



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM  
Volume 18, Number 6 15 June 2016**



**International Environment Forum** A Baha'i inspired organization addressing  
the environment and sustainable development

Website	<a href="http://www.iefworld.org">www.iefworld.org</a>	<b>Article Deadline next issue 13 July 2016</b>
Article submission	<a href="mailto:newsletter@iefworld.org">newsletter@iefworld.org</a>	
Secretariat Email	<a href="mailto:ief@iefworld.org">ief@iefworld.org</a>	General Secretary Emily Firth
President Email	<a href="mailto:ief@iefworld.org">ief@iefworld.org</a>	Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.
Postal address	12B Chemin de Maisonneuve, CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva, Switzerland	

### **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.

## **INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM 20TH Annual Conference**

**Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals as communities and individuals**  
Nur University, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 7-9 October 2016

Planning is going ahead for the next IEF International Conference on 7-9 October at Nur University in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. We should be able to announce more details and the procedure for registration in the July newsletter

In this important year for the launching of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the conference will focus on three issues that concern everyone, and are of particular interest to Latin America:

- **Responsible and sustainable lifestyles** (SDG12)
- **Values and education** (SDG4)
- **Sustainable urban communities** (SDG11)

The IEF 20th Conference will provide an opportunity to dialogue and reflect about these elements of the SDG framework. It will be relevant to prominent personalities and opinion leaders, government officials, academics and students. It will include some keynotes and workshops, and also sessions for presented papers. If you are interested in participating in the conference or making a presentation relevant to one of its themes, please contact IEF ([info@iefworld.org](mailto:info@iefworld.org)). A formal call for presentations and conference registration will be issued later.

The conference will also provide a forum to consider key issues relevant to Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (<https://www.habitat3.org/>), to be held in Quito, Ecuador, on 17-20 October 2016. Some participants may also wish to combine it with the dedication of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Santiago, Chile, on 13-16 October.

## Update your IEF directory entry

As usual, the IEF will be updating its Directory of Members and sending it to all members before the Annual General Assembly in October. Many members have not changed their information in the directory since they joined IEF, often many years ago. Now is your chance to bring your information up to date before the new directory is finalized. The easiest way is to log into the IEF web site, go to your user page, and change whatever needs to be updated. If you have forgotten your password, write [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org). You can also email your information to the same address.

## IEF speakers in Kuwait

IEF board members Wendi Momen and Arthur Dahl were invited to be keynote speakers at the first **Vision Gulf Business Conference** in Kuwait on 31 May 2016, on the theme "Opportunities for Innovation and Coexistence", preceded by a press conference on 30 May. The conference, planned to be an annual event, aims to explore, inspire and offer practical approaches for building a better future for Kuwait. Ethical Business Building the Future (ebbf) was a conference partner.

Arthur Dahl gave the opening keynote on "The future of business in a world with a changing climate" (<http://iefworld.org/ddahl16c>). He highlighted the requirement of the Paris Agreement for a rapid transition to a low carbon society and the challenges this represents for a country like Kuwait with an economy built on oil, and suggesting some of the options for a more sustainable future. The following workshop allowed participants to discuss some of the positive directions that Kuwait could take. The second speaker was Dr. Hamad Al-Hasawi, President of the Kuwait Banking Association, on "Strategic projects in Kuwait: opportunities and challenges".



Closing panel with Wendi Momen, Bayan Salmanpour and Arthur Dahl



The second conference session began with conference organizer and ebbf member Bayan Salmanpour speaking on "Coexistence, business and the environment, do they mix?", followed by Arthur's second talk on "The UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals: challenges and opportunities" (<http://iefworld.org/ddahl16d>). The last conference keynote was by Dr. Wendi Momen OBE on "Why bother with business ethics? The ebbf view" in which she discussed a number of passages from the Qur'an about ethics in business transactions. The conference concluded with a panel discussion responding to questions from the audience. Discussion continued afterwards around an extensive buffet lunch. For a photo album on the conference, see <http://yabaha.net/dahl/travel/t2016/Kuwait/Kuwait.html>.

## ebbf and SDGs

IEF's partner Bahá'í-inspired organization, ebbf - Ethical Business Building the Future, is exploring how to align its activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted with the UN 2030 Agenda last September. It has identified a selection of SDG targets that are relevant to business, either because they represent business opportunities, or because business has a responsibility in changing its practices to meet the goal. It is also using a compilation of Bahá'í texts relevant to each SDG that is also available on the IEF web site at [http://iefworld.org/cmp\\_SDG](http://iefworld.org/cmp_SDG). A new section of the ebbf web site on the SDGs is in preparation.

## Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen in Colombia

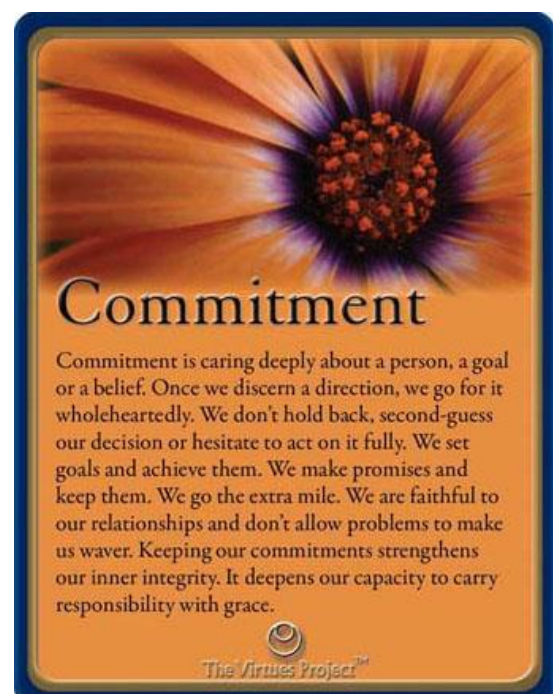
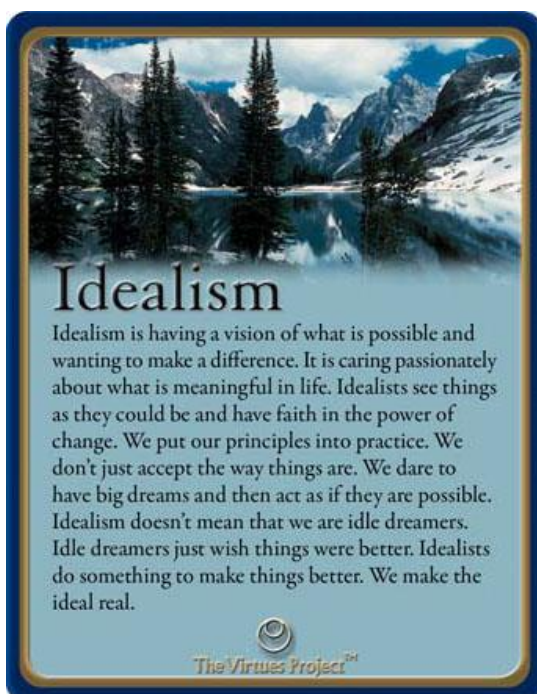
IEF board member Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen spent 10 days in Colombia at the end of April. First she attended the International Civil Society Week in Bogota where some 900 people from over a hundred countries gathered to discuss and celebrate civic action. Sylvia is a member of the board of CIVICUS, the main organizer, and the IEF has just become an associate member in this international non-governmental organization that supports greater civil society participation in governance at all levels. The week provided a rich experience and many inspiring meetings with individuals strongly committed to social action. Sylvia then continued to Cali for three days. She visited the site for a local Bahá'í House of Worship in the North Cauca region. During a meeting with the director of FUNDAEC she learned more about the project to plant a native forest on a large part of the property where the House of Worship is being built. The plan is to reintroduce many species of trees and medicinal plants useful to people that have largely disappeared from the region now dominated by sugarcane cultivation. In the city of Cali, Sylvia had the opportunity to meet two local IEF members and gave a short informal presentation one evening on the IEF contributions to the UN Climate Conference in Paris in 2015.

## Interfaith Climate Change Course Now Available in Spanish

28. May 2016 The Interfaith Study Course on the **Scientific and Spiritual Dimensions of Climate Change** prepared for IEF by Christine Muller and used successfully in many communities for study circles, is now available in Spanish, translated by IEF member Zulay Posada of Colombia. The original course in English in 9 modules is available on the IEF web site, and was used to design the very successful on-line course on Climate Change offered through the Wilmette Institute. A 5-module course in French was prepared last year in anticipation of the Paris Climate Change Conference in December 2015. This course is now available in Spanish, which is appropriate since the next IEF Annual Conference will be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on 7-9 October 2016. These courses are designed for self-study and use in local communities or organizations, and include instructions for facilitators, so no special training or experience is required to use them. They are excellent to build a shared understanding of climate change and our responsibility to respond to it among people of all religious backgrounds, and can be useful for interfaith work.

### Las dimensiones científicas y espirituales del cambio climático (pdf)

A Spanish Interfaith Study Course in 5 classes - Una clase entreligiosa en español en 5 modulos



## IEF author contributes to GEO-6 for Europe

Batumi, Georgia, 8 June 2016 – Poor air quality, climate change, unhealthy lifestyles and the disconnection between people and the environment are increasingly affecting human health in the region, finds the latest Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) assessment for the pan-European region, prepared by UNEP and UNECE with support from the European Environment Agency (EEA). Air pollution is now the greatest health risk in the region, with more than 95% of the EU urban population exposed to levels above World Health Organisation guidelines, for example. Over 500,000 premature deaths in the region were attributable to outdoor air quality and 100,000 to indoor air quality in 2012.

Climate change is one of the largest threats to human and ecosystem health and to achieving sustainable development in the pan-European region. It is also an accelerator for most other environmental risks. Impacts of climate change affect health through floods, heat waves, droughts, reduced agricultural productivity, exacerbated air pollution and allergies and vector, food and water-borne diseases.

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation is continuing in the region and is mainly caused by increased land-use change, particularly agricultural intensification, urbanization and habitat fragmentation. On-going biodiversity decline and loss is particularly high in Eastern and Western Europe, with lower rates in Central Europe, the Russian Federation and Central Asian countries. Biodiversity underpins all ecosystem services, guaranteeing supply of environmental goods and services, such as nutrients and food, clean air and freshwater.

Competing interests for land resources are widespread across the region. Every day the countries of the EU28 alone lose 275 hectares of agricultural land to soil sealing and land take. Land quality impacts human health in various ways, through direct benefits from food and nutrition, living and recreational space for optimal lifestyles, physical exercise and even mental health.

Environmental challenges in the region have become more systemic and complex, while resilience to these will be affected by megatrends largely outside the region's control, finds the report, launched at the eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial conference on 8 June.

"The GEO-6 assessment for the pan-European region highlights how the transition to an inclusive green economy in the region must be built on resilient ecosystems, sound management of chemicals and clean production systems, and on healthy consumption choices," said Jan Dusik, Head of UNEP's Regional Office for Europe. "Greater cooperation and a more integrated approach are needed to tackle these transboundary challenges, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals," he underlined.

"This report provides fresh information on the region's emerging environmental issues and it will help governments shape their future policy," said UNECE Executive Secretary Christian Friis Bach. "UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and other instruments are effective tools to assist member States tackle many of these issues from air quality to water management to access to information, justice and public participation."

Greater investments are needed in environmental accounting systems to ensure external costs are addressed. There is a need to pay close attention to early signals from science and society and invest in foresight processes to identify possible future risks, opportunities and conflicts. The Shared Environmental Information System and the GEO assessment provide the knowledge base for policy-makers to act on.

IEF President Arthur Dahl was Coordinating Lead Author for Chapter 1.1 of the report on the Sustainable Development Goals, and a lead author for Chapter 4. GEO is a consultative process resulting in reports on the state, trends and outlook for the environment (<http://www.unep.org/geo/>). The EfE conference in Batumi, Georgia, where the GEO-6 assessment for the pan-European region was launched on 8 June was attended by dozens of ministers and high-level representatives (<http://efebatumi.com/en/>).

The report can be downloaded at [http://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/assessments/GEO\\_6\\_Assessment\\_pan\\_European\\_region.pdf](http://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/assessments/GEO_6_Assessment_pan_European_region.pdf) or consulted as an e-book at: <http://content.yudu.com/web/2y3n2/0A2y3n3/GEO6-EUROPE/html/index.html>. All the GEO-6 regional reports are available at <http://uneplive.unep.org/theme/index/18#.V1mmb2aNsxB>.

Based on UNEP Press Release from Batumi 8 June 2016

## **For World Environment Day – Sunday 5 June**

### **“A deadly undertaking” – UN experts urge all Governments to protect environmental rights defenders**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20052&LangID=E>

GENEVA (2 June 2016) – *Speaking ahead of World Environment Day on Sunday 5 June, three United Nations human rights experts call on every Government to protect environmental and land rights defenders.*

*The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, John Knox; the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, stress that protecting environmental rights defenders is crucial to protect the environment and the human rights that depend on it.*

“Being an environmentalist can be a dangerous, even deadly undertaking. Berta Cáceres, the Goldman Prize winner who was assassinated in Honduras in March 2016, was only one of dozens of environmentalists to be killed in recent months.

Every week, on average, two environmental and land rights activists are killed and the numbers are getting worse, according to civil society figures. The situation is particularly grave in Latin America and Southeast Asia, but it affects every region of the world. It is truly a global crisis.

On this World Environment Day, we want to underscore that environmental human rights defenders should be lauded as heroes for putting themselves at risk to protect the rights and well-being of others. Instead, they are often targeted as if they were enemies of the State.

The brave women and men who work to protect the environment are routinely harassed, threatened, unlawfully detained, and even murdered, merely for opposing powerful business and governmental interests bent on exploiting and destroying the natural environment on which we all depend.

The enjoyment of a vast range of human rights, including rights to life, health, food, water, and housing, depend on a healthy and sustainable environment. Those who work to protect the environment are not only environmentalists – they are also human rights defenders.

In March 2016, the Human Rights Council adopted a landmark Resolution (res 31/ 32) which requires States to ensure the rights and safety of human rights defenders working towards the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

That was a good initial step, but Governments must do far more. They have obligations under human rights law to protect environmentalists’ rights of expression and association by responding rapidly and effectively to threats, promptly investigating acts of harassment and violence from all parties including business and non-State actors, protecting the lives of those at risk, and bringing those responsible to justice.

States must also adopt and implement mechanisms that allow defenders to communicate their grievances, claim responsibilities, and obtain effective redress for violations, without fear of intimidation.

They must take additional steps to safeguard the rights of members of marginalized and vulnerable communities, especially indigenous peoples, whose cultures, identities and livelihoods often depend on the environment and whose lives are particularly susceptible to environmental harm, placing them on the frontlines of conflict.

Currently, States are failing to meet these obligations. Of the nearly 1000 reported murders over the last decade, fewer than 10 have resulted in convictions. The real culprits are rarely held accountable for their crimes.

In the last year, the international community has reached consensus on the new sustainable development goals as a roadmap to a more sustainable, prosperous and equitable future. But those goals cannot be met if those on the front line of protecting sustainable development are not protected.

It is ironic that environmental rights defenders are often branded as ‘anti-development’, when by working to make development truly sustainable, they are actually more pro-development than the corporations and governments that oppose them.

Supporting environmental human rights defenders is crucial to protect our environment and the human rights that depend on it, and Governments should never forget that.”

## ENDS

The UN Human Rights Council appointed Mr. **John H. Knox** (USA) in 2012 to serve as Independent Expert, and reappointed him in 2015 as Special Rapporteur, on the issue of human rights obligations related to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The Council requested him, a professor of international law at Wake Forest University in the United States, to clarify the application of human rights norms to environmental protection, and to identify best practices in the use of human rights obligations in environmental policy-making. Learn more, visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/SREnvironmentIndex.aspx>

Mr. **Michel Forst** (France) was appointed by the Human Rights Council as the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in 2014. Michel Forst has extensive experience on human rights issues and particularly on the situation of human rights defenders. In particular, he was the Director General of Amnesty International (France) and Secretary General of the first World Summit on Human Rights Defenders in 1998. For more information, log on to:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/SRHRDefendersIndex.aspx>.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Mr. Forst will present a report on the situation of environmental and land rights defenders to the UN General Assembly in October 2016.

The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Ms. **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz** (Philippines), is a human rights activist working on indigenous peoples' rights. Her work for more than three decades has been focused on movement building among indigenous peoples and also among women, and she has worked as an educator-trainer on human rights,

development and indigenous peoples in various contexts. She is a member of the Kankana-ey, Igorot indigenous peoples in the Cordillera Region in the Philippines. Learn more, log on to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx>

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. They are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organization. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work.

For more information and **media requests**, please contact Ms. Ahreum Lee (+41 22 917 9391/[ahreumlee@ohchr.org](mailto:ahreumlee@ohchr.org)) or write to [srenvironment@ohchr.org](mailto:srenvironment@ohchr.org)

For **media inquiries** related to other UN independent experts: Xabier Celaya – Media Unit (+ 41 22 917 9383 / [xcelaya@ohchr.org](mailto:xcelaya@ohchr.org))

### For your news websites and social media:

Multimedia content & key messages relating to our news releases are available on UN Human Rights social media channels, listed below. Please tag us using the proper handles:

Twitter: [@UNHumanRights](https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights)

Facebook: [unitednationshumanrights](https://www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights)

Instagram: [unitednationshumanrights](https://www.instagram.com/unitednationshumanrights)

Google+: [unitednationshumanrights](https://plus.google.com/+unitednationshumanrights)

Youtube: [unohchr](https://www.youtube.com/user/unohchr)



## High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

11 - 20 July 2016, New York  
Ministerial days from 18 - 20 July

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is United Nations central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015.

The Forum, which adopts a Ministerial Declaration, is expected to start effectively delivering on its mandates to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the 2030 Agenda's implementation and follow-up; keep track of progress; spur coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences; as well as address new and emerging issues.

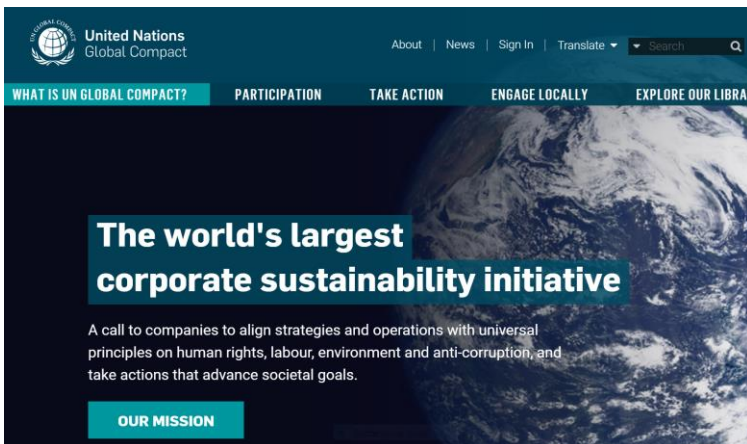
## WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING HLPF IN 2016?

HLPF in 2016 is the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The session will include voluntary reviews of 22 countries and thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums. HLPF will also include a range of side events, a Partnership Exchange event, and SDGs Learning, Training and Practice sessions.

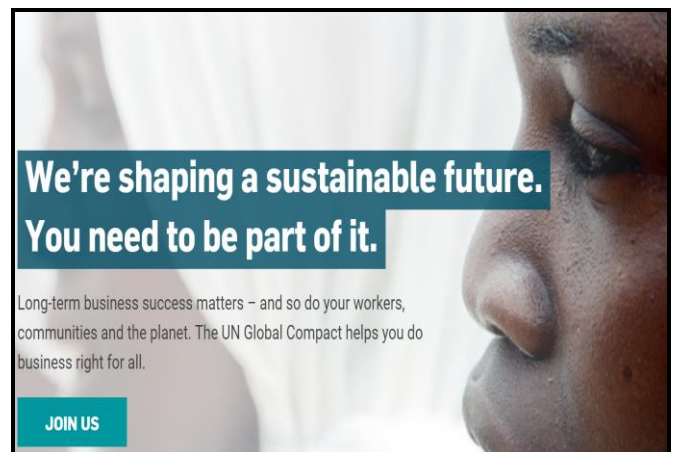
## HOW CAN MEMBER STATES, UN SYSTEM ENTITIES, MAJOR GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATE?

HLPF is the most inclusive and participatory forum at the United Nations, bringing all States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies together. All people can participate in HLPF through the major groups and other stakeholders format. All stakeholders are also invited to organize side events, and register multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments in support of the SDGs.

- [Download Programme as PDF](#)
- [Schedule for Side events and SDGs Learning, Training and Practice](#) coming soon.



<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc>



<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/participation>

## Our Mission

At the UN Global Compact, we believe it's possible to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to people, communities and markets. That's our vision.

To make this happen, the UN Global Compact supports companies to:

1. Do business responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption; and
2. Take strategic actions to advance broader societal goals, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on collaboration and innovation.

## The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

Corporate sustainability starts with a company's value system and a principled approach to doing business. This means operating in ways that, at a minimum, meet fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Responsible businesses enact the same values and principles wherever they have a

presence, and know that good practices in one area do not offset harm in another. By incorporating the Global Compact principles into strategies, policies and procedures, and establishing a culture of integrity, companies are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people and planet, but also setting the stage for long-term success.

The UN Global Compact's Ten Principles are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

### **Human Rights**

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### **Labour**

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### **Environment**

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### **Anti-Corruption**

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## **Business Commits to Advance Agenda for Humanity at UN Summit**

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/3461-05-24-2016>

*Istanbul, 24 May 2016* – Today, the UN Global Compact and UN Foundation convened over 100 senior business representatives at the World Humanitarian Summit Business Breakfast, with the goal of jump-starting progress on the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity.

During the breakfast session, participants identified important pathways to support implementation of World Humanitarian Summit outcomes and deepen business engagement in humanitarian action. Companies shared examples of partnership work and innovations that could be scaled to dramatically accelerate private sector action in humanitarian response and resilience. The event united private sector leaders attending the first-ever global summit to tackle modern humanitarian challenges, which attracted over 6,000 delegates from all regions and sectors.

With over 60 million people displaced by conflict and violence worldwide, the World Humanitarian Summit underscored that peace and stability are essential for securing a truly sustainable and prosperous future. More efforts by government, business and civil society worldwide are needed to help stem the flow of people fleeing conflict, address the root causes of instability, and avoid future crises that trigger large-scale migration and forced displacement.

Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson noted the important role of the private sector as a strategic partner to the UN in humanitarian preparedness and response at the business session. The strong linkage between the global humanitarian and development agendas was emphasized by UN Global Compact Executive Director Lise Kingo who committed that, "the UN Global Compact will mobilize private sector action on areas that are essential to humanity including poverty, climate, gender, peace and good governance."

Additional UN Global Compact work will be carried out through the Business for Peace initiative to advance responsible business practices in high-risk and conflict-affected areas, and through the UN-Business Action Hub to appeal to companies during major crises and disasters to apply their core assets, expertise and resources.



## Baha'i community participates in first World Humanitarian Summit



Steve Karnik and Bani Dugal, representatives of the Baha'i International Community at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on May 23, 2016.

ISTANBUL 26 May 2016 — With a rising tide of natural disasters and widespread civil unrest, the community of nations is realizing the critical need to work more closely to ensure effective responses to humanitarian crises.

This realization led to the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, organized by the United Nations and held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016. The summit brought together government leaders, as well as leaders from business, aid agencies, civil society, and faith-based organizations.

"A record number of people—130 million—need aid to survive," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his opening remarks at the Summit. "More people have been forced from their homes than at any time since the end of the Second World War."

A statement released by the Baha'i International Community (BIC) for the occasion, titled "Rising Together: Building the Capacity to Recover from Within", draws on the experience of the Baha'i community in recent decades with community-building and responses to natural disasters. The document highlights the ongoing Baha'i efforts at the grassroots, which are focused on developing capacity in individuals, communities, and institutions in a process of social transformation that greatly enhances a community's resilience.

Commenting on the summit, Bani Dugal, representative of the BIC to the United Nations, said, "It seems critical at this juncture for the institutions and organizations engaged in disaster relief to learn how to effectively engage communities that are directly affected, to consult with them, plan with them, and learn with them."

"Ensuring that development continues after the world's attention has moved on to the next challenge is critical to the long-term prosperity of communities affected by a disaster and depends on the participation of the populations that have been affected."

"We are learning that the work of disaster relief can be unifying and bring out the strength of a community," said Steve Karnik, another representative of the BIC at the event. "Rather than viewing this work merely as a response to a natural disaster, we can understand these moments, tragic as they are, as the time for communities to marshal their material and moral resources and become stronger and more resilient for the future."

"Assuming ownership of their own development has become a foundational element of Baha'i communities' response to disasters and more broadly in social and economic development," said Mr. Karnik. "Our experience has emerged from efforts of Baha'i communities throughout the world that have suffered natural disasters. And we have learned that the stronger the pattern of collective life in a community, the greater its resilience."

Mr. Ban's opening remarks drew attention to the importance of nations coming together to address meaningfully the challenges that the rising wave of disasters in the world presents for humanity.

"A generation of young people feels that we have lost our way," he stated. "We are here to shape a different future. Today we declare: We are one humanity, with a shared responsibility. Let us resolve here and now not only to keep people alive, but to give people a chance at life in dignity."

To advance a learning process on this subject and how it and like-minded organizations can play their part, the BIC will bring together various social actors next month in its New York office to reflect on the outcomes of the summit.

To read the article online, view photographs and access links: <http://news.bahai.org/story/1110>. For the Baha'i World News Service home page, go to: <http://news.bahai.org/>

## Renewable energy is not just a fix for climate change – it's also a sign of progress



A worker inspects solar panels.  
Image: REUTERS/Carlos Barria.  
Written by Francesco Starace CEO, Enel Group  
Published Wednesday 15 June 2016  
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/beyond-climate-change-renewable-energy-is-more-than-just-a-fix>

According to NASA, 2015 was the hottest year since man started measuring the temperature of the planet. This was by no means an isolated case, but a constant trend from the year 2000 to today; the biggest culprit is the global warming associated with human activity, along with emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) as a by-product of fossil fuel combustion.

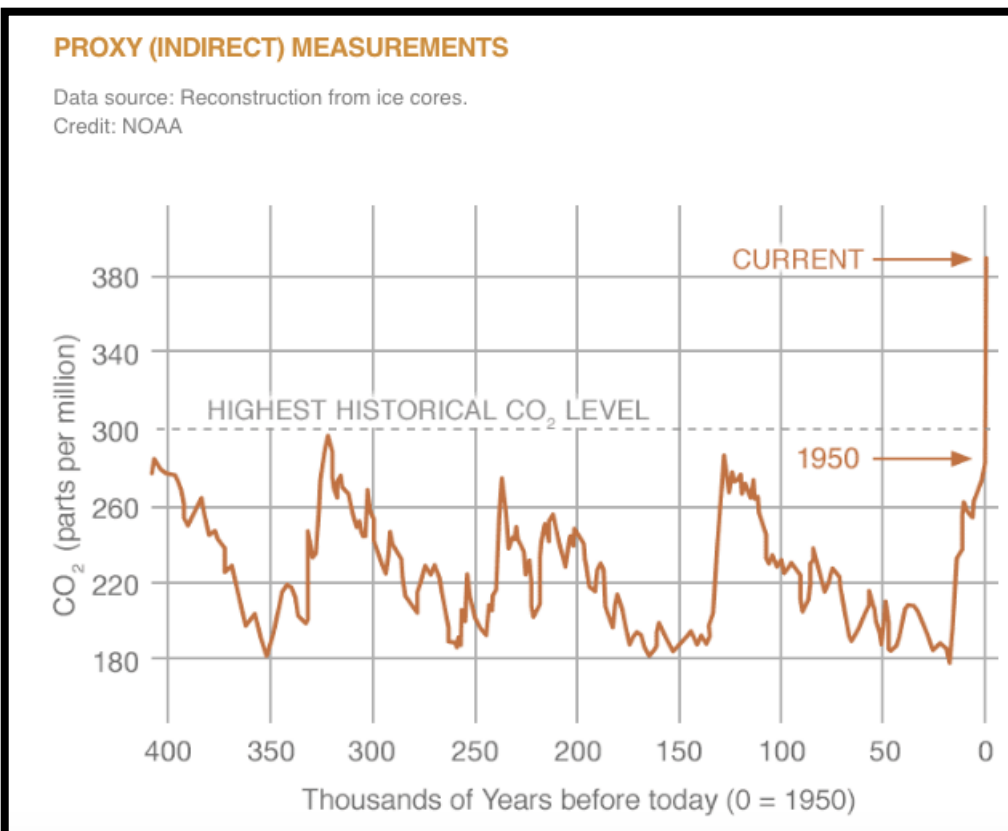


Image: NQAA

Climate change is an issue that has been discussed to no end: actor Leonardo DiCaprio has spoken very frankly about the need to act at the UN General Assembly, U.S. President Barack Obama added climate change to his mandate, and in Paris 195 countries reached a historic agreement during the COP21 conference.

Despite all these efforts, the consensus is that the solution is still a long way away, and that big companies just don't do enough. *Why?*

### **The traditional approach to climate change: progress vs environment**

The debate on climate change

is usually tackled starting with three fundamental assumptions. The first concerns a *moral duty*: it's our responsibility to safeguard the planet for future generations, as we only have one Earth.

The second assumption is ecological: the climate mutation for which we are responsible is also to blame for unpredictable natural disasters, of which the victims are many.

The third assumption stems from the juxtaposition of progress and environment: progress means economic growth, and economic growth of an individual or a nation implies increased pollution: progress demands energy, and access to energy is ever more at the cost of the environment. Asking individuals, or whole nations to limit their own carbon footprint means placing limits on their demand for energy, and as such, their demand for growth. Asking individuals and states to compensate for their own carbon footprint leads to their growth being more expensive; which in turn accounts for the differences between most Latin America and developed countries' plans to combat climate change.

CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita)	
Arab World	4.7 2011
Caribbean small states	9.7 2011
Central Europe and the Baltics	6.9 2011
East Asia & Pacific	5.3 2011
Euro area	7.1 2011
European Union	7.1 2011
Europe & Central Asia	5.4 2011
Fragile and conflict affected situations	0.9 2011
Latin America & Caribbean	2.4 2011
Least developed countries: UN classification	0.3 2011
Middle East & North Africa	3.9 2011
OECD members	9.9 2011
Other small states	1.5 2011
Pacific island small states	1.1 2011
Small states	3.5 2011
South Asia	1.4 2011
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.8 2011
World	4.9 2011

Image: World Bank

These three assumptions don't actually help to find a solution, because the truth is that facing up to climate change is considered by big companies and governments to be *important*, but not *convenient*. It's a case of having to bear the brunt of immediate costs in the present, in order to reap the rewards in the distant future.

If we think, for example, of a traditional car: all of us know that in using one (a benefit of the present) we are impacting negatively on the climatic conditions of the planet (tomorrow's cost). However, the sacrifice of having to walk (today) often means that we put off dealing with the problem (until tomorrow). What happens, however, if someone were to propose a car with the same functionality and characteristics as the one we use, at a similar price to the one we paid, but that doesn't pollute? Well now

the picture changes: we're suddenly motivated to act against the issue at hand (pollution), because we finally have a solution (the electric car) from which we can reap immediate benefits.

It's certainly not by chance that I have just described what is happening to the automobile market, thanks to Elon Musk: energy is set to dominate the debate on tomorrow's world. From self-driving cars to wearable devices, the problem will be how to enable this progress without having to resort to finite resources that only serve to worsen the climate change issue.

### Renewable energy is not just a reaction to climate change

Since the industrial revolution, progress has continued to be achieved at the cost of the planet we live on; in 2040 demand for solar electricity is expected to have grown by 70%. With these statistics, we cannot afford to continue to think of Earth as a disposable resource, ripe for consumption.

Renewable sources solve this problem, because they radically transform energy availability: from a zero-sum game, in which it is a race to see who can claim the most fossil fuels, using them at the expense of the environment, to a positive-sum game whereby the access by one party to energy does not affect the other party's access, resources are neither limited or localized, and the environmental impact is minimal. We need to build convenient, tangible alternatives until a new direction is adopted and replicated.

Nevertheless, there are still many that believe that resorting to renewable sources is still impractical from an economic point of view, when compared to the use of fossil fuels.

But what happens if we begin to look at it from the perspective of long-term value?

We ought to factor in both the costs and benefits of whichever choice we make.

For Enel, Latin America is an enormous technological laboratory when it comes to renewable energy. The solutions that we have adopted were not, however, motivated by reacting to the climate change issue; they are derived from a precise strategy centered on Porter and Kramer's shared value theory: only in aligning the shareholders' interests with those of the customer and territory, is it possible to successfully grow a business over time.

Renewable resources needn't just be a reaction to climate change. They are motors of progress. The benefits are many, tangible and immediate:

- Technology makes renewable resources all the more competitive from a financial point of view, but they also have an extremely fast time-to-market. Renewable energy can be competitive with traditional energy production, even in geographic areas where its development is still in the early stages, as we're proving in Peru, profitably managing three different renewable technologies in the country: wind, solar, and hydroelectricity (totaling 326 MW). Renewable resources provide diversification of a country's energy mix, making the energy system more resilient and better focused on addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

- Renewable resources generate energy security in the country that develops them, because their production does not depend on the volatility of commodity prices. Less developed countries which are often rich in fossil fuels could set their sights on more stable growth. In Venezuela, fossil fuels seem to be more of a curse, rather than an advantage. Since 2005, Uruguay has invested over 3% of their own GDP in altering their energy mix to favour renewable energy, now generating 95% of the country's electricity from renewable energy.

- Renewable resources also help in solving the issue of bringing energy to isolated communities, as demonstrated by the Ollague case, where renewable energy allows us to provide energy (24

hours a day, 7 days a week) to an off-grid village at 3700 meters above sea level, in a deserted area of Chile, ensuring that the village has access to energy, even at night.

- Renewable resources create local jobs and above all else promote a direct, inclusive dialogue with communities that are based in the territory, as demonstrated by the Cerro Pabellon case in Chile, where we're constructing the first geothermal plant in Latin America (48MW). The involvement of 6 indigenous Quechua and Atacamegne communities has made it so that some of the investments and benefits reaped remain in-situ, thanks also to the integration of those same communities into the chain of service providers for the construction phase of the project; this has facilitated the birth of new entrepreneurs, of whom the majority are women.

### **What we can learn from our efforts in Latin America**

What is clear to us now, having faced so many issues in Latin America, is this: thinking of the world as a battleground between those who love the planet and those who are interested in delivering shareholder value is both superficial and outdated. The real distinction lies in those who are committed to creating long term value for all, and those who are not.

A commitment to long-term shareholder value means that over 50% of the Enel Group's growth capex over the next four years is dedicated to renewable energy, the generation technologies of the future. That same commitment means that we will not to open any more coal-fired power plants either – because this is a generation technology of the past. In the long run, companies need to produce value in order to generate profit; and in an interconnected world that is best achieved by adhering to the principle of *shared value*, which moves us beyond the perspective of trade-offs.

It was because of this that in March 2015 Enel and Greenpeace took a stand together: the challenge of those who strive to protect this planet is the same as that of a company that wishes to generate long-term shareholder value: ensure that today's progress does not need to happen at the expense of tomorrow's opportunities.

*The World Economic Forum on Latin America is taking place in Medellin, Colombia from 16 to 17 June.*