



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

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**International Environment Forum** A Safer inspired organization addressing  
the environment and sustainable development

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**From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters**

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to [newsletter@ief.org](mailto:newsletter@ief.org)

Please share the *Leaves* newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

**IEF 23rd Conference in New Zealand in April  
Planetary Health and Sustainable Development  
Auckland and Rotorua, New Zealand, 5-14 April 2019**

IEF 23rd Annual Conference in New Zealand will consist of four interrelated events around the general theme of **Planetary Health and Sustainable Development**. The following are brief preliminary descriptions of the events. More details will be forthcoming.

**5 April 2019, Seminar at Auckland University of Technology**

Theme: **Spiritual mind-sets for social and environmental transformation**

1-5 PM, short talks and group consultation

Organised by IEF member Marjo Lips-Wiersma, Professor of Ethics and Sustainability Leadership, Auckland University of Technology

**Linking spirituality to the Sustainable Development Goals**

Arthur Dahl, President, International Environment Forum

translating the SDGs to the individual and community levels, looking at spirituality as another-centred mindset, and exploring some of the values that motivate changes in lifestyles and behaviour, as well as some indicators for values-based education.

**A Maori perspective**

Amber Nicholson, Auckland University of Technology

**One World, One People, One Health: Why I co-host a world conference on health promotion**

Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director, Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand and Vice President, South West Pacific Region, International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE)

Other speakers to be announced

Closing panel or ritual

## Friday evening 5 April: International Environment Forum Annual General Assembly

at Auckland University of Technology. This event is open to everyone who would like to learn about the IEF.

## 7-11 April 2019, 23rd IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion

Rotorua, Aotearoa New Zealand

Theme: **Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the framework for the sub-themes of the conference

IEF is a co-sponsor of Sub Plenary 16:

### **Wellbeing for everyone in a challenging world: community and spiritual health promotion perspectives**

with the Planetary Wellbeing Network (PWN) and the Spiritual Health Promotion Group (SHP)

Wednesday, 10 April 1:45-3:15 PM

Speakers include:

Prof. John Raeburn, Auckland University of Technology and PWN

Dr. Tess Liew, PWN

Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director, Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand

Dr. Richard Egan, University of Otago, NZ

Dr. Arthur Dahl, President, International Environment Forum

Arthur Dahl is also presenting a paper:

### **New approaches to governance for the Sustainable Development Goals**

Parallel 13a: Multisectoral governance at different scales

Tuesday, 9 April, 3:45 PM - 5:15 PM

Energy Events Centre - Unison Arena

## 14 April 2019 Seminar at Auckland Bahá'í Centre

### **One World, One People, One Health**

A seminar on planetary health and sustainable development

Auckland Bahá'í Centre, 129 Taniwha St, Glen Innes, Auckland 1072

Sunday 14 April 2019, 1:30-5pm

Speakers:

Dr Arthur Dahl, President, International Environment Forum

Topic: **Drawing on recent guidance from the Baha'i World Centre for socially- and environmentally-coherent action**

Sione Tu'itahi, Executive Director, Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand

Topic: **Learnings from co-hosting a world conference on planetary wellbeing and sustainable development**

The wellbeing of the planet is one of the most significant issues for humanity today. Dr Dahl and Mr Tu'itahi are Baha'is who work in the field of health promotion and sustainable development. They are speakers in a subplenary at the 23rd World Conference on Health Promotion, to be held in Rotorua on April 7-11, 2019. Mr Tu'itahi is the co-chair of the world conference which is to be held for the first time in New Zealand. More on the conference: <http://www.iuhpe2019.com/en-gb/iuhpe-home>

For registration or further information for the 14 April event, contact Sylvia Aston or Sione Tu'itahi

## Member's Corner

### **Call for brief videos on health and sustainability related topics**

This year's IEF conference will take place in connection with the World Health Promotion Conference in Rotorua, New Zealand on 7-11 April 2019. We invite IEF Members, especially those working in health related areas, to participate remotely by producing brief videos that would fit into the themes of the conference or of the IEF/Baha'i related events. Links to these videos will be shared at these events as well as on the IEF website. We are looking for 2 - 3 min. videos. However, shorter is fine, and a little longer is ok, too.

Topics should fit into one of the three overall themes:

"Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development for All" – the theme of the World Health Promotion Conference in Rotorua, New Zealand on 7-11 April 2019

“The role of spirituality in creating new social and environmental sustainability mindsets” - the theme of the full day interfaith public event at the Auckland University of Technology on 5 April  
 “Baha’i-inspired perspectives for public discourses on planetary well-being and sustainable development” - the theme of a Baha’i session in Auckland on 14 April

It would be helpful, if you could send your video to [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org) by March 25, so that we will have the time to post it on the website and to include the link in materials distributed at the conference and its side events. If you have any questions about producing such a video, please, send an e-mail to the same address.

### **IEF needs help from people with video experience**

IEF has begun to encourage its members to get actively involved by producing brief videos, currently, for example, in connection with the World Health Promotion Conference in New Zealand. We are looking for some volunteers who could provide the following service:

- Write a basic guide that provides advice how to produce a video.
- Direct online technical assistance to a fellow IEF member who needs help with producing a video.

Please, contact [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org) if you are able to assist with one of these tasks. Thank you!

### **Book Review**

#### **Equality for Women = Prosperity for All: The Disastrous Global Crisis of Gender Inequality**

By Augusto López-Claros and Bahiyih Nakhjavani

New York: St. Martin's Press. 312 p.

**Book review** by Arthur Dahl

When a distinguished economist, who headed the unit at the World Bank producing the "*Women, Business and the Law*" reports, gets together with a well-known Bahá'í author of books such as "*The Woman Who Read Too Much*" to write about gender inequality, the result is bound to be outstanding. Their new book (October 2018) is a remarkable analysis of all the reasons why gender discrimination is bad for society, with an emphasis on its economic costs. They demonstrate convincingly, citing many research findings that the resulting social and political disparities are behind endemic poverty and violence, individual frustration, social instability and cultural disaffection. The more freedoms are given to women, the greater the resulting prosperity for all.

The first chapter explores the demographic dimension of the gender issue, including the women missing due to son preference, and the fact that we frequently ignore or deny rights to half the world population (the female half). This then leads into a disturbing review of violence against women in all its forms, often hidden or protected by family and labour law.

One of the most significant forms of discrimination against women is in the world of work, starting with beliefs that the place of women is only in the home and raising children. Even when they do go out to work, it is often in the menial and least-paid jobs. Many countries had, and often still have, laws prohibiting women in certain professions. Then there is the "glass ceiling" preventing women from accessing higher levels of responsibility and managerial positions. Even when the laws are changed, practices are slow to follow. The consequences of the exclusion of women from the economy are analysed in some detail, demonstrating how significant is the economic impact.

In analysing the culture question, the book considers the barriers erected by religious interpretations of gender roles and the arguments of cultural exceptionalism that deny the universality of human rights, dissecting the many ways that an unjustified sense of male superiority and the defense of male power hide behind questionable interpretations of scripture and culture, making women who try to improve their lot the victims of cultural crimes.

In its analysis of the legal approaches to gender, the book explores the impact of international conventions and the evolution of civil law, common law and traditional forms of law on women's mobility, and their marital and inheritance rights. The long struggle for female suffrage and the right to vote is only beginning to be reflected in

women taking on legislative and political responsibilities. Behind all of this is the role of education, particularly of girls, but also more generally to overcome gender stereotypes in society. There are still movements that see education of girls as such a threat that they resort to kidnapping, rape and murder to prevent it. The authors demonstrate the benefits of providing education to girls, and the costs of denying it, with 500 million women still illiterate today.

Finally, the book adds up the costs of inequality, with systems of governance that license injustice, and identifies the kinds of laws that must be changed to uphold women's rights, guarantee their security, and improve their access to education and employment. One could not ask for better justifications for guaranteeing equality to women in order to achieve prosperity for all.



## Our global system has spun out of control. Here's how to rebalance it

The world is not just more complex than ever before, it is also changing ever faster

Image: REUTERS/Edgar Su/File Photo  
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/how-to-rebalance-our-global-system/>

05 Feb 2019. **Klaus Schwab**, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum

The global system we are part of seems to be spinning out of control. Headlines around the world tell us something is amiss in many societies. I believe many of the developments we see today in individual countries and societies are part of an interconnected network of cause and effect. The entire global system is under stress. We must ensure it rebalances.

I believe this is possible, and I will outline below how I think this rebalancing can be achieved. But first let us consider the extent of the current global imbalances. There are four reasons why the system has spun as out of control as it has.

### 1. The unprecedented complexity of our global system

In a world of 7.7 billion people, it is no surprise that our global system is more complex than at any other time in history. In 1945, when the building blocks of the current global system were constructed, the world population was less than a third of what it is today. Similarly regarding the global economy, after World War II exports comprised a mere 5% of global GDP. Today, that percentage is roughly five times higher, even as global GDP has increased multifold as well.

### 2. The accelerating speed of change caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The world is not just more complex, it is also changing ever faster. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has already introduced more new technologies than any of its predecessors, including artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles and gene editing, among others. Moreover, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is powered by increasingly faster chips, and by an exponential rise in their computing power. All but a handful of organizations in Silicon Valley, Shenzhen and other tech hubs are falling behind in their ability to cope with this change.

### 3. An outdated steering mechanism for global governance

Confronted with this complex, fast-changing world, the steering mechanism for global governance created in the mid-20th century is quickly becoming outdated. The United Nations was created at a time when the People's Republic of China - soon the world's leading economy and already a major political power - did not yet exist. The Washington Consensus on how to achieve economic development is no longer valid in a world of automation and 3D printing. And to this day, no international organization has an actual estimate of the size of our digital economy.

#### **4. Popular uprisings in many countries, driven by a broad-based popular urge to take back control of society**

Seeing that even sovereign governments are caught off guard by the pace of technological change and are unable to cope with it, people around the world are revolting. Some direct their anger towards supranational organizations such as the European Union, others direct it towards foreigners and foreign nations, and still others revolt against other members of their own society. But many are also revolting against the political or economic system for either failing to produce widely held gains or for failing to address climate change. Almost all share one feeling: they want to take back control of a system that feels out of reach.

This is the overall state of the world in which we live today. But our global system is also a complex set of interdependent subsystems, and each of these subsystems is now out of balance too. Together, they are creating an explosive mix of threats to our future.

There are five subsystems that make up the global system: our ecological system; our economic system; our technological system; our social system; and our political system.

##### **The ecological subsystem**

This is arguably the most important of the five. Without a balanced global ecological system, none of the others can function at all. On global warming, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a dire warning in October 2018 that we have only 12 years left to prevent a global climate change catastrophe. Indeed, unless we drastically change course now, global temperatures will almost certainly rise by more than two degrees Celsius, and the consequences will be nearly impossible to reverse.



##### **We have 12 years left to prevent climate catastrophe**

Image: REUTERS/Denis Balibouse

At the same time, we have come to realize that global warming itself is only one aspect of the Anthropocene. Our oceans, for example, are suffering in other ways too. At Davos in 2016, we were warned that there may be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050, if we continue to produce as much single-use plastic.

This year, primatologist Jane Goodall, documentary filmmaker Sir David Attenborough and World Wildlife Fund Executive Director Marco Lambertini warned of other irreparable harms that we are causing to our planet. This

has given rise to the conviction that we need a New Deal for Nature as a whole.

##### **The economic subsystem**

The International Monetary Fund in January once again lowered its global economic growth forecast, to 3.5% in 2019 and only slightly higher in 2020. IMF Director Christine Lagarde warned that “the world economy is growing more slowly” just as “risks are rising”. This slowdown comes at a time when corporate debt levels in the United States and elsewhere are almost double what they were in 2007. Local government debt in China has risen dramatically as well, and Europe still hasn’t entirely recovered from its previous crisis. Clearly, we have little room to manoeuvre when the next recession hits.

Trade issues are generating additional economic concerns. For decades, trade helped fuel the greatest wealth increase the world has ever seen. But since a few years ago, trade has been tapering off as a percentage of global GDP. This is set to get worse as leading countries are turning to trade war as an economic policy tool. This is a dangerous gamble. In a complex global economic system, it is almost certain that trade restrictions will have unintended and negative consequences.

### **The technological subsystem**

Connected technology is playing a more important role than ever before in our global system, yet it presents risks that are also greater than ever before. Our [Global Risks Report 2019](#) indicated that alongside climate change and extreme weather events, one of the greatest causes for concern is large-scale cyberattacks and the breakdown of critical IT infrastructure and networks.

This looming cyber threat comes just as breakthrough technologies are affecting us to an ever-greater extent, and in ways with which we have not yet learned to cope. We have only seen the tip of the iceberg when it comes to artificial intelligence, for example. It will lead to the automation of many more tasks. It will also be able to predict many more things than it already can, owing to more abundant data collection. The next great power struggle for supremacy has already begun, and it is focused on AI.

For the use of data in AI to have positive outcomes, we must ensure that the data used is both diverse and properly obtained. On these fronts, enormous challenges are increasingly raising concerns around bias and privacy. Nations possessing large and diverse data sets, or those that create cross-border data flow protocols to create them, will be well positioned to take full advantage of machine learning. Nations with smaller populations and those with large populations but without the digital infrastructure to collect data via the Internet of Things risk falling even further behind in this race.

### **The social subsystem**

Partly because of the technological progress of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which puts great power in the hands of big tech companies, we once again live in a “winner-takes-all” society and economy. The power of these companies stands in deep contrast to the situation of a new “precariat” arising all over the world.

The plight of the “yellow vests” in France, of the “forgotten people” in America’s Midwest and Appalachia, and of the nationalist voters in Brazil, the Philippines and India may seem distinct at first glance. But the fact that they have all come to the fore in the space of a few years is no coincidence. Technology has left many people behind and has increased disparity, while opening a window to the world of its beneficiaries.

### **The global political system**

From a world of two powers fighting for global dominance, by 1990 only one remained: the United States. That unipolar world, with the US as the leading political power and market capitalism as the leading economic concept, has come to an end. The new, multipolar and multiconceptual world that met at Davos 2019 is extremely fragile, as the rise of new powers leads to an inherently more hostile environment for the previous hegemony.

This brings me to the core question to be answered. How can we re-establish system control in a world that is out of balance on all these fronts?

I believe we can spawn a new era of prosperity and relative peace if we manage to put in place a normative framework for global system change. Executed properly, this framework can lead us from imbalance to balance, and from upheaval, nationalism and protectionism to a new era of globalization - Globalization 4.0. What would the norms for global system change look like? I propose the following seven.

**First, a collaborative approach of global governance that is respectful of multipolarity and diversity.** A new global system should be based on common interests. It should be founded on coordinated achievement of common objectives, rather than on cooperation to achieve a common strategy. The Paris Climate Agreement is a case in point. It agreed on “what” we want to achieve, but left sovereign nations free to decide “how” best to reach their country goals.

**Second, the new global system should be more stakeholder-based.** Countries have achieved the greatest progress when they have considered all their stakeholders: civil society, business, government, and individual citizens and groups. This has been true for the country I come from, Germany, and will remain true for all countries going forward.

**Third, our system should be more sustainable.** Already in the early 1970s, the Club of Rome warned us that one day, there would be limits to growth. They were mistaken about the short-term Malthusian aspect of those limits, but they were very right about the environmental aspect of our limits to growth. According to one estimate, in the last three decades, our global ecosystem has lost up to a quarter of the value it could potentially provide. We cannot let it degrade further.

**Fourth, our system should be more inclusive.** Individuals may be able to garner more wealth by blindly pursuing their own interests. But in the interest of society, we must make sure that no one gets left behind. In many societies, that may well mean a renewed focus on redistributive policies and taxation.

**Fifth, our system should be more gender-balanced.** For too long, we have lived in a world that has granted all kinds of privileges based on gender. The 21st century must be the one in which this changes, and in which women participate in politics and in business to the same or similar degree as their male counterparts. At our Annual Meeting, we remain committed to increasing the share of women's participation year after year, as we did again this year.

**Sixth, it should be more human-centric.** That is not to say I believe that humans should wage war against robots, but rather that we are more powerful when we work in collaboration with them. When we evolve our global system, we must make sure that the primacy of people and their needs, as well as all species, take precedence over machines.

**Lastly, our future global system should be more ethically based.** It needs to stamp out distortions including corruption and various excesses. Elites need to be more trustworthy role models. In short, we need a re-moralization of globalization.

If we apply these norms consistently across the global subsystems I mentioned earlier, I believe we can shape Globalization 4.0 as a wave of globalization that will lead to a prosperity and stability more profound and more widely shared than ever before in history, including even the prosperity and stability which came about in the last great wave of global growth in the 1990s and 2000s.



Of course, to rebalance each subsystem, separate dialogues will need to take place. For example, in socio-economic systems, new rules will need to be agreed on fiscal policies. With rising inequality and "winner-takes-all"-driven industries, it will almost certainly be necessary to increase taxes on wealth and reduce those on labour, as well as to take anti-trust action to ensure that competition and choice are respected.

In the technological subsystem, we will have to agree on new rules for AI and gene editing, to make sure they are underpinned by the necessary ethical principles. And in

the societal subsystem, we will need to move from a materialistic fixation to a more humanistic focus, particularly in ageing societies.

What do all the systemic changes I have described mean for the world as a whole? They confirm, most importantly, that no single actor has the capability to restore order in the global system. If ever the world was a unipolar world, that time is over. If ever there was a political system with absolute sovereignty, it no longer exists. We can turn our back on the digitally and environmentally connected world we live in today, but we cannot escape its reality. There are two ways of approaching this fact, one negative and the other constructive. The negative approach would cause national leaders to focus solely on their national interests, on the understanding that preserving national social cohesion is the sole priority. Such an attitude however, would further disintegrate the global system.

The constructive approach to the new global reality suggests the global system can be reinforced and restored. Certainly, this cannot be done top-down as in the past, but rather by strengthening the elements of the system from the base. It will surely take multiple efforts to remodel these elements and to remove the distortions and imbalances among them.

As proof that this approach can work, let me share just a few of the key achievements from the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting 2019 in Davos:

- Multiple stakeholders announced their commitment to achieving a New Deal for Nature by 2020. The World Wildlife Fund, the International Chamber of Commerce, and several other stakeholders fully support this goal.
- A similar success was announced with respect to trade by the World Trade Organization. Several dozens of countries declared that they would start to craft rules for digital trade.
- The 2019 Annual Meeting saw a record number of concrete outcomes thanks to the multistakeholder and bottom-up systemic approach.

But progress needs to be made beyond Davos and beyond the global system too. So let me attempt to answer a final, crucial question. What does this systems theory of change mean for the leaders of countries and governments? In a fragile global system, we need to strengthen resilience by building a strong national subsystem that is able to absorb shocks. I see three main pillars for building resilient and future-ready national systems.

**The first is that governments need to take a foresighted approach.** The good news is that this is now possible. The abundance and availability of data and AI allows for a transformation from backward-looking analyses to predictive ones, and from reactive analyses to proactive ones. It is paramount that governments invest in tools that enable this, and that they learn to gather and process the available data in responsible ways.

An example of such a foresighted approach is the evolution of early warning systems for tsunamis. Until very recently, Stanford researchers said that such systems could only use pre-computed relations between earthquakes and tsunamis. Now, new methods allow for real-time estimates.

Moreover, new geological sensors can also more accurately predict everything from the probability of future seismic shocks in a specific area, to the chances of that area being flooded. These kinds of technologies can help governments decide where to build critical infrastructure or where to allow houses to be built.

**The second pillar for building resilient national systems is achieved by bundling resources.** Too often, government institutions still work in silos, whether within countries or across nations. By bundling resources and linking smart systems, governments can reduce system complexity and strengthen the agility and resilience of their national systems.

**The final pillar for governments should be constant exploration, adaptation, and scaling up.** We have pioneered this governance approach at our World Economic Forum Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution across the world.

The approach we suggest to governments is to test technology policies through fast prototyping and testing in a limited environment. Technology is changing quickly, and so should governments.

The world we live in today is troubled by a global system imbalance. If we don't address it soon, it will surely lead to more problems down the road, and our ability to rebalance the system will lessen. But it need not be this way.

Equipped with the right principles, and with an understanding of the complexity of each subsystem, we can steer the world towards an unprecedented era of global and shared prosperity. Let us make sure that Globalization 4.0 will be the best yet.