



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM  
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**International Environment Forum** A Baha'i inspired organization addressing  
the environment and sustainable development

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## **22nd ANNUAL IEF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**An electronic meeting over the Internet, 25-26 August 2018**

<https://iefworld.org/genass22>

This year the 22nd General Assembly of the International Environment Forum, at which members review IEF activities over the past year and consult on future directions, will be held over the Internet using the Zoom platform on Saturday-Sunday 25-26 August 2018 (depending on your time zone) starting Saturday at 15:00 GMT. This will correspond to Saturday 8:00 a.m. West Coast of North America, 16:00 UK summer time, 17:00 central European time (CET), 20:30 in India, 01:00 Sunday morning in Sydney, 03:00 in Fiji. Please check to confirm the correct time in your time zone. We regret that living on a round planet makes it impossible to find a time convenient for everyone, especially those members in the Pacific.

Members are receiving a direct invitation to participate. The meeting is open, so Associates or others are welcome to join in, and should write to the IEF secretariat at [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org) for detailed instructions.

The election of the IEF Governing Board will be taking place by e-voting before the General Assembly so that the results can be announced during the meeting.

### **The Agenda for the General Assembly is as follows:**

1. Opening of the General Assembly by the IEF President
2. Introduction of members participating
3. Approval of the officers of the General Assembly
4. Approval of the agenda
5. Report on the election of the Governing Board
6. Presentation, consultation and approval of the Annual Report 2017-2018
7. Consultation on activities and priorities for the coming year, such as:
  - Review of the IEF and its functions
  - How to involve more members in IEF functions and activities
  - Locations and themes for future IEF conferences
  - Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
8. Other business
9. Closing of the General Assembly

The [Annual Report 2017-2018](https://iefworld.org/report2018) is now available on the IEF web site at <https://iefworld.org/report2018>.

## **Summary of the International Environment Forum Annual Report May 2017 to August 2018**

The **22st Annual Report** of the International Environment Forum summarizes the events and activities from May 2017 to August 2018 between two annual General Assemblies. The General Assembly in 2018 is being held on line in August 2018 since it was not practical to hold it in New York during the 22nd Annual Conference in July.

### **21st ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM 2017**

-partnership with the Justice Conference in de Poort, the Netherlands from 14-17 April 2017. The theme of the Justice Conference was "From Disintegration to Integration: navigating the forces of our time.

### **21st IEF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

-held on 15 April 2017 at de Poort, the Netherlands, during the Conference.

### **IEF GOVERNING BOARD**

-The IEF Governing Board elected Arthur Dahl as President and Emily Firth as General Secretary. However, Emily Firth resigned from the Board at the end of the year due to family and professional responsibilities, and she was replaced on the board in a by-election by Christine Muller (USA). Ian Hamilton has also not been able to serve for most of this period. The Board held four electronic meetings including teleconferences during the fifteen months covered by this report and has consulted on a variety of topics related to future conferences and IEF activities. The Board has approved 25 new membership applications since May 2017.

### **22nd IEF ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 10-14 July 2018**

-a series of activities in support of the UN High Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) in New York on 9-18 July 2018.

### **23rd IEF ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 2019**

-Plans are to hold the 23rd IEF Annual Conference in New Zealand in partnership with the 23rd World Conference on Health Promotion, 7-11 April 2019 in Rotorua, hosted by the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand (HPF) in association with the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) (<http://www.iuhpe2019.com/>). 3,000 participants are expected for the conference. The theme of the conference is **Waiora: Promoting Planetary Health and Sustainable Development**

### **IEF PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

-Partnership for Education and research about Responsible Living (PERL)  
-ebbf – Ethical Business Building the Future  
-European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD)  
-United Nations

### **IEF INVOLVEMENT IN COURSES**

-IEF engagement with the Wilmette Institute (<http://wilmetteinstitute.org/>):  
-Other courses

### **IEF MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN OTHER EVENTS**

### **PUBLICATIONS, PAPERS AND STUDY MATERIALS BY IEF MEMBERS**

### **IEF NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The last fifteen months have been a busy time for the International Environment Forum despite its limited resources, including on the Governing Board. At the United Nations, we were able to contribute to the Talanoa Dialogue of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, support the engagement of UN Environment with faith-based organizations, and participate in the UN High Level Political Forum on sustainable development,

directly and through the Scientific and Technological Major Group. IEF members have made significant contributions to scientific processes, conferences and publications, reinforcing our credibility as a professional organization. Our educational activities, both as courses and materials, are widely appreciated, as is our regular monthly newsletter. We still face the challenge to recruit younger members willing to contribute actively to our activities and thus to guarantee our own sustainability. As the old world order continues to demonstrate its unsustainability and disintegrate, it is ever more urgent to contribute positively to the discourses on the environment and sustainability from an ethical perspective that can motivate people to change.

## **IEF MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS, updated August 2018**

### **Full members – 408 members in 75 countries (up from 379 in April 2017)**

Albania 1 \* Argentina 2 \* Australia 19 \* Austria 1 \* Bangladesh 2 \* Belgium 4 \* Bolivia 4 \* Bosnia and Herzegovina 1 \* Brazil 2 \* Brunei Darrussalam 1 \* Bulgaria 2 \* Cambodia 1 \* Cameroon 2 \* Canada 43 \* Chile 1 \* China 3 \* Colombia 3 \* Congo, Democratic Republic 3 \* Czech Republic 3 \* Denmark 1 \* Ecuador 3 \* Eritrea 1 \* Ethiopia 1 \* Fiji 1 \* Finland 1 \* France 8 \* Germany 9 \* Ghana 2 \* Greece 1 \* Guinea Bissau 1 \* Guyana 2 \* Hong Kong 2 \* Hungary 2 \* Iceland 1 \* India 11 \* Indonesia 1 \* Iran 1 \* Israel 2 \* Italy 1 \* Japan 1 \* Kazakhstan 1 \* Kenya 3 \* Liberia 1 \* Macedonia 1 \* Malaysia 6 \* Marshall Islands 1 \* Namibia 1 \* The

Netherlands 13 \* New Zealand 9 \* Norway 3 \* Pakistan 3 \* Philippines 1 \* Poland 1 \* Portugal 2 \* Samoa 1 \* Serbia 1 \* Singapore 2 \* Slovakia 1 \* South Africa 5 \* Spain 4 \* Suriname 1 \* Swaziland 2 \* Sweden 4 \* Switzerland 9 \* Tanzania 1 \* Togo 1 \* Tonga 1 \* Trinidad & Tobago 1 \* Uganda 1 \* United Kingdom 50 \* United States of America 121 \* Vanuatu 1 \* Zambia 1 \* Zimbabwe 1

### **Associate members – 59 Associates in 17 countries**

Australia 2 \* Canada 6 \* Chile 1 \* China 1 \* Czech Republic 1 \* Finland 1 \* France 2 \* Ghana 1 \* Iceland 1 \* Lithuania 1 \* New Zealand 2 \* Pakistan 2 \* Portugal 2 \* Switzerland 3 \* The Netherlands 5 \* USA 22 \* United Kingdom 6

The updated Annotated Directory of Members is available at <https://iefworld.org/director.htm>

## **International Environment Forum Position on Climate Change**

In a few countries where climate change science has become a political issue, the International Environment Forum has been criticized for taking sides in the “debate”. The following paragraphs explain the clear position of IEF concerning climate change.

The International Environment Forum recognizes that climate change is a reality and that it poses one of the most serious threats to human civilization and to all life. There is overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is a result of anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming, caused by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation, and by other economic activities.

This position is in alignment with the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, the Supreme Institution of the Baha'i Faith. Its 29 November 2017 letter commenting on climate change, states:

... there does exist at present a striking degree of agreement among experts in relevant fields about the cause and impact of climate change.

In the same letter, the Universal House of Justice emphasizes the importance of science:

Among the Bahá'í teachings are those concerning the importance of science. “Great indeed is the claim of scientists ... on the peoples of the world,” Bahá'u'lláh observed. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá wrote that the “sciences of today are bridges to reality” and repeatedly emphasized that “religion must be in conformity with science and reason.”

The letter refers to the Paris Climate Accord as a “starting point for constructive thought and action...,” emphasizes how “remarkable is the fact that at a time when nations have difficulty reaching agreement on

many important issues, the governments of nearly every country on earth have reached political consensus on a joint framework, in the Paris accord, to respond to climate change...,” and points to the agreement as “another noteworthy demonstration of that development anticipated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” when He referred to “unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed.” The Universal House of Justice also guides the participation and the written statements by the Baha’i International Community at UN conferences on climate change.

The IEF is aware of the widespread misinformation campaign that deliberately sheds doubt on the science of climate change. There are some skilled science writers and well-funded front groups who “dismiss or contend with relevant scientific findings,” but their claims are politically motivated – in the words of the Universal House of Justice - “by political and vested interests.”

The IEF does not provide a platform to discuss whether climate science is real. Its intention is to spread awareness about climate change, to stand up for science, to apply spiritual principles (especially the Baha’i teachings) to this issue, to provide space for consultation about the numerous ways to effectively mitigate this problem, and to assist its members and the wider public in meaningful climate action.

The mission of IEF, as a professional organization at the interface of science and ethics, is to address issues such as this in the spirit so clearly worded in the above cited letter of the Universal House of Justice:

One of the most pressing problems of humanity in the current century is how a growing, rapidly developing, and not yet united global population can, in a just manner, live in harmony with the planet and its finite resources.

## Wilmette Institute - Sustainable Development and the Prosperity of Humankind

<http://www.cvent.com/events/sustainable-development-and-the-prosperity-of-humankind/event-summary-4e60653b0dbd4f5287e3ea8408c65137.aspx>

FACULTY: [Arthur Lyon Dahl](#), [Christine Muller](#), [Laurent Mesbah](#)

[Watch Video](#)



Are you troubled by the poverty and suffering of people at home and abroad, concerned about the future of your children, and worried about the destruction of the environment on which their lives depend? These are the challenges of sustainable development, requiring a fundamental transformation in the economic, social, and environmental actions of our lives and society. In Sustainable Development and the Prosperity of Humankind we will explore the profound implications of the Bahá’í teachings for sustainability and the scientific and spiritual principles that can ensure the future prosperity of humankind. We will explore how carrying “forward an

ever-advancing civilization” is conditioned on respecting the human rights of all people as well as planetary limits. We will learn to see the Bahá’í core activities in a new light and to infuse them with deeper meaning.

### Welcome to Sustainable Development

This unit introduces you to the course and features a video on the transition to sustainability. You are then invited to imagine your own vision of a more sustainable future. An important task is drawing up a personal learning plan (PLP) which summarizes what you will do in the course.

### Introduction to the Concept of Sustainable Development

Unit 2 provides an introduction to sustainable development, including a general approach to thinking sustainably, and a review of the principles and practices of sustainability that can be applied individually or in a local community. It covers the concept of sustainable development, the Sustainable Development Goals, and introduces a first set of Bahá’í quotations on Environment and Sustainable Development.

### **Economic Development and Sustainability: Poverty and Wealth**

In this unit you are introduced to a critique of the Western economic system and its development failures, including income and wealth inequality, before looking towards a Green Economy and the spiritual basis for the prosperity of humankind.

### **Social Development: Crises and Solutions**

A second dimension of sustainable development is social, and this unit looks at how to bring back the social into development. It explores the concept of human capital, and reviews spiritual values for social development, such as the nature and purpose of human life, unity, humanity's place in the natural world, material and spiritual civilization, governance, gender, science and technology, education, religion and cultural transformation.

### **The Environmental Challenge and Baha'i Approaches**

It is the environmental dimension of sustainable development that has become so threatening as our growing population and technological progress cause environmental deterioration and bring us to critical thresholds. We look at climate change and its ethical challenges and explore the possibilities of abundance within planetary boundaries.

### **Future Perspectives on the Prosperity of Humankind**

This unit helps to integrate all the dimensions of sustainable development into one systems framework, looking at scenarios of possible futures and the need for a sustainability transformation. It discusses implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and concludes with visions of an eco-civilization.

### **Education for Sustainable Development: Individual and Community Action**

Unit 7 comes back to your local reality, helping you to reexamine your individual lifestyles and your ecological footprint. It suggests approaches to applying sustainability at the local community or project level, and points to some interfaith perspectives, concluding with some useful educational resources.

### **Reflection and Application of Learning**

The unit provides time to summarize what we learned through discussion together. The most important task is to complete a learning self assessment form, which reviews how much of your personal learning plan you accomplished and what skills you acquired, values you developed, and new understandings you attained.

### **Fees**

Individual \$75.00, Group fee \$75.00, Group Member \$45.00, Senior (65+)/University Student; International Pioneer \$50.00. Scholarships and Financial Aid are available.

## **Symposium on Ethics of Environmental Health Budweis (Ceske Budejovice), 9 - 12 September 2018**

Submitted by IEF Member Friedo Zölzer <[zoelzer@zsf.jcu.cz](mailto:zoelzer@zsf.jcu.cz)>  
Detailed information can be found at [www.iseeh.org](http://www.iseeh.org)  
Deadline for late registration 31 August 2018



For the fourth time after three very successful international Symposia on Ethics of Environmental Health in 2011, 2014, and 2016, scientists, regulators and practitioners from all over the world will come together to discuss ethical issues related to radiation and chemical protection, epidemiology, biomonitoring, risk management, emergency preparedness and related areas.

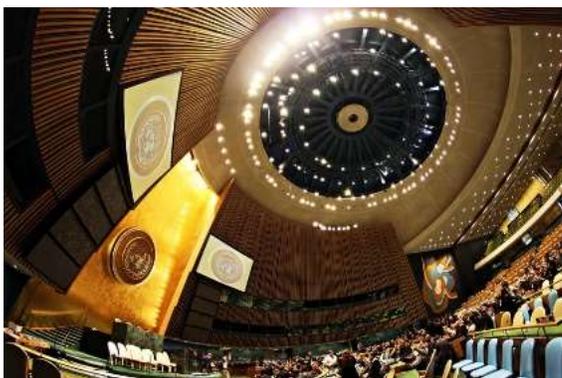
So far, the following speakers have agreed to give present papers (preliminary titles):

- Robin Attfield, Cardiff University, UK. Air Pollution, Health and Ethics
- Marie Claire Cantone, University of Milan, Italy  
Radiation protection of environment and humans in an harmonic view
- Carl Cranor, University of California, Riverside, USA  
Toward a Medico-Legal Approach to Protecting the Public's Health

- Britt-Marie Drottz Sjøberg, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway  
Perception and communication in contexts of health, environment and technology
- Kevin Elliott, Michigan State University, East Lansing, USA  
Ethical issues surrounding emerging technologies
- Steven G. Gilbert, Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders, Seattle, USA  
Connecting the Dots with Ethics to Enhance Public Health
- Minu Hemmati, MSP Institute, Berlin, Germany. Gender and Chemicals
- Liudmila Liutsko, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Spain  
Citizen's participation in post-accidental recovery: "citizens in science" for dose measurements, improving health and well-being
- Jacques Lochard, Nagasaki University, Japan  
Ethical dimensions of expertise in nuclear post-accident situations
- Yuliya Lyamzina, Fukushima Medical University, Japan  
Importance of risk perception factors for the development of effective risk communication
- Colin L. Soskolne, University of Alberta, Canada; University of Canberra, Australia  
Working in public health to protect the public interest: when stakeholder goals are at odds
- Farhang Tahzib, Public Health Ethics Committee, UK Faculty of Public Health, London  
Moral Mandate of Environmental Public Health: implications for policy, research and practice

Environmental health comprises the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect human health, such as radiation, toxic chemicals, and certain biological agents. The ethical frameworks and underpinnings that drive environmental health practice are not always made explicit and in our view require greater attention. We are looking forward to the contributions of colleagues from the whole range of environmental health on the ethical implications of science and technology and on the application of research results in the regulatory and policy domains.

The symposium will be sponsored by the University of South Bohemia, the city of České Budějovice and a number of private companies. For those who require financial support the conference fee incl. meals and accommodation (at a student residence) will be waived.



## Imagining UN's evolution, global governance specialists collaborate

To read the story online or view more photos, visit [news.bahai.org](http://news.bahai.org).

STOCKHOLM, 14 August 2018, (BWNS) — As the world grows more interconnected and as the imperative to unite humanity becomes ever more strongly felt, systems of global governance need to evolve. This idea is at the core of an award-winning proposal to reshape global governance, put forward by three

Baha'is who specialize in aspects of governance in international affairs.

"Many of the problems we face are global in nature. They cannot be solved without some kind of stronger mechanism of international cooperation," says Augusto Lopez-Claros, an international economist and co-author of the proposal.

The United Nations provides a foundation for global governance, but the proposal makes a case for a stronger international governing body. The proposal outlines a mechanism with two legislative bodies: one with national representatives and the second with delegates who represent particular global issues, such as the environment, human rights, and others. It would also include a strengthened executive branch with an international security force, as well as a well-trained international judiciary that regularly makes binding decisions.

The proposal was one of three winners of the New Shape Prize in May from the Global Challenges Foundation, a non-profit organization that aims to stimulate discussions on systems for managing global risks.

Dr. Lopez-Claros, former Director of Global Indicators Group at the World Bank Group and currently a senior fellow at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, collaborated with Maja Groff, an international lawyer based in The Hague, Netherlands, and Arthur Dahl, a former senior official with the U. N. Environment Programme and current President of the International Environment Forum, on the proposal to reform the U.N. and other global institutions. Titled “Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century,” the proposal highlights the need for a system of global governance capable of effectively addressing the major contemporary challenges facing humanity.

“The principles and various aspects of our proposal draw upon the wisdom of multiple generations and thinkers from a variety of backgrounds,” says Ms. Groff, who works with the Hague Conference on Private International Law. “We hope to engage with the common aspirations of humanity.”

Dr. Dahl noted that the past decades have exposed the limitations of the U.N. system to solve issues that cross national boundaries, a challenge that requires new thinking about the U.N., its further evolution, and its mandate. “A range of inherently global crises cannot be solved outside the framework of global collective action involving supranational cooperation and a fundamental rethinking of the meaning of ‘national interest,’” the paper describes.

For the three authors, this means it is necessary to build upon structures that exist in the U.N.

“Taken together, our proposals would ensure that the U.N. moves as soon as possible to a model of coherent governance, analogous to what we expect from effective national government systems with capacities for ongoing monitoring and rapid response to current and emerging global risks,” Ms. Groff explained.

## A Transition Pathway to Avoid “Hothouse Earth”

Article submitted by IEF Member Gary Colliver, Mariposa CA, USA

Earlier this month, a team of 16 climate scientists, led by Will Steffen and Johan Rockström, published what may prove to be a seminal paper in climate change research. Hopefully, it will be wakeup call that could bring more people into the fold of those who want to look for and urgently work toward mitigating and adapting human society to the peril of climate change.

The paper, “Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene”

(<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2018/07/31/1810141115>) published August 6 in the *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences*, explores “potential future trajectories of the Earth System” by four questions:

1. Is there a planetary threshold in the trajectory of the Earth System that, if crossed, could prevent stabilization in a range of intermediate temperature rises?
2. Given our understanding of geophysical and biosphere feedbacks intrinsic to the Earth System, where might such a threshold be?
3. If a threshold is crossed, what are the implications, especially for the wellbeing of human societies?
4. What human actions could create a pathway that would steer the Earth System away from the potential threshold and toward the maintenance of interglacial-like conditions?

In short, the answer to the first question is “yes”; to the second question, “around 2°C above preindustrial temperature”, beyond which “intrinsic biogeophysical feedbacks in the Earth System...could become the dominant processes controlling the system’s trajectory”, leading to “a domino-like cascade that could take the Earth System to even higher temperatures”, a state they term “Hothouse Earth”.

Regarding the implications, if that threshold is crossed, there is a series of “potential tipping cascades”, most of which “are largely irreversible on timeframes that matter to contemporary societies...” Several of these feedback processes are discussed. As for potential effects on humankind, they look to the past to identify instances of “regional and seasonal hydroclimate variability” that have been associated with “[s]ocietal declines, collapses, migrations/resettlements, reorganizations, and cultural changes...” However, because Hothouse

Earth would be global and permanent rather than just regional and temporary, it likely would “be uncontrollable and dangerous . . . , and it poses severe risks for health, economies, political stability . . . , and ultimately, the habitability of the planet for humans.”

Although their examination of the fourth question is cursory, several important points are highlighted: First, rather than being “external” to the environment, their analysis “argues that human societies and our activities need to be recast as an integral, interacting component of a complex, adaptive Earth System.” Second, they say that humanity’s “challenge” is to consciously move the Earth System away from our current trajectory toward “a de facto stable intermediate state” which they call “Stabilized Earth”. And finally, that “[i]ncremental linear changes to the present socioeconomic system are not enough to stabilize the Earth System. Widespread, rapid, and fundamental transformations will likely be required to reduce the risk of crossing the threshold and locking in the Hothouse Earth pathway; these include changes in behavior, technology and innovation, governance, and values . . . .”

The authors’ call for “fundamental transformations” within human society, especially in the area of “values”, will resonate with Bahá’ís and growing numbers of other people around the world.

## Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change

Summary/Comment by Christine Muller

There was a time when humankind came close to solving the problem of climate-change. A recent article in the New York Times, *Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change* by Nathaniel Rich, provides an accessible and comprehensive overview of the decade 1979 – 1989, when gradual consensus evolved in the United States about the importance of taking action to reduce carbon emissions.

The article begins by stating that “the world has warmed more than one degree Celsius since the Industrial Revolution” and that the odds of the Paris Climate Agreement succeeding to limit the warming to “well below 2 degrees” are only one in 20, according to a recent study based on current emissions trends. Nathaniel Rich then briefly, but powerfully, describes the catastrophic impacts of climate change which we will likely experience in the future and illustrates these trends with pictures of recent natural disasters that have already become more destructive because of climate change.

With captivating language, the article highlights the efforts of a handful of people in the US three decades ago, especially of Rafe Pomerance and Dr. James Hansen: “That we came so close, as a civilization, to breaking our suicide pact with fossil fuels can be credited to the efforts of a handful of people, among them a hyperkinetic lobbyist and a guileless atmospheric physicist who, at great personal cost, tried to warn humanity of what was coming.” The article then shows how, at the end of

the '80s, the world came close to adopting a proposal to reduce carbon emissions 20 percent by 2005, which could have kept the warming at less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. There was a brief time when scientists, politicians of both parties, and even the fossil-fuel industry were ready to take action to keep global warming to a minimum.

The main question the author asks is “Why didn’t we act?” Getting to the bottom of that profound question would, of course, require examining several different factors. The article does a good job touching on one psychological factor, namely the difficulty humans have when dealing with threats that are perceived to be in the more distant future. The strength of the article, however, lies mainly in the excellent reporting of historical events.

For example, Rich writes about one of the first major diplomatic climate change meetings, the Noordwijk Ministerial Conference in the Netherlands in November 1989 where more than 60 nations were represented. The goal of the conference was to agree on “a statement endorsing a hard, binding target of emissions reductions” in preparation for an international climate treaty. However, a sudden change of opinion by the US government, supported by a few other countries, doomed any agreement which would have required a real commitment. Therefore, despite sufficient knowledge and much commitment of a majority of environmental ministers, the effort failed.

That sequence of events seems to have become a pattern through all international climate negotiations until the present. Today, of course, climate-science

is even more advanced than in the 80's and climate change impacts are now visible for everyone to see, but at the same time, the systematic misinformation campaign that started in the late '80s, led by ideology and self-interest and financed by vested interests, has polarized public opinion and has prevented necessary climate actions in the US, and as a result on the international level.

Rich writes: "Everyone knew — and we all still know. We know that the transformations of our planet, which will come gradually and suddenly, will reconfigure the political world order. We know that if we don't act to reduce emissions, we risk the collapse of civilization. We also know that, without a gargantuan intervention, whatever happens will be worse for our children, worse yet for their children and even worse still for their children's children, whose lives, our actions have demonstrated, mean nothing to us."

In the above paragraph, the author comes close to mentioning the spiritual dimension which would be essential for a full exploration of the question "Why didn't we act?" Responsible actions that aim to benefit future generations, but that occur some present costs, require a spiritual transformation.

In his concluding remarks, Rich offers both hope and despair:  
 "... We are capable of good works, altruism and wisdom, and a growing number of people have devoted their lives to helping civilization avoid the worst. We have a solution in hand: carbon taxes, increased investment in renewable and nuclear

energy and decarbonization technology. As Jim Hansen told me, "From a technology and economics standpoint, it is still readily possible to stay under two degrees Celsius." We can trust the technology and the economics. It's harder to trust human nature. Keeping the planet to two degrees of warming, let alone 1.5 degrees, would require transformative action. It will take more than good works and voluntary commitments; it will take a revolution. But in order to become a revolutionary, you need first to suffer."

These words remind me of a passage written by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, in 1936: "Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. ... A paralysis more painful than any it has yet experienced must creep over and further afflict the fabric of a broken society ere it can be rebuilt and regenerated." (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 193

Nathaniel Rich calls for a revolution to mitigate climate change. We can assume that he means that we fundamentally need to change everything we are doing: The whole energy system, agriculture, transportation, land and waste management etc. From a Baha'i perspective, such fundamental changes can only succeed with a spiritual revolution.

## **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.