to get people into the polycrisis mentality - if we are actually to deal with this.

### **The 'solution'** (insofar as one is even possible):

What we most need to do is get the majority of people beyond the 'green bubble' (i.e. the 'ghetto' of 'progressive' activists, switched-on policy-makers, those in short who already get it), to create global polycrisis awareness and polycrisis action.

Then we will finally be in a less terrible situation than we are now in.

## The Club of Rome — Sandrine Dixson-Declève and Professor Paul Shrivastava

### **The Issue**

Humanity today faces a polycrisis, an interconnected web of challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, economic and gender inequality, enhanced by growing geopolitical instability.

These crises are often compounded by a critical oversight: we continue to dissociate the links between planetary tipping points and social tipping points. Peace, human security and stability for our democracies are essential preconditions for a sustainable future for all.

However, achieving these requires a fundamental transformation in our perspective—from a self-centric focus (individual, local, national) to a planetary well-being focus, fostering cultures of responsible 'good ancestry'. These crises are interconnected, yet our responses often lack a systemic analysis. This lack of a holistic view means we frequently miss the mark in our solutions.

Understanding systemic existential risks and the human problematique has been a core pursuit of the Club of Rome since its inception. Yet, due to the breadth and cultural sensitivity of these issues, there is a reluctance among leaders to confront the systemic changes needed to address these risks effectively. Currently, there is a significant lack of international dialogue, alignment, and vision towards a unified and secure future for all that stays within the planetary boundaries.

The Roundtable is an opportunity for deeper reflection on the work many Club of Rome members are doing about systemic future risks from a planetary perspective.

### **The Solutions**

To address these profound issues, we must develop a coherent vision towards a Future for All. This requires a systemic approach, exemplified by our two flagship initiatives:

1. **Earth4All**: is an international initiative to accelerate the systems-change we need for an equitable future on a finite planet. It aims to transform food and energy systems, reduce inequalities, eliminate poverty and empower women to further ensure a secure earth for all.
2. **Earth Humanity Coalition**: is pioneering the implementation of the 2023 UN Resolution on the International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development, where science anticipates and shapes sustainable futures by integrating natural, social, human and applied science with traditional and indigenous knowledge systems. It unites scientists, policymakers and societal actors to address the existential challenges of the 21st century.

Both projects address the systemic challenges in economic, financial and geopolitical systems and their relationship with science and knowledge. Nonetheless, there is a need to think further on potential relationships and impactful pathways for collaboration, including:

- Convening local, national and international discussions to contextually frame systemic existential risks.
- Designing future-ready institutions, governance structures, and democratic processes.
- Creating a future for all through advancements in complex systems analysis, systemic policy-making, and new roles for research, technology and education, at the service of humanity and the planet.

We invite collaborative engagement with like-minded organisations to develop and implement these solutions, ensuring a sustainable, secure and equitable Future for All.

## Common Home of Humanity – Dr Paulo Magalhaes

### **The Predicament/Issue**

The tragedy of climate change is the result of the degradation of a certain way of functioning of a non-territorial good (or whose territory is the Planet) that is intangible, indivisible and non-appropriable (by individual states), although depreciable. Considering the existence of the "functional aspect" of the planet, already identified by the International Law Commission as distinct from the territories of States, allows us to approach a natural phenomenon we call Climate from a legal perspective. If we identify a certain pattern of atmospheric and oceanic circulation observed during the Holocene period, we can call this pattern software - a mode of operation of the Earth System that results in a Stable Climate. This way of functioning is a visible manifestation of the Earth System working in a favourable way to life in general, and it was this pattern of stable operating dynamics that generated biophysical conditions that are favorable to the flourishing of human civilizations.

By recognizing "climate change (only) as a concern", the "good Climate" was left in an undefined legal situation. Not only was the existence of the "functional aspect" of the planet not recognized, but the attribution of its ownership to all of humankind was refused. The "good Climate" continued to have the status of a "no one's thing" - in international law it is considered a *res nullius*. In this way, the two elements that are at the same time two essential reservoirs of the climate system - the oceans and the atmosphere have become industrial-era garbage dumps and the phenomenon of global warming, recently validated by scientific regimes, has not yet found an effective legal instrument to recognize the seriousness of its threat.

### **The Response/Solutions**

Neither the rights that should result from the global benefits resulting from the provision of the good Stable Climate generated by ecosystems (evapotranspiration, negative CO2 removals, and others), nor the duties that should result from the use/depreciation of the common good Climate, are recognized. There are already a number of large-scale nature restoration plans and decarbonization scenarios, but these don't address the legal conditions necessary to be able to put projects on the ground, i.e., for collective action to be possible. The fact that there are currently no economic mechanisms to pay for negative emissions, is due to the fact that CO2 removals from the accumulated stock in the atmosphere, corresponds to a removal carried out in a reality devoid of legal and economic value, and therefore, no rights are generated for those who carry out the removal in a good that belongs to no one.

The recognition of the Climate as a Common Heritage of Humankind would act as a platform to internalize the negative and positive "externalities" that everyone produces in the climate system, and thus generate rights and duties, and this would make it possible to:

- 1) Address Flows and Stock simultaneously, creating separate accounts;
- 2) Internalize "negative externalities";
- 3) Internalize the "positive externalities" of ecosystems and thus promote their restoration;
- 4) Make these benefits legally visible and economically accountable;
- 5) Boost an economy capable of restoring the climate system;
- 6) Build justice between peoples and a future for new generations.

## Council for the Human Future — Julian Cribb

### **The Issue:**

There is a growing world scientific consensus that human civilization is in deep trouble and faces likely collapse in the mid-latter C21st. Under certain scenarios (eg runaway heating, global nuclear war), all human life could be extinguished.

Scientific leaders warn with increasing urgency about the risks of a 'polycrisis', the simultaneous impact of ten catastrophic threats together. These are:

- Extinction and ecocide – the destruction of the Earth's life support systems.
- Resource depletion – loss of fresh water, topsoil, forests, fish, oxygen, nutrients etc.
- Global poisoning – universal chemical pollution affecting all life.
- Hothouse Earth – accelerating global overheating heating and tipping points.
- A fresh nuclear arms race with dangerous new weapons and killer robots.
- Food insecurity – rising risk of simultaneous harvest failures; failure of supply chains.
- Overpopulation – human numbers vastly exceeding the Earth's carrying capacity.
- New pandemic diseases – arriving out of ruined environments and/or science labs.
- Uncontrolled technologies – like AI, biotech, nanotech and universal surveillance.
- Misinformation and mass delusion – paralysing society's ability to save itself.

These risks are intimately connected. They cannot be addressed one by one. They must all be solved together.

No government on Earth yet has a policy to address all ten megarisks. There is no world plan to save humanity on a habitable Earth.

### **The Solutions:**

1. Develop a viable Plan for Human Survival on a habitable Earth, including:
  - A total ban on nuclear weapons
  - A crash program in climate mitigation and to end fossil fuels and plastics use.
  - A plan to Clean Up the Earth and end chemical emissions
  - Adopt a totally new food system that does not destroy itself or the planet
  - A circular global economy that does not waste or pollute.
  - A World Technology Commission to oversight safe use of dangerous new technologies and prevent future pandemics.
  - A plan to voluntarily lower the human population
  - An Earth System Currency
  - A Global Truth Commission
2. A world agreement to develop a plan to save humanity can best be developed as an [Earth System Treaty](#), under the aegis of the UN, committing all signatories to work together to prevent the ten major threats. The Treaty would also be open for *all citizens of Earth* to sign.

More information [here](#).

## Engage, Connect, Protect – *Dr Angelou Ezeilo*

As a global society, we find ourselves at a critical juncture, facing unprecedented risks to our survival. These challenges include climate change, resource depletion, social inequality, and the erosion of biodiversity.

Our actions today will determine the fate of future generations.

### **Root Causes**

A. Short-Term Thinking: Our focus on immediate gains often blinds us to long-term consequences. Governments and corporations prioritize short-term profits over sustainable practices. We must shift our perspective to consider the impact of our decisions on future generations.

B. Fragmented Approaches: Existing agreements and accords address specific issues but fail to holistically tackle the interconnected challenges we face. We need a unified approach that transcends borders and sectors.

C. Lack of Urgency: Despite mounting evidence, there is no global consensus on the urgency of our predicament. Denial and complacency hinder meaningful action.

### **Strategies for Mitigation**

- Governments and organizations must collaborate to create comprehensive policies that address environmental, social, and economic dimensions. We need a roadmap for a sustainable future.
- Investing in clean energy, regenerative agriculture, and circular economies can mitigate our impact. Technological advancements can drive positive change.
- Raising public awareness is crucial. We must empower individuals to make informed choices and hold leaders accountable.
- Youth as Leaders. Young people have sparked many social movements across the world. It is important to provide youth with the tools and resources they need to own their power and create the change we need.

# Future Earth Australia – Professor Wendy Steele

## **The Predicament**

No human society has ever had to deal with the unstable earth systems that are reflected in the current climate crisis. Humans have always modified their environment to some extent from sustenance to the extraction of colonisation, urbanisation and globalisation. The ground has shifted in the Anthropocene and the context is new for everyone despite the wisest of traditional knowledge systems.

Learning new ways to co-inhabit the Earth is our biggest challenge and shared opportunity for humanity in this critical climate decade. Key to this is the recognition of ‘migrations without nations’. This includes climate change impacts, erosion, pollution, habitat destruction and resource depletion, but also the bioregional flows of air, water and migratory patterns of species such as sea birds and whales to name a few. We must find better ways of understanding the new climate landscape where the complexity of living systems (and humanity’s role within them) is being rapidly reconfigured. This includes taking urgent action to address what is at stake and for whom and where, as part of the mission for more sustainable, regenerative futures.

## **The Response**

Future Earth Australia (FEA) is working towards more sustainable and regenerative planetary futures by collaborating to develop deeper understandings of complex Earth systems, human and non-human dynamics across disciplines and sectors. Addressing the interconnectedness of Earth’s living systems – climate, water, land, ocean, urban, economic, energy, health, biodiversity, and governance systems - is vital.

We see 3 priority areas as central to mobilizing evidence-informed research in policy and community action at scale.

1. *Transdisciplinary research and practices* to address the complexity of societal challenges such as the impacts of the climate emergency.
2. *Integrating and learning from Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Elders* which includes recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and cosmologies.
3. *Enabling and empowering the younger generation*, students and early career researchers/practitioners to actively participate in co-developing the solutions required to support people, places and the planet to flourish.

A radical transformation is needed around how we understand, live with, and govern planetary commons and objects, and the urbanization processes on which there is mutual reliance and interdependence. This includes oceans, forests and rivers but also the impact of cities, pandemic viruses and nuclear development capabilities through the shared lens of inter-generational justice and inter-species equity.

Future Earth serves to help catalyse, collaborate, and connect the research practices and learning that are a critical part of supporting living systems (human and non-human). Our ‘common world’ must be shaped by civic community care and a sense of belonging that finds root in place-based contexts and bioregions, and connected to planetary commons.

## The Future Design Research Center<sup>1</sup> – Professor Tatsuyoshi Saijo

Wouldn't you like to design a society for which future generations will thank us? However, world leaders are willing to wage wars and invasions – but not design the future. Meanwhile, planetary boundary researchers are warning that carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus cycles, as well as biodiversity, have reached a tipping point from which there is no return. Such "Future Failures" and "Polycrises" have been accelerating since the mid-20th century.

What should human society do? Don't we have a disposition to "feel happiness by aiming for the happiness of future generations, even at the expense of immediate benefits"? Let us call this "futurability." Our current society has not been structured in a way that allows us to activate our "futurability." Therefore, Future Design (FD) aims to design a society in which we can exhibit our futurability and avoid Future Failures and Polycrises.

Like the Iroquois, the effectiveness of flying into the "future" and thinking about the "present" from there was confirmed in various subject experiments, and the praxes began. These strongly confirmed that if people go into the future, and then consider the "present" from the "future," they design a creative and sustainable society.

We have also initiated a proposal to use FD at the G7: Think 7 (T7) in the pre-G7 meeting, and at the T7 for the G7 in Germany in 2022, we proposed "Future Design: For the Survival of Humankind." The proposal is to have a time for world leaders to become imaginary future leaders in 2050, to form a vision including peace, and to discuss what should be done now.

### **Our Proposal**

In FD, we call the usual process of thinking about the future from the present, 'creating a vision for the future', and considering what to do now 'Present Design'. We know that present design alone does not allow us to make decisions beyond Business as Usual, because we are stuck in the present. Therefore, FD emphasizes the process of evaluating the past from the present: it is not enough to simply understand historical facts. We call this Past Design. From the perspective of those in the past, we are the future. After this, depending on the issue, we jump to the future (instead of thinking about the future from the present), construct a vision of the future, and create a future history from the future to the present. These processes are considered Future Design.

Our proposal is to use this FD process at the United Nations, Global South meetings, G7, G20, national and municipal decision-making bodies, citizens' assemblies, climate assemblies, etc. This is to make such a system the "standard" or "norm" in our societies. Let us develop and use a system that will allow us to activate our futurability so that humans can deal far better with the polycrises that humanity has created!

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<sup>1</sup> Kyoto University of Advanced Science

## Greening Youth Foundation — *James Ezeilou*

The Greening Youth Foundation (GYF) is taking steps to try and improve the living standards of communities of color while doing our part to push towards a more sustainable future.

GYF was created eighteen years ago by Angelou Ezeilo. She envisioned a foundation that would speak to a new generation of environmental leaders. At the early stages of the foundation's programming, we focused on environmental education for elementary and middle school children. The goal was to begin educating very young people about the need to protect their environment and the benefits of sustainability.

After several years, we were awarded a contract to assist the US Department of Interior in the diversification of their workforce within the National Park Service. This was followed by a subsequent agreement with the Department of Agriculture working with the US Forest Service. Again, we were challenged with the diversification of the agency's workforce.

### **The problem:**

The general stability and prosperity of a country stems directly from the way she treats her citizens and her environment. A government that fails to value its citizens yet takes great care of its natural spaces will only get it half right.

By the same token, a nation that values its people but neglects its natural treasures will suffer due to a lack of harmony and balance.

### **The solutions:**

For nations around the world to be successful and grow responsibly, there must be a harmonious balance between the people and the land they live on. This balance requires a level of respect for other citizens. This same respect must be afforded the land that sustains the people.

So, there is a need to educate and train the general population about the importance of developing systems that conserve their natural resources and promote sustainability throughout the ecosystem.

The land that we build, farm and recreate on is a central part of the overall environment. The immediate need to move away from fossil fuels and more towards renewables, must be at the core of most development decisions.

Populations must realize that there is a social contract that dictates the general principal that each person is entitled to access to natural spaces for mental and physical wellness. These simple yet incredibly complex principles are the binding fiber of a more manageable society. They create a baseline from which to draft litigation, pass laws and develop a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity.

The goal is not to take from one group and give to another, rather, the objective is to create more access to opportunities for all people regardless of background or social status.

### **The Issue:**

Humanity currently faces multiple global catastrophic risks that need to be addressed.

A global catastrophic risk is a possible event or process that, if it occurs, would threaten the lives or livelihoods of a large part of humanity across several continents, and against which no state can protect its inhabitants by unilateral action. Among these risks are catastrophic climate change, ecological collapse and the devastation from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Global catastrophic risks coincide with current governance gaps. The concept of global governance can be understood as a framework of institutions, rules, norms, and procedures that facilitate collective action and co-operation among countries and other actors. It encompasses a wide range of issues, including economic development, trade, human rights, environmental protection, and peace and security. Global risks call for global solutions, without reform current governance is unable to address communal problems.

### **The Solutions:**

Our mission is to facilitate the changes needed in global governance to mitigate global catastrophic risks. In collaboration with partners, we build support for necessary change and formulate alternative outcomes.

Our vision is a world in which effective and fair mitigation of global catastrophic risks secures a safe and just future for all.

Therefore the GCF seeks to:

- Raise awareness about the significant risks facing humanity and the current gaps in institutional risk management.
- Facilitate constructive dialogue between policymakers, researchers, opinion leaders and experts, to foster a greater understanding of these risks and their potential impact.
- Actively promote the creation of networks, collaborations and initiatives aimed at developing governance solutions and moving the conversation forward.
- Together with our partners we advocate for improved governance of global risks through reform processes, seeking to ensure that effective measures are put in place to mitigate these risks and safeguard the future of our planet.

## The Global EverGreening Alliance – *Dr Dennis Garrity*

### **The issue**

The fate of the planet's managed and natural ecosystems is central to addressing the polycrisis of potentially catastrophic threats bearing down on us, particularly widespread land degradation and resource depletion, accelerated global heating, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity.

A concerted effort to restore earth's ecosystems is now under way. It must reverse these dire trends and protect the gains achieved from being lost. Positive land use change is now removing about 10.6 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere every year. This includes land restoration, reforestation, and sustainable agriculture practices. These land use changes are responsible for 99.9% of all carbon removals globally. This is in addition to the removals from natural terrestrial ecosystems of 12.5 billion tons per year, and ocean removals of more than 9 billion tons.

But emissions continue to rise, and time is of the essence now in forestalling disaster. Reducing current emissions (ER) and removing legacy carbon emissions (CDR) will likely no longer be sufficient to cap global temperatures at a level to avoid severe ecosystem degradation in many parts of the world, avoid triggering numerous earth system tipping points, and control the risks of food production failures and increasing poverty.

### **The solutions**

The Global EverGreening Alliance has brought together its 102 member organizations to focus on developing and implementing innovative investment models for large-scale land restoration across millions of hectares, particularly in the tropics, supporting the work of millions of small-scale farmers and their communities. It also spearheads a Campaign to inspire and foster greater commitments, and build the capacity to achieve ambitious global restoration targets for the restoration of hundreds of millions of hectares of degraded croplands, forestlands, and pasturelands. This would also enable the land to be removing over 20 billion additional tons of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> annually by mid-century. It contributes substantively to the aspirations of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, and beyond.

The Alliance is also co-leading an initiative to secure a global pledge to further accelerate carbon removals. This will spearhead international commitments to set clear targets, further ramp up investments, and monitor the progress made, to drawdown atmospheric greenhouse gases as rapidly as possible -- to go beyond simply capping global temperatures, but to reduce them sufficiently to restore a safe climate.

However, it is increasingly likely that we must buy desperately needed time to do all this in the very short time available to turn things around. We recognize that humanity must now develop a more holistic, integrated, climate plan. Such a plan could also include the likely need for direct cooling interventions to correct the rapidly worsening earth energy imbalance, protect the gains being made in ecosystems restoration, and control the risks of exacerbating poverty and food production failures. This would complement the efforts to bring emissions under control, and to further ramp up CDR to levels that can ultimately begin to cool the planet.

## The Issue

The fundamental problem we face today is “our failure to adjust our system of economic and political institutions to the imperative needs of a rapidly evolving age.”

The UN Secretary-General has told the UN General Assembly: “We cannot effectively address problems as they are if institutions don’t reflect the world as it is.” This failure has led to what we can call a “governance gap,” an inability of institutions to address the global problems we face because the world has become far more complex than it was in 1945 when we brought into being the UN Charter and the associated system of multilateral organizations. Indeed, this system of international cooperation is no longer fit for purpose; it struggles to cope with the multiple unresolved crises that we face, often because it lacks the appropriate jurisdiction, sometimes because it does not have adequate resources, or at times because it lacks the conceptual framework to effectively diagnose the problems and bring about credible solutions.

And so, we move on towards a potentially catastrophic future of accelerating climate change, the continued unravelling of our nuclear order, rising and destructive nationalisms, and an economic paradigm that no longer delivers prosperity for all in a way that does not create social divisions and does not undermine the foundations of democracy.

## The Response

The Global Governance Forum believes that strengthened international cooperation and reforms to our global governance architecture will be key towards solving the interconnected and interplanetary crises that we confront today. This cooperation involves states, civil society organizations, the business community and other stakeholders, to address effectively the global challenges that, if unaddressed, will lead to destabilizing social and political implications for peace, economic development, environmental security, and human survival. One starting point and a project in which we have been engaged during the last two years is to put forward a detailed vision of what a new UN Charter would look like, to reflect the needs of the 21st century. This document will be released in New York in September of 2024. Among the ingredients included:

1. To build on the concept of a UN of states embedded in the 1945 Charter to move to a UN of states and peoples through the *creation of a Parliamentary Assembly*, as a complement to the General Assembly and to boost the UN’s democratic legitimacy.
2. *To create an Earth System Council*, giving the UN system the capacity to pass binding legislation to protect our planetary environmental system and the common goods it provides, with necessary enforcement mechanisms.
3. To empower the UN to meaningfully *advance disarmament globally* and help create a conducive environment for sustained progress on nuclear disarmament and reduction of proliferation in other weapons systems.
4. To bring about a new system to fund the UN, that provides a reliable, depoliticized, independent revenue stream, not unlike that in place already for several decades in the European Union.
5. *To reform the Security Council* to make it more representative and to do away with the veto, which exempts its permanent members from the obligations of the Charter and is thus a practice deeply at odds with sound principles of good governance.

## Global Restoration Collaborative<sup>2</sup> — Professor Phoebe Barnard

### **The issue:**

These are the crossroads of humanity - and it's time that we recognize it, talk about it, and decide which way we are going from here.

We are fast getting to the end of this civilization, and heading into an unknown next one. Most people don't yet realize it, but for everyone's sakes, it's best that they do. This predatory western civilization – still aggressively promoting its seductive, hyper-consumptive self all over the world – is failing. And this is leading to different experiments all over the world.

These experiments – some small, some growing, some perhaps dead-ends – will often be kinder, wiser, more humble, more regenerative, more collaborative and more sustainable. But many will be autocratic, fascist, corporate and fear-based. The choice is ours.

And at this most challenging planetary and societal crossroads, we must focus not on symptoms, but on the root causes of our human predicament. These root causes of ecological overshoot are three-fold:

- our numbers (population)
- our appetites (consumption)
- our mindsets and economies (of extraction, entitlement, and domination).

We started the global Stable Planet Alliance in 2021 to shift social mores on each of these from the bottom up (by starting media and other conversations and stories to break taboos) and the top down (by influencing global and national policies on population, consumption and behavior). This is a demand-side effort aimed at reducing human demands on our planet. John D. Liu and I then started the Global Restoration Collaborative, a supply-side effort to bring eight siloed global fields and networks together to shift civilization with more collaborative power, diversity and moral authority.

### **The solutions:**

- Shift civilization complementarily by increasing the number, impact, visibility and strategy of regenerative changemakers across generations, cultures and geographies.
- Unify eight previously separate global fields, and strengthen global restoration plans and initiatives to shift towards a new restoration economy and civilization. These fields are ecosystem restoration, climate restoration, biodiversity conservation, rewilding, social reconnection, youth leadership, women's leadership, and indigenous cultural bridges.

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<sup>2</sup> The Global Restoration Collaborative was initiated in late 2022 by Phoebe Barnard of the Stable Planet Alliance and John D. Liu of the Ecosystem Restoration Communities. The GRC is a temporary convening partnership of eight global fields and networks which we feel need to work together to repair the climate, planet, and society. It is a registered actor in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and is strategically informing other global initiatives, strategies and campaigns.

- Drive conversations and media (bottom-up, especially women and girls) and global and national public policies on ecological overshoot (top-down) to shift how the world understands it and how financial flows can be deployed increasingly to reverse it.

## Global Youth Security Council — Yuhan Zheng

### The Issue

The Global Youth Security Council for Existential Threats (GYSC) highlights the intricate convergence of existential threats. Despite their crucial role in economic and social development, youth frequently encounter exclusion from decision-making processes that profoundly impact their lives. To confront this, traditional international governance structures and fragmented global efforts must adapt to address contemporary existential challenges, such as climate tipping points that could trigger irreversible environmental changes. This urgency is exacerbated by nationalistic tendencies among states and the reluctance of decision-makers to acknowledge or address these threats adequately. Therefore, comprehensive global action is imperative to secure a sustainable and equitable future. Furthermore, there is a critical imperative to co-create a self-sustaining ecosystem that empowers today's youth with knowledge, capacity-building initiatives, and fair access to natural resources. This ecosystem should also ensure the responsible transition of governance frameworks to future generations, promoting continuity and sustainability in global decision-making processes.

### The Solutions

GYSC advocates a comprehensive approach to address these challenges through the following actions:

- **Governance Reform:** Advocate for the restructuring of existing international and intergovernmental governance models to foster global collaboration in addressing emerging threats. This involves creating more inclusive and effective frameworks for decision-making.
- **Sustainable Decision-Making:** Promote long-term, grassroots-driven perspectives in international decision-making. Prioritizing future generations will lead to solutions that are environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically viable.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure:** Develop a comprehensive plan to bolster global health infrastructure. This includes enhancing preparedness, cooperation, and response to health crises, preventing future pandemics, creating a one-planet health system, and transforming global health security with digital solutions.
- **Conflict Prevention and Resolution:** Formulate a coherent strategy to monitor global peace, support sustainable peace-building, and coordinate international conflict resolution efforts. This strategy aims to address and prevent conflicts that threaten global stability.
- **Urgent Environmental Action:** Propose policies to safeguard biodiversity across critical ecosystems such as oceans and forests. This action is crucial for fortifying environmental resilience and confronting the pressing challenges of the climate crisis, particularly for vulnerable communities. Addressing climate tipping points is essential to prevent irreversible changes and ensure environmental stability.
- **Ethical Technology Solutions:** Advocate for regulated technological innovations that address threats to people, planet, prosperity, and peace. This involves promoting the development and implementation of technologies that are ethically sound and beneficial for all.
- **Intergenerational Dialogue:** Facilitate intergenerational dialogue to trigger positive social tipping processes that can accelerate actions towards mitigating climate change. Engaging multiple generations in these conversations will harness diverse perspectives and experiences, fostering innovative and effective solutions.

## Healthy Planet Action Coalition - *Herb Simmens, Rebecca Bishop*

HPAC shares the belief of increasing numbers of people and institutions that the planet is experiencing a rapidly emerging polycrisis - a complex intertwined combination of overheating, overshoot and accelerating environmental and social disarray.

HPAC also recognizes that the polycrisis is on the verge of becoming a permacrisis as the combination of climate and social and environmental tipping points is likely to cause systemic collapse much more rapidly than anticipated.

Humankind does have the opportunity – but just barely – to avert collapse through the embrace of what HPAC calls the Climate Triad:

- accelerating emission reductions to net zero
- large scale removal of legacy greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and oceans
- most urgently, directly cooling the climate through a portfolio of sunlight reflection methods, ecosystem restoration and other safe and effective means.

Restoring temperatures that the world had in the 20th century can bring immense reductions in harm and suffering, averting death for billions. HPAC considers the need to begin cooling the climate, through the Climate Triad, is the single most urgent shared global objective. The HPAC group of scientists are part of a wider movement developing feasible and safe methods of climate and ecosystem restoration. These need to be developed and shared with communities so that over time, acceptable methods can be deployed at a scale which will have planetary effect.

Such restoration can directly ameliorate ecological and climate collapse, temper the negative consequences of increased inequality and population growth, slow the internal and cross-border migration already beginning, help stabilize agricultural production, mitigate sea level rise and extreme weather and prove beneficial in addressing virtually every other component of the polycrisis.

Equally important, stabilizing and cooling the climate will orient people away from anxiety and despair toward optimism and action. It will strengthen the forces of democracy and open societies versus those of autocracy and repression, enhancing opportunities for worldwide cooperation in every field of human endeavour.

Evidence indicates that irreversible ecological and climate tipping points are on the verge of activating, or may already be underway, taking the control of the climate out of humanity's hands.

Only planetary-scale deployment of all three legs of the Climate Triad can provide the 8 billion of us the desperately required additional decades of a stabilized climate. Therefore, the most pressing international priority must be for all of us to come together to urge the world community to objectively, equitably and urgently develop and deploy a Climate Triad-based plan of action to bring temperature increases back down to well below 1°C, starting in the next decade.

When climate restoration becomes a nascent but tangible reality, the many insightful and necessary actions and ideas proposed by our colleagues at the Roundtable for the Human Future can gain purchase with citizens and leaders throughout the globe, bringing transformative change for the future of all life on this planet.

## InterAction Council — *Dr Jo Nurse*

Goal: To prevent and reduce risks from existential threats to ensure human survival.

**Key Threats and Risks:** Existential threats and risks can be considered under the Sustainable Development Goal clusters of Planet, Peace, People and Prosperity:

- Planet: Threats range from mass extinctions from asteroids to massive volcanic eruptions and biodiversity collapse to threats from our climate emergency
- People: Inequalities, food and water insecurity act as drivers for migration and conflict, whilst a warming planet increases the risk of pandemics with the potential to threaten human existence
- Peace: Nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare, including engineered pandemics; Digital Warfare and Artificial Intelligence
- Prosperity: Mechanical-Technical-Industrialisation including unsustainable growth (planet); unhealthy crowded cities and rapid travel (pandemics) and widening inequalities (peace); human security risks are posed by emerging technologies, including Quantum Computing and genetic engineering.

**Strategic Sustainable Systems:** Utilise strategic foresight to design processes for the delivery of multi-disciplinary governance and policy for the:

- Planet: Prevent tipping points from escalating and creating runaway climate change; create a strategic global emergency response to stabilise our essential determinants of life on this planet including temperature, air, water, land, and food systems, and to assist in recovery of the environment and biodiversity
- People: Prevent future pandemics – through enhanced global governance with regional and local coordination, create One Health systems for prevention, detection, early warning systems, preparedness and response; transform global health security as a global good with digital solutions
- Peace: Prevent violence within families and communities, and create inclusive and fair societies to promote a culture of peace; identify risks for conflicts for early intervention with diplomacy and development for pathways to peace including intercountry initiatives; advocate for and agree on common global rights and responsibilities, and implement controls for technologies and weapons of mass-destruction; adopt no first use policies, remove hair trigger alerts and pledge no use of nuclear weapons
- Prosperity: Scale renewable energy to underpin human security, sustainable development and growth; establish global governance for digital technology and AI to reduce risks and enhance beneficial solutions; promote open access health and education, research and innovation to create a flourishing world for all.

**Recommendations:** led by the Global Youth Security Council to Prevent Existential Threats:

- GOVERNANCE: A Global Existential Security Threats (EXST) Board
- STRATEGY: A Plan to Secure the Future of Humanity from Existential Threats
- PLATFORM: A Global Futures Platform - for the Planet, People and Peace
- ADVOCACY: Champions and Ambassadors for the Well-Being of Future Generations
- LEADERS: Create Courageous Leadership for Emergencies and Global Security
- PARTNERS: Establish an Alliance of Partners for the Planet, People and Peace.

## Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere

*Emeritus Professor Paul Ehrlich and Dr Joan Diamond*

There is now unequivocal evidence that humanity has seriously altered the ability of the planet to support civilization indefinitely.

The cumulative knowledge from the natural sciences has clearly shown that the global ecosystems upon which humanity indisputably depends have been significantly degraded. Without a fundamental shift in how people perceive and use ecological capital and services the indefinite continuity of societies around the globe, an unchallenged assumption of past thinking, is now seriously in question.

With this decisive diagnosis about the ill-health of our life-support systems there is the clear need for global response. We cannot fix the world but we can redirect the human enterprise to a compelling future. The “perfect storm” of problems facing humanity, is well-delineated by the scholarly community and discussed widely in the mainstream and social media as individual problems but not interconnected risks and vulnerabilities which embody amplifying feedback loops.

The “storm” includes lethal and escalating threats posed by the degradation of our life support systems, traceable to over-population and over-consumption by wealthy individuals and nations, and manifested by a growing gap between rich and poor, widespread poverty, resource wars, financial crises, climate disruption, pandemics and new diseases, increased threat of the use of nuclear weapons and toxification of the planet (to name just some of the most prominent).

What is deeply puzzling is the persistent gap between our actions and civilization’s knowledge of this “human predicament.” Some call it the meta-crisis, others the polycrisis, cascading crises—and there are many other “names” but regardless of the name, there is a near-total failure of individuals, institutions and societies to develop patterns of behavior that will reverse the current trend. Even though scholars in the natural and social sciences have extensively explained the issues and worked with civil society to produce popular books, films, blogs, and lectures, human beings continue to deplete our natural resources at rates far faster than it can be replenished, creating an increasingly unsustainable situation.

This chasm between knowledge and constructive action is the human predicament and the greatest threat to civilization. Instead of decisive tough decisions and a commitment to an ecological civilization, we see countries either succumbing to the threats or shifting governments towards the far right which often promises simple vague solutions to the discomforts of the disruptions caused by the Predicament.

Prior to our current hiatus in operations, the Millennium Alliance for the Biosphere’s (MAHB) core commitment was to develop a strategy which would engage and empower citizens to respond to the Predicament with scientific knowledge and life-affirming values by confronting the root drivers of the Predicament and shifting towards a more equitable and compelling future for all life.

We propose there should be a global network of social scientists, humanists, civil society, and scholars in related disciplines whose collective knowledge can be harnessed to stimulate a global dialogue on how to guide human cultures and institutions toward sustainable practices and an equitable and satisfying future.

## Natural Capitalism Solutions - Hunter Lovins

The polycrisis is defined by others as climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty, economic and gender inequality, growing geopolitical instability. Add pandemics, AI, worsening hunger, conflicts, nuclear proliferation and loss of trust in institutions.... Collapse seems imminent.

Of these, the most existential are global warming and biodiversity loss. These, and loose nukes can soon [end the human experiment](#).

And we know how to solve them. Climate: end fossil emissions by using renewable energy, and return the excess carbon to the soil with regenerative agriculture. Earth-for-All modeling shows that solutions exist for the other challenges, too. Rejecting nuclear power lessens that threat.

Eminent folks have gathered forever to fix the world. And failed. Governments have failed. For 30 years the UN has convened climate COPs, and in that time emissions have doubled. Survival now requires mobilizing ordinary people. People globally know the problems, want aggressive action to solve them, but large majorities think no one else feels the same way. We're paralyzed. Each paper herein clamors that theirs is the solution. Time to get over ourselves. No one of us, nor all of us together is enough. What can we do here? Stop being a bucket of crabs, and learn how to support each other, and more, the people in our communities world-wide.

It's time to stop telling people what they need to do, and support them in implementing the myriad solutions they know are right for their own communities, in their own communities, creating local resilience, globally connected. Organizations from [Partners for Planetary Emergency](#), [Count Us In](#), [Planet Reimagined](#), [Global Citizens Assembly](#), and many more are mobilizing millions to do this. Each in their own bubble. Even they do not talk to each other. Meaningful action to solve the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the rest will only come from effective distributed leadership in towns across the globe.

A group of committed individuals is working to create such communities of practice, based in expertise and experience, through a curated online platform that enables ordinary people to join the conversation, share what they are doing, what others in their community are doing, and what people on the other side of the earth are doing, to take action, and to learn how to do whatever they now feel inadequate to tackle. We need organizers, playbooks, "Locapedia's" of solutions, funding.

The answers will not come top down. Waves of bottom-up action implementing the needed solutions will aggregate into the political will politicians now say they lack to create realistic policy changes, social stability and faith in the future. It will force governments to solve every part of the poly-crisis.

JRR Tolkien's Gandalf, speaking about entrusting the future of the world to the little people said, *"Some believe that it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay... small acts of kindness and love..."*

### **The Predicament**

Many now recognise what is alternately called the Polycrisis or Metacrisis (if viewed in a sober light), or The Great Turning or The Great Transition (if viewed more aspirationally). While the dynamics of the polycrisis are highly complex and uncertain, and outcomes are unlikely to be distributed evenly, PCI shares the view that the source of the predicament is simple to define: human overshoot.

Through a combination of: (a) intrinsic human characteristics and skills honed by evolutionary biology; (b) deeply embedded social structures (hierarchy; competition-based economies); and (c) belief systems (human supremacy; the myth of progress), fuelled by (d) the short-lived burning of massive reserves of fossil energy, “modern” human society has quickly and dramatically exceeded the Earth’s capacity to support our numbers and activities over the longer term.

The consequences of overshoot are already being felt — unequally impacting those who benefited least from it, including the more-than-human world — and are almost certain to worsen, even if radical steps are taken immediately to reduce risks. Unfortunately, we appear constitutionally incapable of proactively ratcheting down the human enterprise, with the most likely result being a collapse.

### **The Response**

Post Carbon Institute does not believe humanity is presented with feasible “solutions” (which imply an ability to resolve our “problems” and maintain current systems and trajectories) but rather possible pathways of response. Ultimately, the human enterprise must shrink to sustainable levels, which will entail much smaller human populations, massively reduced material consumption, economies oriented around care and regeneration rather than consumption and competition, a reorientation of collective worldviews more aligned with mutualism, and a far more equitable distribution of wealth. This resetting of the human enterprise will occur willingly or unwillingly, in the context of great turmoil and uncertainty. This makes the central question of our new era thus: How can we navigate this “Great Unraveling” in ways that protect the most life; maintain the knowledge, technology, and rights we hold most dear; and lead to the best possible futures for future descendants?

We believe the focus of the relatively small cohort of individuals and institutions who recognize The Predicament for what it is, should be to support:

- As many people as possible to deeply understand the predicament, and to build their emotional/psychological capacity to navigate it in pro-social ways;
- Innovators, early adopters, and cultural elders in building community resilience, new (or very old) narratives, and replicable models of sustainably meeting essential needs; and
- A diverse ecosystem of responses, operating at different scales and in different bioregions, that utilizes modern technology for as long as possible to exchange best practices.

## The Third Act – *Bill McKibben*

Our organization believes that the planet is facing a climate crisis that will do the earth grievous damage. We believe that simultaneously curtailing the production of fossil fuel and dramatically increasing the deployment of renewable energy is crucial to solving our dilemma.

We believe that we face a crisis of democracy as well, and that mobilizing people in large movements for democratic nonviolent action is key to addressing it

There are two interlinked factors that will determine the outcome of things on this Planet.

The first is the threat to democracy embodied by powerful people, both in the US and in plenty of places around the world. This is a threat that is gaining strength, while at the same time people are pushing back against it.

The second is climate change. One of the reasons it is so dangerous right now is that we are at the most exposed and vulnerable stage in our fight against climate change.

I wrote the first book on what we now call the climate crisis, but then called the 'greenhouse effect', back in 1989. The warnings that we gave back then have come true.

The Planet is physically starting to unravel in very dramatic ways.

We cannot stop global warming. We may still be able to stop it getting worse than it has to.

That depends almost entirely on how quickly we can supplant the fossil fuel that is driving our predicament with the renewable energy from the sun, the wind and batteries. This would allow us to slow the rise in global temperatures.

These are the two factors that will decide the human future – the state of the climate and the voice of the people.

They are interlinked because it is going to be very hard for most of the world to take the action that we need, as long as most of our governments are pawns of fossil fuels, the very industry that got us into this fix in the first place.

The Third Act is mobilising the power of older citizens to strengthen democracy and fight climate change. We are uniting to ensure a safe and stable planet for generations to come.

## Transition Earth - Suzanne York

### **The Predicament:**

Human beings have only been here in the blink of an eye in evolutionary terms – a mere 200,000 years. Yet we dominate the earth. In a world of over 8 billion people, we cannot ignore the impacts humanity has on the planet, to the point that some scientists argue we have entered a new geologic epoch called the Anthropocene.

Ninety six percent of the biomass of mammals on Earth comprise people and livestock. Wildlife populations have declined by an average 69% in the past 50 years. The year 2023 was the hottest year on record. Just about every issue facing the world today is made that much more challenging by increasing human population, along with overconsumption and unsustainable (and inequitable) resource use.

### **Solutions:**

Our mission is to advocate for a thriving world through supporting the empowerment of people, by linking population, health and environment.

A successful path forward to attaining a healthy population must be grounded in the principles of rights and planetary well-being.

The most promising solutions are interconnected. Population, Health and Environment, or PHE, is an integrated approach linking family planning, health and conservation that supports the connection between people, their health and their local environment. It can include the following:

- Women's rights – support reproductive rights, access to family planning services and the right to own land;
- Girls' education – educate girls to overcome poverty, inequity, child marriage;
- Youth rights – provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education to the nearly 1.2 billion young adults between the ages of 15-24;
- Rights of Nature – reconceptualizes the relationship with nature, by recognizing the legal right of ecosystems to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles;
- Ecological economics – implement alternative economic frameworks that end economic disparities and support well-being;
- Rewilding – restore land to its natural uncultivated state;
- Traditional ecological knowledge – acknowledge the importance of indigenous and local knowledge of living in balance with the Earth.

There is much more that could be listed here. Ultimately, all solutions are connected and should redefine how we interact with other species and respect the web of life, and one another.

## World Academy of Science and the Arts – Professor Garry Jacobs

The following are essential strategies for effectively addressing the challenges confronting humanity today. They emphasize the absolute necessity of establishing an atmosphere of peace and stability as preconditions for advancing human security and sustainable development, especially among youth and addressing fundamental root causes rather than merely specific threats.

1. **Imperative Peace Offensive:** Today's youth want peace more than anything else. Rising levels of conflict undermines all their hopes and aspirations. Peace is imperative. This proposal mobilizes the weight and influence of the NGO community to engage all stakeholders in global society in a systematic initiative to reduce all forms of war, conflict and threats to human security, major and minor, by a global peace offensive based on reciprocal, incremental, unilateral initiatives to de-escalate conflicts. Read more.
2. **Integration of Common and Human Security:** Without peace there can be no real security for people. Without human security there can be no firm foundation for a secure peace. An integrated global system based on an integrated conception of security is needed that unites the common security of nation states with the human security of people and communities worldwide. InterParliamentary Union endorses it.
3. **Human Security for Sustainable Development:** The 17 SDGs unanimously adopted by 193 nations are of unprecedented importance. But the focus on global macro goals has failed to reach and galvanized the energy and commitment of the masses of people and communities. The focus on human security covers nearly all the objectives of the SDGs in a language and with a specificity that can appeal to and mobilize people. It resonates with parliamentarians charged with adopting the policies necessary for local application and with corporates concerned most directly with the response of the general public, as confirmed by our experience with IPU members and the Consumer Technology Association which includes most of the largest global corporates.
4. **Solutions to Close the SDG Implementation Gap:** Accelerated implementation of the 10 scalable, digital, tech-enabled solutions based on existing technologies identified in the latest Force for Good report can address up to 50% of the funding gap in SDG implementation.
5. **Digital Connectivity:** Extend the global system of networks to include the 40% who do not yet have global connectivity. It can now be done through telecom networks at a fraction of the former cost as a powerful lever for all implementing all the SDGs.
6. **Financial Inclusion:** Extend to all nations the India model for digital fin-tech which has brought 500 million+ Indians into the financial system with access to bank accounts, insurance, subsidy payments, information, for the price of a low cost mobile phone, etc. India offers the "India Stack" to all nations.
7. **Global Education:** Establish a world class platform for education and vocational training that is accessible and affordable to all, harnessing the now available digital communications run on generative AI-based educational technology, e.g Khanmigo, to provide personalized, customized, interactive, self-based school and life-long learning in their own language to all those with connectivity.
8. **Central Bank Blockchain Currency:** WAAS Project headed by Stefan Brunnhuber demonstrates the feasibility of financing the huge multi-trillion dollar annual investment requirements for achieving the SDGs based on central bank currencies specifically targeting investments in SDG related activities.
9. **Global Voices and Referendum:** Establish a blockchain based global network for global citizenry, especially youth, to debate critical issues and conduct global referenda to reflect for the first time the real aspirations and voice of humanity relating to issues of global importance.
10. **Global Cooperative Security System:** A system that replaces competitive nationalism and reliance on military preparedness with a common security system that prohibits aggression against other nations and offers global safeguards to members, akin to NATO's collective security system, but inclusive of all nations which agree and adhere to on a non-aggression treaty.

[Dr Brian Walker](#), Blue Planet Prize winner, joint recipient of the Nobel Peace prize to the IPCC.

## **The causes**

The biophysical causes of the polycrisis have been described and discussed in several of the Roundtable presentations, and do not need repeating. The question is, when the biophysical basis of the human predicament is understood and agreed on by all who are informed, why is there no action?

### **Reasons for inaction:**

1. Short-termism and commitment to constant growth in wealth, measured as economic growth in terms of monetary value, disregarding real inclusive wealth. Interest rates determine the time horizon for all assessments.

There are three causes for this continued behaviour:

- The vested interest of an elite (again, in this case, basically those in power and with influence who benefit most from the status quo - the captains of industry and the politicians who need to defer to them).
- The so-called “sunk-cost effect” - a reluctance to abandon things in which much has been invested, even if it would be rationally better to abandon them.
- A ubiquitous contagiousness of attitude and opinion, making it difficult to deviate from the view held by the majority, and therefore stabilizing the status quo.

2. The second reason for lack of action is a change that has occurred in peoples’ values and behaviour, held in place by the third cause – contagiousness of attitude and opinion. (Example of family size in India). The change that has occurred is in people’s and societies’ behaviour, from caring for and contributing to society, to one of personal acquisition and wealth. This became entrenched in the 1960’s and 70’s (Reagan and Thatcher era). It is not only OK to be greedy, but necessary in order for the trickle-down effect to occur. But the trickle down effect has been disproved many times (Prof. John Quiggin, “Zombie Economics: How dead ideas still walk amongst us”).

Without a shift in behaviour from the current focus on increasing personal / national / organizational wealth to a focus on increasing social wellbeing, at all scales, the present trend towards the polycrisis and consequent huge decline in human wellbeing is inevitable.

The question is how to achieve this shift in behaviour across all levels of society.

## Professor Jem Bendell, author of *'Breaking Together'*

Multiple domains of pain are being experienced, to varying degrees, around the world, due an underlying driver of expansionist monetary systems which have captured economies, cultures & governance - for decades. These painful domains include habitat & species extinction, natural resource exhaustion, pervasive toxicity, climate chaos, hyper-militarism, food insecurity, relative overpopulation, chronic and infectious disease, ungoverned technologies, plus widespread delusion & denial. These domains not only invite our simultaneous attention. The fact they are experienced globally & have not been curbed despite decades of scholarship, activism, dialogue & policy innovation, demonstrates they have common causes. One cause is the 'source code' for modern societies, which is the expansionist monetary system, involving private banks issuing nearly all money as debts to themselves. That directly & indirectly incentivises, manipulates & coerces institutions & people to behave in more acquisitive, consumptive, defensive & short-termist ways. Although deeper causes can be supposed, doing so is a way of avoiding actionable yet politically difficult ideas for addressing the monetary driver of the current unravelling & breakdown of societies globally.

That political difficulty leads members of the managerial class who work on matters of public concern to avoid monetary critique & instead return to the failed tropes of i) raising awareness, ii) convening elite collaboration, and iii) magically preventing collapse:

- I. Raising awareness of multiple domains of pain doesn't raise awareness of common causes: it leads to counterproductively profligate state funding of corporations and draconian policies.
- II. Convening elite collaboration accentuates the illegitimate and ill-informed agendas of corporate and bureaucratic officials. That distracts the public from causes and generates a backlash to collective action on common dilemmas.
- III. Calling for action to prevent collapse requires ignoring or downplaying the last 8 years of data, which indicates modern societies worldwide are already at various stages of fracture & there is a momentum in their trajectories. Such downplaying both avoids a verdict upon current institutions & occludes discussion of what can help communities when life is further disrupted.

Moving beyond these failed triple tropes opens a new conversation: how might well-intentioned members of a bureaucratic class do less harm in general & in their efforts on the domains of pain described above? But psychology, culture and institutional incentives militate against such an agenda. The topic generates difficult emotions, yet professionals have learned that to feel confident is good and that can be aided with categories and maps. For instance, inventing a name for our current tragedy by referring to geological eras enables academics to make it a topic for pontificating and professional advancement. More finance & opportunities for exposure arise for any framings & narratives that don't challenge incumbent power. The combination of these dynamics means that the analyses that dominate will serve the professional power of the relatively tiny minority with the finance to engage in discussions about such public concerns. Within that context, officials in governments and intergovernmental agencies are unlikely to engage fully in the reality of an era of societal disruption & collapse, and if they do, they will not find much support. That is why the extent of lying about 'sustainable development' was called out by hundreds of scholars in a public letter to the UN system in 2022. Therefore, what can such officials try to do?

- I. Stop lying and admit failure, including one's involvement in the production of that failure;
- II. Explore how to promote localised coping mechanisms and what blocks local initiative;
- III. Resist ongoing lies about the predicament, the half measures that only profit capitalists, and emerging proto-authoritarian narratives and initiatives
- IV. Support more participation in policy dialogues by people not aligned to any incumbent power.

**Note: Inquiries regarding the policies advocated by participants in the Roundtable should be directed to the individual organisations.**

**A link to the website of every organisation is included in its title, at the top of the page where its submission appears.**

**Please follow the contact details on individual websites.**

**Further reading:**

- [How to Fix a Broken Planet: Advice for Surviving the C21st](#)
- [Earth For All: A Survival Guide for Humanity](#)
- [Breaking Together](#)
- [Eaarth](#)
- [Power: Limits and Prospects for Human Survival](#)
- [The Climate Majority Project](#)