



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the
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International Environment Forum A Baha'i 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

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.

The Justice Conference 2017
FROM DISINTEGRATION TO INTEGRATION: NAVIGATING THE FORCES OF OUR TIME

“THE BEST BELOVED OF ALL THINGS IN MY SIGHT IS JUSTICE”
-BAHA'ULLAH

SAVE THE DATE
FRI 14 - MON 17 APRIL
DE POORT CONFERENCE CENTRE
NETHERLANDS

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS
The Justice Conference invites the submission of presentation and workshop proposals relating to the year's theme, "From Disintegration to Integration: Navigating the Forces of Our Time" and the related thematic questions. Submissions by legal scholars, practitioners, and others in non-legal fields are welcome. Proposals can be for shorter panel presentations or longer workshops aimed at generating discussion. Please send proposals (max. 200 words) with a short bio (max. 50 words) to iefjustice@gmail.com by 7 January 2017.

Many of us are struck today by what seems to be a "devastating crush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the custom institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society" (Shoghi Effendi).

Given this backdrop, how can we work effectively with forces of integration to build a just order, at all levels of society? How do we engage others in this effort?

In contributing to building a more just and humane new culture and civilization, what elements of the current order must we discard, and what is worth retaining? As we strive for justice, what new ideas must guide our actions?

How do we manifest a clear optimism and faith in the capacity of human endeavour, guided by spiritual and philosophical principles, to achieve a coherent system / reality of greater justice for all?

How do we rise above the polarizing forces of partisan politics, strife between religions and other forces which undermine the unity of humanity?

THE JUSTICE CONFERENCE IS A BAHAI-INSPIRED FORUM FOR THE EXPLORATION OF (PRESENTATIONAL) AND (WORKSHOP) DISCUSSIONS ON JUSTICE AND INTEGRATION. WE WELCOME (ALL) REGISTERED TO OPEN SOON. WWW.DEPOORT.ORG | FURTHER INFORMATION: IEFJUSTICE@GMAIL.COM

**IEF International Conference
de Poort, The Netherlands, 14-17 April 2017**

<http://iefworld.org/conf21>

For its 21st International Conference, the IEF Governing Board has decided to partner with the **Justice Conference in de Poort, the Netherlands, on 14-17 April 2017**, over the Easter weekend. The theme of the Justice Conference is "*From Disintegration to Integration: navigating the forces of our time*". The conference will start at 15:00 on Friday 14 April, and end at noon on Monday 17 April.

The IEF contribution to the programme will be the following workshop:

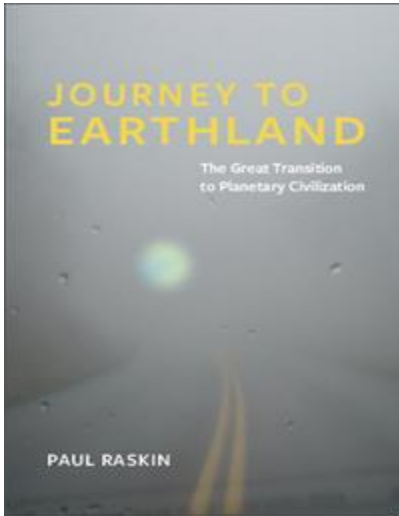
"Environmental Changes as forces for disintegration and integration"

Human pressures are causing extreme climate change and the sixth mass extinction, among other environmental catastrophes. At least such obvious impacts should pressure world leaders to accept that global environmental governance is essential and inevitable. Elements of that governance should include a strong scientific advisory process, multilevel decision-making at the optimal levels for resource management, and local community empowerment for local environmental management and improvement. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a globally-accepted framework for environmental and sustainability action for the next 14 years.

IEF members who would like to propose a short paper as a contribution to this workshop should send an abstract of their presentation to ief@iefworld.org before 25 January, when the programme needs to be finalized. Anyone wanting to attend the conference should make a reservation directly with the de Poort Conference Centre as soon as possible as space is limited:

https://www.depoort.org/index.php?url=/content/en/course_detail_new.html¶ms=/course:14655 .

The IEF Annual General Assembly will be organized during the conference as usual.



Journey to Earthland: The Great Transition to Planetary Civilization

by Paul Raskin, Boston: Tellus Institute, 2016. 127 p.

Free download at <http://www.tellus.org/tellus/publication/journey-to-earthland>

A global scenario pioneer charts a path to an organic planetary civilization, a vision that opens before us as both possibility and exigency in an interdependent and dangerous century.

We have entered the Planetary Phase of Civilization. Strands of interdependence are weaving humanity and Earth into a single community of fate—the overarching proto-country herein christened Earthland. In the unsettled twenty-first century, the drama of social evolution will play out on a world stage with the perils many and dark premonitions all too plausible.

Still, a Great Transition to a planetary civilization of enriched lives and a healthy planet remains possible. But how? What forms of collective action and consciousness can redirect us toward such a future? Who will lead the charge? What might such a world look like?

Journey to Earthland offers answers. It clarifies the world-historical challenge; explains the critical role of a global citizens movement in advancing social transformation; and paints a picture of the kind of flourishing civilization that might lie on the other side of a Great Transition.

In this pivotal moment, the odyssey to a different world is underway yet the ultimate destination depends on choices and struggles yet to come. Acting to prevent the futures we dread is where our work must begin. But the larger task is to foster the finer Earthland we and our descendants deserve.

Book review by Arthur Dahl <http://iefworld.org/node/860>

Paul Raskin, one of the pioneers of planetary perspectives and global scenarios, has updated his thinking from his 2002 essay, "*Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead*" in his new book "***Journey to Earthland: The Great Transition to Planetary Civilization***".

With the wide vision of a systems thinker, the book starts with a rapid and comprehensive overview of the past and present in all its contradictions, with great potential for good while teetering on the verge of catastrophe. It then systematically lays out the options for imagining alternative futures, both positive and negative. It reviews the potential actors driving different scenarios, and suggests that the best hope for the future is in some kind of global citizens movement.

Intellectually, Paul Raskin has covered all the aspects of the challenge. He places his hope in a positive vision of the society that can emerge from the great transition. He acknowledges the need for "fundamental changes in both human consciousness and the social model: the inner 'normative realm' and the outer 'institutional realm.'" (p. 47). The necessary values include individual well-being and fulfilment, collective solidarity and equity, and an ecocentric concern for the biosphere and environmental sustainability, all reflecting a longing for wholeness and a growing awareness of global citizenship.

The challenges of building a global citizens movement with unity in diversity are reviewed realistically. The level of trust within the movement needs to be strong enough to overcome proximate differences to sustain the ultimate basis for unity. Parts of the book are written as the view looking back from 2084 on what has been accomplished in the great transition and what remains to be done. It includes detailed discussions of options for governance, the economy, world trade and environmental restoration. On the human side, it explores the use of time, education, spirituality and social justice. The perspective of this journey is that of a pragmatic visionary, of which Raskin is a perfect example.

From a Bahá'í perspective, what is missing in the book is the spiritual dimension of reality. The book provides strong intellectual arguments for ethical values, and acknowledges spirituality as one dimension of human experience, but does not consider the potential of religion to provide the motivating force for the great transition that it argues for so earnestly. Indeed, this may be the missing ingredient that could power the great transition to a planetary civilization laid out in the UN 2030 Agenda and in this well-reasoned vision of the possible futures before us.

World Economic Forum: Five leadership priorities for 2017

By Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum
For more information on the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, go to <https://www.weforum.org/>

As the past year has demonstrated, leaders must be responsive to the demands of the people who have entrusted them to lead, while also providing a vision and a way forward, so that people can imagine a better future.

True leadership in a complex, uncertain, and anxious world requires leaders to navigate with both a radar system and a compass. They must be receptive to signals that are constantly arriving from an ever-changing landscape, and they should be willing to make necessary adjustments; but they must never deviate from their true north, which is to say, a strong vision based on authentic values.

That is why the World Economic Forum has made Responsive and Responsible Leadership the theme for our annual January meeting in Davos. As leaders in government, business, and civil society chart a course for the next year, five key challenges will warrant their attention.

Firstly, they will have to come to grips with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is redefining entire industries, and creating new ones from scratch, owing to groundbreaking advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, self-driving vehicles, 3D-printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and quantum computing.

These technologies have only begun to show their full potential; in 2017, we will increasingly see what

used to be science fiction become reality. But, while the Fourth Industrial Revolution could help us solve some of our most pressing problems, it is also dividing societies into those who embrace change and those who do not. And that threatens our wellbeing in ways that will have to be identified and addressed.

Secondly, leaders will have to build a dynamic, inclusive multi-stakeholder global-governance system. Today's economic, technological, environmental, and social challenges can be addressed only through global public-private collaboration; but our current framework for international cooperation was designed for the post-war era, when nation-states were the key actors.

At the same time, geopolitical shifts have made today's world truly multipolar. As new global players bring new ideas about how to shape national systems and the international order, the existing order is becoming more fragile. So long as countries interact on the basis of shared interests, rather than shared values, the extent to which they will be able to cooperate will be limited. Moreover, non-state actors are now capable of disrupting national and global systems, not least through cyber attacks. To withstand this threat, countries cannot simply close themselves off. The only way forward is to make sure that globalization is benefiting everyone.

A third challenge for leaders will be to restore global economic growth. Permanently diminished growth translates into permanently lower living standards: with 5% annual growth, it takes just 14 years to double a country's GDP; with 3% growth, it

takes 24 years. If our current stagnation persists, our children and grandchildren might be worse off than their predecessors.

Even without today's technologically driven structural unemployment, the global economy would have to create billions of jobs to accommodate a growing population, which is forecast to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, from 7.4 billion today. Thus, 2017 will be a year in which social inclusion and youth unemployment become critical global and national issues.

A fourth challenge will be to reform market capitalism, and to restore the compact between business and society. Free markets and globalization have improved living standards and lifted people out of poverty for decades. But their structural flaws – myopic short-termism, increasing wealth inequality, and cronyism – have fueled the political backlash of recent years, in turn highlighting the need to create permanent structures for balancing economic incentives with social wellbeing.

Finally, leaders will need to address the pervasive crisis in identity formation that has resulted from the erosion of traditional norms over the past two decades. Globalization has made the world smaller but more complex, and many people have lost confidence in institutions. Many people now fear for their future, and they are searching for shared but distinct beliefs that can furnish a sense of purpose and continuity.

Identity formation is not a rational process; it is deeply emotional and often characterized by high levels of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and anger. Politics

is also driven by emotion: leaders attract votes not by addressing needs or presenting long-term visions, but rather by offering a sense of belonging, nostalgia for simpler times, or a return to national roots. We witnessed this in 2016, as populists made gains by fostering reactionary and extreme beliefs. Responsible leaders, for their part, must recognize people's fears and anger as legitimate, while providing inspiration and constructive plans for building a better future.

But how? The world today seems to be engulfed in a sea of pessimism, negativity, and cynicism. And yet, we have an opportunity to lift millions more people out of poverty, so that they can lead healthier and more meaningful lives. And we have a duty to work together toward a greener, more inclusive, and peaceful world. Whether we succeed will not depend on some external event, but rather on the choices our leaders make.

The coming year will be a critical test for all stakeholders in global society. More than ever, we will need responsive and responsible leadership to address our collective challenges, and to restore people's trust in institutions and in one another. We do not lack the means to make the world a better place. But to do so, we must look past our own narrow interests and attend to the interests of our global society.

That duty begins with our leaders, who must begin to engage in open dialogue and a common search for solutions to the five major challenges on the horizon. If they acknowledge that ours is a global community with a shared destiny, they will have made a first – albeit modest – step in the right direction.

New research predicts the future of coral reefs under climate change

Coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef. Photo Credit: Paul Marshall

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=27092&ArticleID=36336&l=en>
5 January 2017



If current trends continue, severe bleaching will occur every year on 99% of the world's coral reefs within this century

- More ambitious emissions reductions may give reefs an average of 11 extra years before annual bleaching strikes
- High-resolution predictions of annual coral bleaching can help prioritize reefs for conservation

New climate model projections of the world's coral reefs reveal which reefs will be hit first by annual coral bleaching, an event that poses the gravest threat to one of the Earth's most important ecosystems.

These high-resolution projections, based on global climate models, predict when and where annual coral bleaching will occur. The projections show that reefs in Taiwan and around the Turks and Caicos archipelago will be among the world's first to experience annual bleaching.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Read the study](#)

[Download data and maps](#)

[Download hi-res images](#)

Other reefs, like those off the coast of Bahrain, in Chile and in French Polynesia, will be hit decades later, according to [research](#) recently published in the journal *Nature Scientific Reports*.

"These predictions are a treasure trove for those who are fighting to protect one of the world's most magnificent and important ecosystems from the ravages of climate change," said Erik Solheim, head of UN Environment.

"They allow conservationists and governments to prioritize the protection of reefs that may still have time to acclimatize to our warming seas. The projections show us where we still have time to act before it's too late."

If current trends continue and the world fails to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then severe bleaching will occur every year on 99 per cent of the world's reefs within the century, according to the study.

The Paris Agreement's aspirational target of limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius provides a safer, but not an entirely safe space for coral reefs. Even if emission reductions *exceed pledges made by countries to date under the Paris Agreement* more than three quarters of the world's coral reefs will bleach every year before 2070.

It takes at least 5 years for a reef to recover from a single bleaching event. "Bleaching that takes place every year will invariably cause major changes in the ecological function of coral reef ecosystems," said study leader Dr. van Hooidonk of NOAA and the University of Miami. "Further, annual bleaching will greatly reduce the capacity of coral reefs to provide goods and services, such as fisheries and coastal protection, to human communities."

The need to act is clear. Between 2014 and 2016, the world witnessed the longest global bleaching event ever recorded, which killed coral on an unprecedented scale. In 2016, bleaching hit 90 per cent of coral on the Great Barrier Reef and killed more than 20 per cent of the reef's coral.

The new study shows that, on average, the world's reefs will start suffering annual bleaching in 2043. About 5 per cent of them will be hit a decade or more earlier, while about 11 per cent will suffer annual bleaching a decade or more later than this date.

If emission reductions exceed pledges made by countries to date under the Paris Agreement, coral reefs would have another 11 years, on average, to adapt to warming seas before they are hit by annual bleaching.

If such emissions reductions become reality, many high and low latitude reefs in Australia, the South Pacific, India, Coral Triangle and the Florida Reef Tract will have at least 25 more years before annual bleaching occurs, buying time for conservation efforts. However, reefs near the equator will experience annual bleaching much sooner, even if emissions reductions pledges materialize.

"It is imperative that we take these predictions seriously and that, at the very minimum, we meet the targets of the Paris Agreement. Doing so will buy time for coral reefs and allow us to plan for the future and adapt to the present," said Mr. Solheim.

Predicting when and where annual bleaching occurs will help policymakers and conservationists decide which reefs to prioritize. "Reefs that will suffer annual bleaching later - known as climate "refugia" - are top priorities because they have more time to respond positively to efforts that seek to reduce bleaching vulnerability", said Dr. van Hooidonk. Such efforts include reducing land-based pollution, halting overfishing and preventing damage from tourism.

Coral reefs, which are already under threat from overfishing and tourism, are especially vulnerable to climate change because they are easily affected by warm water. When sea temperatures rise, the algae that give coral its bright colours leave their host, causing it to look white, hence the term 'coral bleaching'. The loss of algae, which provide coral with much of its energy, make corals vulnerable to starvation and disease.

Known as the world's underwater cities, coral reefs provide hundreds of millions of people with food, income and coastal protection. They are home to at least one quarter of all marine life and they generate an estimated \$375 billion per year from fisheries, tourism and coastal protection.

"We are going to need to be much more innovative and proactive if we want to see coral reefs thrive into the next century," said World Wildlife Fund (WWF) lead marine scientist and study co-author Dr. Gabby Ahmadi. "Conventional conservation is not going to cut it against the impacts of climate change. We need to embrace the new climate reality to guide efforts to save our oceans".

About the study

Support for the study, entitled "Local-scale projections of coral reef futures and implications of the Paris Agreement", was provided by UN Environment, the World Wildlife Fund, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Conservation Programme, the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory and the National Marine Fisheries Service via the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, US Geological Survey via the Pacific Islands Climate Science Center, Total Foundation, and US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The study was led by Dr. Ruben van Hooidonk and Dr. Jeffrey Maynard.

A report entitled '*Coral Bleaching Futures - Downscaled projections of bleaching conditions for the world's coral reefs, implications of climate policy and management responses*' will shortly be published by UN Environment, providing additional detail including regional summaries as well as information on using the data for coral reef policy and management planning as well as outreach.

The projections are freely available on the [UNEP-Live Coral Reef Theme](#), as spatial data for GIS applications, as files viewable in Google Earth, and as high-resolution image files.

For more information and to arrange interviews, please contact:

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Protecting our water sources brings a wealth of benefits

<http://www.unep.org/stories/Ecosystems/Protecting-our-water-sources-brings-wealth-of-benefits.asp>

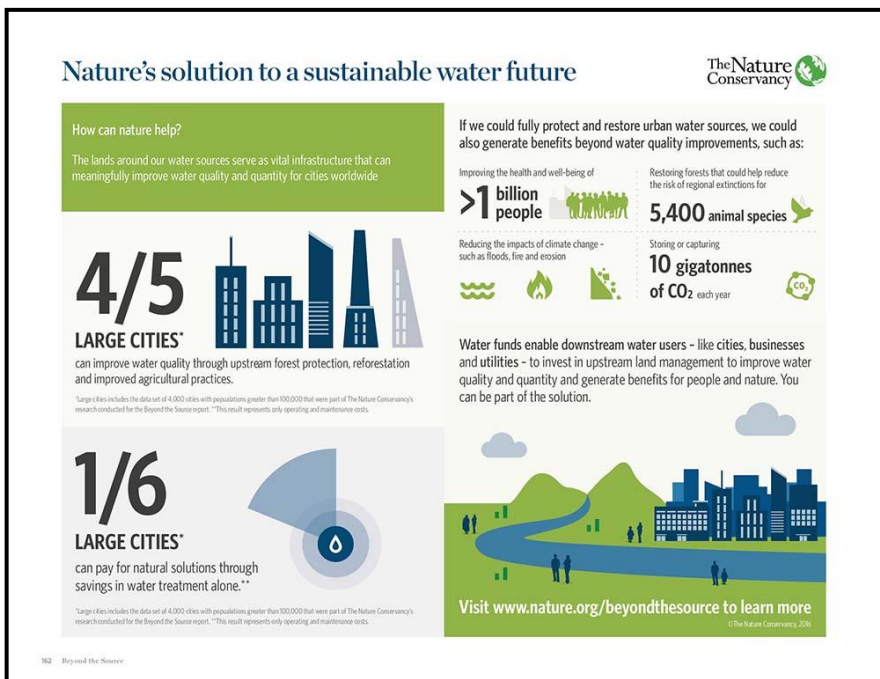
By Andrea Erickson, Managing Director, Water Security

The journey of our water from source to tap is long, and not one we think much about. For most of us, our water starts high in the mountains, hundreds of miles away. From there, water flows across natural and working lands until a portion is channeled to water pipes that move water to our faucets, to farms and to various types of businesses. Most often we think of those pipes as being our main water infrastructure, but upstream lands play a key role in capturing, storing and moving our water.

By conserving these lands, we can better protect our water and generate additional benefits for people and nature.

Today, approximately 40 percent of the land in urban source watersheds of the world's largest cities show high to moderate levels of degradation. This degradation impacts the present and future quality and reliability of water flows. But by investing in nature, we can reduce these impacts.

A new report released by The Nature Conservancy, *Beyond the Source: The environmental, economic and community benefits of source water protection*, shows that forest protection, reforestation and the use of cover crops can help four out of five of the 4,000 cities analyzed reduce sediment and nutrient pollution in waterways by a meaningful amount. For one in six cities analyzed in the report, the cost of implementing source water protection activities could be recouped through savings in annual water treatment costs alone. For half of the cities analyzed, these activities could be implemented for about US\$2 per person annually.



Infographic: © The Nature Conservancy

These nature-based solutions also provide a number of co-benefits, including improving the health and well-being of people, preserving biodiversity, capturing and storing carbon and building more climate-resilient communities. When cities “stack” the value of these co-benefits on top of the savings realized in water treatment costs, they can derive even greater value.

Maximizing the benefits of conservation activities will require collective action. Water funds, which enable downstream water users to jointly invest in upstream land conservation and restoration, are a successful mechanism for securing

improved water quality and, in some cases, more reliable flows.

For example, in Nairobi, Kenya, high sediment levels in the Tana River from agricultural run-off and development in the mountains catalyzed the development of Africa's first water fund. Partners in the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund jointly invest in providing upstream farmers with the training, resources and equipment they need to help keep the river healthy, conserve water and reap the benefits of higher crop yields and more stable farms. The fund also has downstream projected benefits including improved water yields and reduced sediment in the river. An analysis of the water fund structure showed that even by conservative estimates the selected watershed interventions could deliver a two-to-one return on investment on average over a 30-year timeframe. During a recent trip to Kenya, the message from water fund investors and participants was clear: it's in their best interest to make this work. Taking care of the land will ensure the longevity of the agricultural community and create a more sustainable water future throughout the watershed.



© The Nature Conservancy (Ken Geiger)

As cities and populations grow, and climate change adds undue pressure on vulnerable freshwater systems, maintaining healthy lands around our water sources will be increasingly vital to the future of our water security. By investing in nature, we also invest in our future.



Wild successes: Big wins for the environment in 2016

The year 2016 may have been turbulent, but it certainly scored some wins for the environment and sustainability. Momentum from a triumphant 2015, which saw the adoption of the Paris climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, continued into 2016 with some major breakthroughs for our planet. Here are some of 2016's big wins for the environment.

<http://www.unep.org/stories/Climate/Wild-successes-Big-wins-for-the-environment-in-2016.asp>

The Paris Agreement on climate change came into force early

Much earlier than expected, the universally-agreed Paris Agreement entered into force, holding its signatories to the actions they've promised to keep global warming at a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius and to adapt to climate change.

That meant that the climate conference in Morocco could focus in earnest on the finer details of implementation and how to ramp up action— which is a good thing, because UN Environment's analysis of carbon emissions showed that current pledged action falls short of curbing the temperature rise to 2°C.

Keeping cool in a climate-friendly way

Living up to its reputation as the world's most successful multilateral environmental agreement, the Montreal Protocol — having ensured that the ozone layer was now on the mend — took responsibility for phasing down the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). These ozone-neutral substances replaced ozone-munching chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in many refrigerators, air-conditioners and aerosols, but they turned out to be powerful greenhouse gases with a global warming potential thousands of times higher than carbon dioxide.

So, in a meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, the 197 Montreal Protocol parties agreed on a schedule to bring down the use of HFCs in the world. This could prevent a 0.5 degree Celsius rise by the end of the century. If that doesn't seem like much, remember that all it took was a one to two degree drop to plunge the Earth into the Little Ice Age.



The world rallied for endangered species

Pangolins, grey parrots, rhinos, lions, sharks and rays, elephants and rosewood were among the winners at the largest ever World Wildlife Conference, the 17th conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Johannesburg. Countries agreed on actions that would strengthen enforcement against illegal trafficking and trade in endangered species and their parts, including ivory. UN Environment's #WildForLife became one of the most recognizable campaigns in major economies.

The world's largest Marine Protected Area established

A pristine, biologically diverse area in the Antarctic, larger than the UK, France, Germany and Italy combined, was declared a Marine Protected Area, after five years of negotiations, and tireless "Speedo diplomacy" from endurance swimmer and UN Environment's Patron of the Oceans, Lewis Pugh. An unprecedented 3.6 million square kilometres — an area larger than India — was added to marine protected areas worldwide, including through the creation and expansion of five "mega protected areas" in Chile, Palau, Hawaii, the Pitcairn Islands and St Helena's in the South Atlantic.

G20 recognize that green is the way to go

For the first time, leaders of the world's most powerful economies formally recognized that scaling up green finance was important to strong, sustainable and balanced growth. The G20 welcomed input from the Green Finance Study Group (to which UN Environment acts as secretariat), launched in January last year to develop options on how to mobilize private capital for green investment.

Major environmental agreements start to grow legs at UN Environment Assembly

They say that the devil is in the detail; and 2016's UN Environment Assembly, coming months after the signing of major sustainability and climate change agreements, began to dig down into the nittier, grittier question of how to get these running on the ground. Twenty-five landmark resolutions of the Assembly brought crucial decisions on the 2030 sustainability Agenda, the Paris Agreement, illegal trade in wildlife, marine litter and debris, the nexus of environment and health, and other pressing environmental issues.

630 companies and investors tell Washington: Continue to act on climate change

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/630-companies-and-investors-tell-washington-continue-to-act-on-climate-change>

January 10, 2017

With the private sector responsible for nearly two-thirds of the heat-trapping carbon emissions produced by the United States, American companies are a linchpin in the domestic and global fight to slow climate change. The good news? With an eye on the bottom line, US companies are rising to the challenge.

Almost half of Fortune 500 companies have set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, buy renewable energy such as wind and solar, and/or increase energy efficiency. Their voices are becoming louder, too. Today 630 companies and investors called on Washington to accelerate the low-carbon economy in the United States and stand strongly behind the Paris Agreement, our first truly global plan to combat climate change. Large iconic brand companies and small businesses from 44 states joined forces to stand for continuing action. With nearly \$1.2 trillion in annual revenue and 1.8 million people employed, their call for continued action on climate change is wide and deep across America.

And momentum from the private sector shows no sign of easing. Companies have come to realize that setting ambitious emissions reduction goals unleashes innovation and saves them money. The continuing drop in the price of electricity produced from renewable energy, and the security renewables provide against future energy price increases and volatility, are leading some companies to set more ambitious goals and others to set them for the first time.

However, companies need greater access to renewable energy to achieve their goals. In the few states where customers can buy their energy from any supplier, transactions are often too complex. In most states, where customers don't have a choice of electricity providers, the vast majority of utilities don't offer their large corporate customers the option to buy renewable energy.

With businesses hamstrung from buying the large amounts of renewable energy they are looking for, WWF and our NGO partners developed the Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance, a forum for utilities, energy suppliers, and corporate buyers intended to dramatically increase the accessibility and availability of renewable energy. As part of that initiative, corporate buyers developed a public statement outlining their priorities for utilities, utility regulators, and the renewable energy marketplace. These Corporate Renewable Energy Buyers' Principles are now supported by more than 60 iconic, multinational companies. Collectively, these companies are seeking enough renewable energy equivalent to power 4.2 million American homes.

These voluntary business actions are critical, whether it is to help close the emissions gap beyond the reductions promised by governments in Paris, or to replace reductions should the US step away from its commitments. By investing now in the clean energy economy, US businesses are also creating jobs, increasing the US' economic competitiveness, building stronger communities, and taking bold steps to ease the climate crises.

Looking forward, WWF will continue to mobilize business, making it easier for large and small companies to cut their carbon footprint, set goals in line with climate science, and to aggregate their renewable energy purchasing power to accelerate the low-carbon economy so crucial to our collective future.