



LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM Volume 25, Number 6 --- 15 June 2023

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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.

“Justice demands coherence between word and deed. Beyond establishing new bodies or concluding new agreements, therefore, the international community must make the fulfillment of promises already made a keystone of all future efforts.”

One Planet, One Habitation: A Bahá'í Perspective
on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World

Trends toward Justice and Solidarity

Editor's notes

Despite the worsening environmental state of the world, this newsletter can report on significant progress in human thinking and ethical understanding.

It starts with *Safe and just Earth system boundaries* (page 2), a report on a study that quantified the Earth System Boundaries. Although its findings are sobering, it is significant that, for the first time, a scientific study not only assessed the biophysical processes and systems that regulate the state of the Earth system, but also safety and justice for humanity on Earth.

Implementation of promises to act for the well-being of people and planet has been weak – accountability is required. Read about how universal accountability can have multiple dimensions covering the major aspects of human and environmental well-being. See *Accountability* on page 6.

A just world order requires global governance. The article *Wide support for effective global governance* (page 7) reports on a recent survey by the Stimson Center that shows a surprisingly strong support for global governance by populations in many countries.

Civil society has been consulting over many months about how to strengthen the UN system and came up with excellent practical recommendations in the *Interim People's Pact for the Future*, including environmental governance, see page 10.

If you want to know how some IEF members have contributed to public discourse, just scroll down to page 14 and read about their contribution to the book *50 Years with UNEP and Civil Society* in the article *The Peoples' Environment Narrative*.

The newsletter concludes with an update on IEF member Austin Bowden-Kerby's exciting *Community-based coral adaptation program in Fiji* on p. 14.

IEF NEWS

IEF Annual Conference

The IEF Annual Conference will take place virtually during and/or soon after the *UN Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future (SOTF)* and the *Sustainable Development Goals Summit* in New York on 18-20 September 2023. The IEF conference topics will correspond in some way to the public discourse at these international fall conferences.

Would you like to join the conference planning team or volunteer for IEF in other ways? Please, write to ief@iefworld.org.

IEF Webinars

The IEF Webinars will take a summer break and resume after the IEF Annual Conference in the fall.

Spirited Seas: Science and Spirituality, an interfaith exploration of the environmental consequences of Deep Seabed Mining

Now you can listen to a recording of this excellent webinar which took place on 30 May. IEF President Arthur Dahl was the moderator: <https://www.g20interfaith.org/2023-deep-seabed-mining/>

Safe and just Earth system boundaries

A just world on a safe planet:
First study quantifying Earth System Boundaries
Earth Commission Report



Humans are taking colossal risks with the future of civilization and everything that lives on Earth, a new study published in the journal *Nature* shows. Developed by an international science commission engaging more than 40 researchers from across the globe, the scientists deliver the first quantification of safe and just Earth system boundaries on a global and local level for several biophysical processes and systems that regulate the state of the Earth system.

For the first time, safety and justice for humanity on Earth is assessed and quantified for the same control variables regulating life support and Earth stability. Justice, assessed based on avoiding significant harm to people across the world, tightens the Earth system boundaries, providing even less

available space for humans on Earth. This is extremely challenging, as the Earth Commission concludes that many of the safe boundaries are already crossed today.

“We are in the Anthropocene, putting the stability and resilience of the entire planet at risk. This is why, for the first time, we present quantifiable numbers and a solid scientific foundation to assess the state of our planetary health not only in terms of Earth System stability and resilience but also in terms of human well-being and equity / justice” said Prof. Johan Rockström, Earth Commission Co-Chair, lead author and Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

“Justice is a necessity for humanity to live within planetary limits. This is a conclusion seen across the scientific community in multiple heavyweight environmental assessments. It is not a political choice. Overwhelming evidence shows that a just and equitable approach is essential to planetary stability. We cannot have a biophysically safe planet without justice. This includes setting just targets to prevent significant harm and guarantee access to resources to people and for as well as just transformations to achieve those targets” said co-author Prof. Joyeeta Gupta, Co-Chair of the Earth Commission, Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South at the University of Amsterdam and Professor of Law and Policy in Water Resources and Environment at IHE Delft Institute for Water Education.

Health indicators for people and planet

The Earth Commission has quantified safe and just boundaries for climate, biodiversity, freshwater and different kinds of pollution to air, soil and water – and most have been breached. For example, human activities are altering water flows, excessive amounts of nutrients are released into waterways from fertilizer use, and limited natural areas are left. This poses existential threats for a stable planet, to ecosystems and their vital contributions to people. The world has already passed the safe and just climate boundary, which is set at 1°C above pre-industrial temperature levels, as tens of millions of people are already harmed by the current level of climate change.

“Our results are quite concerning: Within the five analyzed domains, several boundaries, on a global and local scale, are already transgressed. This means that unless a timely transformation occurs, it is most likely that irreversible tipping points and widespread impacts on human well-being will be unavoidable. Avoiding that scenario is crucial if we want to secure a safe and just future for current and future generations” continued Rockström.

“The Earth system is in danger, as many tipping elements are about to cross their tipping points. So far, seventeen tipping elements are identified in scientific literature, among them, nine are cryosphere-related. The Asia High Mountain Cryosphere (AHMC) is fast changing and close to becoming a new tipping element, which can impact the regional social-economy” explained Prof. Dahe Qin, Co-Chair of the Earth Commission and Director of the Academic Committee, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

For a safe future, the world needs global targets beyond climate

Global target setting has focused on climate change and limiting global warming well below 2°C and aiming at 1.5°C according to the Paris Agreement. Science also clearly shows there is a need to manage all the other biophysical systems and processes on Earth that determine the livability on the planet.

“The Earth system is an interconnected set of biophysical processes that operate across regions and scales. Interference in one part of the world can have enormous impacts in other regions. Using Earth Systems Boundaries as an entry point for holistic and transformative action will support impactful and just progression towards a safe and just world” said Wendy Broadgate, Earth Commission Executive Director and Future Earth, Global Hub Director, Sweden.

Justice tightens the available space for humans on Earth

The new study builds on authoritative scientific evidence defining the biophysical conditions to maintain a stable planet to underpin life on Earth (“safe”) as well as assessing how significant harm

can be avoided to humans and other species. Past scientific attempts to define environmental boundaries, such as the Planetary Boundary framework, have looked at the global conditions needed to maintain a stable planet and safeguard life on Earth.

“The new research provides safe and just earth system boundaries for five critical domains that play a key role in life support and Earth stability. It also explores what’s needed to minimise significant harm to humans as a result of changes in the Earth system and sets boundaries at scales relevant for assessment and management of the conditions of biophysical systems such as the biosphere and freshwater” explained Steven Lade, Lead author and Research Scientist, Earth Commission Secretariat at Future Earth, Australian National University and Stockholm Resilience Centre.

Safe boundaries ensure stable and resilient conditions on Earth, and use an interglacial Holocene-like Earth system functioning as a reference point for a healthy planet. A stable and resilient Earth is dominated by balancing feedbacks that cope with buffer and dampen disturbances. Cutting edge science on climate tipping points feature as one major line of evidence to set safe boundaries.

Just boundaries minimize human exposure to significant harm. The Commission defines significant harm as: widespread severe existential or irreversible negative impacts on countries, communities and individuals from Earth system change, such as loss of lives, livelihoods or incomes, displacement, loss of food, water or nutritional security, chronic disease, injury or malnutrition.

“Our safe and just boundaries will guide target setting, but must also be realized through just transformation processes that ensure minimum access to resources for people,” adds Gupta.

The Safe and Just boundaries take the stricter of the two quantified levels to identify the Safe and Just Earth System Boundary.

Science for real world application

The Earth Systems Boundaries will underpin the setting of new science-based targets for businesses, cities and governments to address the polycrises of: increasing human exposure to the climate emergency, biodiversity decline, water shortages, ecosystem damage from fertiliser overuse in some parts of the world coupled with lack of access elsewhere, and health damage from air pollution. In a time of increasing scrutiny and expectations, the resilience and success of businesses, cities and governments will depend on their ability to accurately measure and improve their impact on people and planet – and target opportunities within the finite limits of the planet.

“A safe and just transformation to a manageable planet, requires urgent, collective action by multiple actors, especially in government and business to act within Earth system boundaries to keep our life support system of the planet intact. Stewardship of the global commons has never been more urgent or important,” continued Wendy Broadgate, Earth Commission Executive Director, and Global Hub Director (Sweden), Future Earth.

“With this global scientific assessment, we provide all stakeholders with scientific boundaries that can enable a prosperous and equitable world development on a stable planet, a better future for people and planet. This new science functions as input to the development of science-based targets. These can be adopted by cities, businesses and countries to address the systemic global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, nutrient overloading, overuse of water, and air pollution,” concludes Rockström.

SAFE AND JUST EARTH SYSTEM BOUNDARIES

- CLIMATE

Safe: 1.5°C to avoid high likelihood of multiple climate tipping points. NOT YET BREACHED

Just: 1°C to avoid high exposure to significant harm from climate change. BREACHED AT 1.2°C

Safe and Just: 1°C

- **BIOSPHERE**

Global Intact Nature: at least 50-60% natural ecosystem area (safe and just). BREACHED AT 45-50%

Local Managed nature: at least 20-25% natural ecosystems in every square kilometer (safe and just). BREACHED FOR TWO-THIRDS OF HUMAN-DOMINATED LAND AREA

Safe and Just (global intact nature): >50-60% natural ecosystem area

Safe and Just (local managed nature): >20-25% natural ecosystems in every km²

- **WATER**

Surface water: 20% monthly flow alteration (safe and just). BREACHED FOR 34% OF GLOBAL AREA

Groundwater: Annual drawdown less than recharge (safe and just). BREACHED FOR 47% OF GLOBAL AREA

Safe and Just (surface water): <20% monthly flow alteration

Safe and Just (groundwater): Drawdown ≤ Recharge

- **NUTRIENT CYCLES (Fertilizers)**

Nitrogen:

Safe: <2.5 mgN/L in surface water & <5-20 kgN/ha/yr land deposition (local); 61 TgN/yr surplus (global) – BREACHED AT 119 TgN/yr

Just: same as Safe, plus drinking water <11.3 mgNO₃-N/L (local); 57 TgN/yr surplus (global). BREACHED AT 119 TgN/yr

Phosphorus:

Safe: 50-100 mgP/m³ (local freshwater concentration); 4.5-9 TgP/yr (global surplus). BREACHED AT 10 TgP/yr

Just: same as Safe, plus any additional local standards. BREACHED AT 10 TgP/yr

Safe and Just (nitrogen): <57 TgN/yr (global)

Safe and Just (phosphorus): Surplus <4.5-9.0 TgP/yr (global)

- **AEROSOL POLLUTANTS**

Global: 0.15 annual mean interhemispheric aerosol optical depth (AOD) difference (safe). NOT BREACHED AT 0.05

Local: 0.25 AOD to avoid changes to monsoons (safe). 15 µg/m³ PM_{2.5} to avoid high likelihood of harm to human health (just).

Safe and Just (global): 0.15 annual mean interhemispheric AOD difference (safe)

Safe and Just (local): 15 µg/m³ PM_{2.5}

JUSTICE CRITERIA

A box in the original paper describes the criteria used to assess justice.

Interspecies justice and Earth system stability

Interspecies justice aims to protect humans, other species and ecosystems, rejecting human exceptionalism. In many domains, interspecies justice could be achieved by maintaining Earth system stability within safe Earth System Boundaries (ESBs).

Intergenerational justice

Intergenerational justice examines relationships and obligations between generations, such as the legacy of greenhouse gas emissions or ecosystem destruction for youth and future people. Achieving

intergenerational justice requires recognizing the potential long-term consequences of short-term actions and associated trade-offs and synergies across time. We define two types of intergenerational justice: (between past and present) whether actions of past generations have minimized significant harm to current generations and (between present and future) the responsibility of current generations to minimize significant harm to future generations.

Intragenerational justice: between countries, communities and individuals

Intragenerational justice includes relationships between present individuals, between states (international), among people of different states (global) and between community members or citizens (communitarian or nationalist). Intersectional justice considers multiple and overlapping social identities and categories (for example, gender, race, age, class and health) that underpin inequality, vulnerability and the capacity to respond. Achieving intragenerational justice means minimizing significant harm caused by one country to another, one community to another and one individual to another.

SOURCE: <https://earthcommission.org/news/publications/just-world-safe-planet/>

ORIGINAL PAPER: Rockström, J., Gupta, J., Qin, D. et al. Safe and just Earth system boundaries. Nature (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06083-8>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06083-8>



Accountability

Addressing the failures in implementation
Making progress in justice through innovation

Failings in environmental governance

For more than 50 years, since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, governments have signed up to ambitious declarations, conventions, action plans, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other efforts at global environmental governance intended to preserve the biosphere, respect planetary boundaries and limits, and protect the natural capital and ecosystem services upon which all life including our own depends. Yet the environment continues to degrade, we have overshoot most planetary boundaries, and we are now facing existential threats from climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and waste. The science is clear, the means are available, but implementation falls short because the motivation to act is lacking. At present, global environmental governance is voluntary, limited by the consensus rule, and demonstrates the failure of political will. Within the framework of national sovereignty, where national interests come before the common good of all, short-term political priorities, vested interests, corruption and retaining power come first. The best efforts of some cannot overcome the neglect of others. Accountability is a way to respond to the widespread failures in implementation and lack of political will at the national and international levels.

Accountability

Short of major reforms in global governance, stronger accountability can provide an immediate way forward. The [Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment](#) is now recognised and needs to be implemented as a matter of environmental justice. This requires a mechanism of accountability that would apply to governments, economic actors, institutions, communities and even individuals. Since we are all members of one human family in one planetary system, we need an accountability system for universal solidarity, including with all people and other life forms with which we share our Earth home. In a world of great wealth and technological progress, it is unconscionable

that billions of people struggle to meet basic needs while destruction of the environment brings great profits to some. We should be caring for the well-being of everyone and everything on this planet, since we all suffer the consequences of our social and environmental mismanagement.

Universal Accountability

A system of universal accountability would have multiple dimensions covering the major aspects of human and environmental well-being. For an individual, this could include education toward global solidarity and equity, learning moderation and contentment, practicing generosity, and reducing one's environmental footprint. For community accountability, tools might help to read the local reality and to consult about social actions to address the most immediate needs within local capacities, such as [Community Conversations for Global Solidarity](#). Businesses should consider their responsibilities all along their supply chain as well as the impacts of their products and services, defining a social purpose for which they can be held accountable beyond just profitability, such as through [Global Solidarity Accounting for Business](#). Governments need an accountability system that reports on their current state of universal solidarity in all their practices in the past and present, and that reports on efforts for improvement towards more solidarity. This could include the [Global Solidarity Accounting](#) beyond GDP that we have been developing as an alternative to purely monetary values in society. Some countries and organisations have already made progress in this direction, as illustrated in [examples of other efforts to measure human and environmental well-being beyond GDP](#).

Public discourse on accountability

The UN Secretary-General and many other actors have called for measures of progress beyond GDP, and this will be an important theme for public discourse in the next couple of years of UN debate. On 18 September 2023, the UN will organize in New York a ministerial preparatory meeting for the Summit of the Future (SOTF) in September 2024, followed on 19-20 September by the mid-term review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. There may also be a special meeting on climate change. The IEF is planning its annual conference around these meetings, and this might include a discussion afterwards of what the events have agreed, considering the results and the efforts needed going forward, to hold governments to account for what they concluded. For the IEF, the spiritual dimension of motivating a desire to change in the interest of environmental and social justice would be an important aspect of this.

For the status of progress on the SDGs, the Secretary-General's [Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report](#) is discouraging. Two important documents for the SOTF are the report of the High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB) to which IEF members made significant inputs, [A Breakthrough for People and Planet](#), which calls for efforts to articulate and act on alternatives to GDP, and the civil society [Interim People's Pact for the Future](#) which was co-led by Daniel Perell of the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) and addresses the lack of accountability.

If you are interested in *Social Change toward Universal Solidarity with a System of Accountability*, you can read more about this on the IEF website here: <https://iefworld.org/node/1414>



Wide support for effective global governance

Finding Consensus in a Divided World Global Governance Survey 2023

As part of the Global Governance Innovation Network, the Stimson Center commissioned Craig Charney to initiate a globally representative survey of how people see the state of the world and the necessary solutions in global governance, with the results of the first year collected in February and released on 8 June 2023. It shows strong support for strengthened global governance and action on

climate change by people who already see themselves as global citizens. Public opinion is far ahead of political leaders on these issues. The following is a shortened version of the executive summary. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

The world today is widely seen as split, perilous, and darkening. But there are reasons for hope: a broad awareness of global problems and a willingness to consider answers. The global public is responsive to issues facing the whole world, not just their own countries. The Global Governance Survey explored attitudes on key global issues and potential solutions from a representative sample of 4,800 people across the U.S., Canada, U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, accounting for 51% of the world's population and 70% of its economic output.

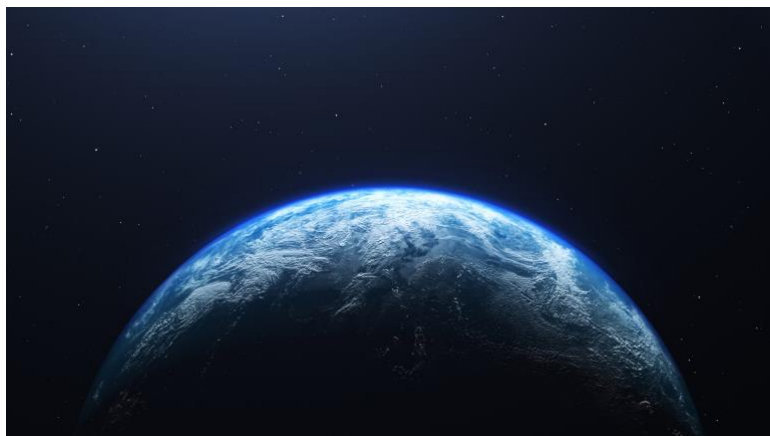


Image Credit: [Jim](#)

There was a substantial degree of consensus on major global issues across the nations polled, with unexpected similarities on responses on war, peace, and conflict resolution, with a hostility to aggression and a willingness to penalize it. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have forged a shared commitment to avoiding a repetition and promoting health care for all. On climate issues, the long-term result of advocacy, leadership, and disasters is a readiness

to back major initiatives to respond to the crisis. There is also a willingness to fill in gaps in international institutions — such as the lack of an international anti-corruption court, to make the Security Council more inclusive, or to connect UN bodies to other stakeholders, including parliamentarians.

Key findings include:

Megatrends—The Global Mood: Divided, Dangerous, and Worsening

- “Divided,” “dangerous,” and “worsening” are the most frequent descriptions of the state of the world.
- The general view is that the world is headed in the wrong direction, and worry is widespread.
- There is particular concern about conflict, economics, and corruption.
- Discontent is also widespread on climate, human rights, governance, resources, and cooperation; COVID-19 and refugees are the only issues where most say the world is doing well.
- On most global issues, the world is seen as doing worse than a decade ago.
- The respondents in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and the young are more optimistic on global issues.

International Peace and Security: Hostility to Aggression, Support for International Law

- There is broad support for strong international responses to aggression, including non-recognition of territorial conquest, for economic sanctions, and reparations from aggressors.
- International consequences for Russian aggression are favored by citizens everywhere (except Russia), even where governments have taken neutral stances.
- War crimes should include attacks on power grids, rape and sexual violence, and the use of autonomous killer drones, in the view of large majorities.
- Most people say their countries should cooperate in bringing war crimes suspects to the International Criminal Court in every country polled, except Russia.
- A greater role for international courts and arbitration in dispute resolution is massively favored.

Pandemic Response and Socio-Economic Development: Progress and Desire for More

- The vast majority of adults say they have received vaccination against COVID-19, and nearly half report having had the disease, so almost all have some immunity to it.
- There is general satisfaction with national COVID-19 vaccination and treatment programs, as well as broad if lesser approval of countries' economic and social recovery efforts from the disease.
- There is extensive support polled for measures to prevent future pandemics, including boosting World Health Organization authority, establishing funding, and building vaccine factories, as well as early warning systems.
- There is also broad support for public-private partnerships to promote Universal Health Care.

Environmental Governance and Climate Action: A Broad Consensus for Change

- The Paris Climate Accord is known to majorities in most countries polled, and almost half of the publics have heard of the Conference of Parties (COP) 27.
- Opinions are split on whether voluntary national pledges, as recommended in the Paris Climate Accord, or mandatory carbon emissions limits are the best way to encourage countries to reduce their emissions.
- Compensation from a Loss and Damage fund for global warming damage in developing countries, adopted, in principle, at COP 27 draws substantial support but also considerable uncertainty.
- Policy measures to encourage or require climate action, or punish climate damage, are favored by large majorities.

The Rule of Law and Inclusive International Governance: Readiness for Bold Measures

- Most respondents favor the creation of an international anti-corruption court for cases which national tribunals are unable to handle.
- Substantial majorities view the United Nations and Group of 20 (G20) favorably.
- Sentiment broadly favors making the Security Council more inclusive by adding Brazil, India, and South Africa as permanent members and limiting permanent members' use of the veto.
- Better connecting international bodies, through G20/General Assembly economic summits and an international UN parliamentary network, gets a favorable reception.

Global Collective Action, Citizenship, and Leadership: Multilateralism and a Shared Identity

- There is a widely shared preference for multilateral leadership to deal with security, climate, pandemic, and human rights issues.
- The majority of respondents consider themselves global citizens, but this perspective is more common in the G7 countries than in the BRICS.
- Humanity represents a common bond against shared threats.

Conclusion

- Overall, support for strengthening global governance is widespread in the survey countries.
- Attitudes on global citizenship, COVID-19 vaccination, and cosmopolitanism strongly correlate with support for more effective global governance.
- The public is ahead of their leaders on global governance innovation and strengthening.

In short, the survey reveals a shared readiness for action on global governance across the divides of North versus South or East versus West. Collective action and multilateral institutions are seen as the best ways to advance the common interests of citizens in all nations, whether on conflict, rights, climate, or health. People feel they are stakeholders in a connected world, not just individual countries. There is a sense of global citizenship and an awareness of a common humanity which underlie these beliefs. The Global Governance Survey shows that there is an option besides an anarchic world beset by war and crisis. It is a positive, hopeful, and truly global vision that the peoples of leading nations are ready to support, if their leaders can find a willingness to embrace it.

You can watch the recording of the impressive one-hour program for the launch of the survey here:

<https://www.stimson.org/event/global-governance-survey-launch/>

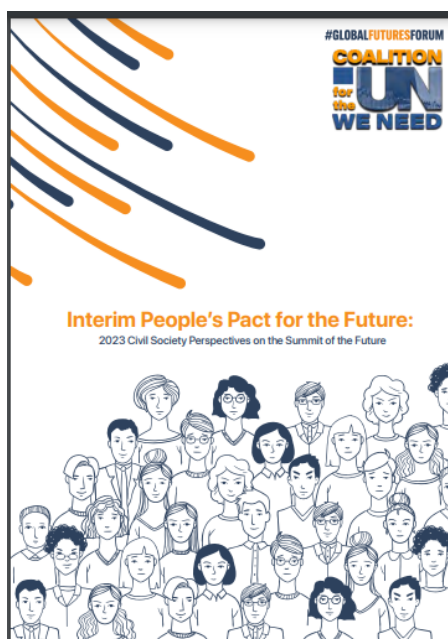
SOURCE: based on Global Governance Survey <https://ggin.stimson.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Global-Governance-S...>

Interim People's Pact for the Future

2023 Civil Society Perspectives on the Summit of the Future

Source: Coalition for the UN We Want

Following the successful Global Futures Forum in March 2023, that brought together civil society organizations from around the world to amplify their voices on the official discussions leading to the 2024 Summit of the Future (SOTF), conference outcomes and recommendations have now been consolidated in the interim [People's Pact for the Future](#).



Designed as a contribution to negotiations leading to the 2024 UN Summit of the Future, the interim People's Pact sets out recommendations for a strengthened UN system under seven themes: development and the SDGs, environmental governance, human rights and participation, the global digital compact, improved global economic and financial architecture, peace and security, and UN and global governance innovation.

Development of the People's Pact also relied upon pre-GFF consultations that included over 1600 civil society representatives across the seven thematic tracks. Recommendations in the People's Pact are followed by "next steps" – suggestions for advancing multilateral progress, including at the September 2024 UN Summit of the Future.

According to Nudhara Yusuf, Coordinator of this year's GFF, "this Interim People's Pact is an evolving document and therefore we welcome and look forward to constructive feedback as we continue engaging in further regional, online and thematic consultations in the coming months".

To ensure that diverse civil society perspectives are engaged in the preparatory processes leading to the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future (SOTF) and the preceding 2023 SOTF Ministerial Forum to strengthen and revitalize multilateralism, the Global Futures Forum (GFF), led by the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN), took place March 2021 in New York, with an additional UN Missions Engagement Day on March 22, 2023.

The Forum included over 180 participants in person, each day. Over 2,000 individuals registered to participate online. Participants included civil society representatives, UN member state delegates, secretariat officials, and other stakeholders.

The seven thematic areas that civil society has chosen for deliberation stem from a combination of the United Nations' pillars and the tracks identified in Our Common Agenda, namely:

1. Development and the SDGs;
2. Environmental governance;
3. Human rights and participation;

4. The Global Digital Compact;
5. The global economic and financial architecture;
6. Peace and security;
7. UN and global governance innovation.

Below are the recommendations from the second track, Environmental Governance.

Environmental Governance

The Four Recommendations

1. Promote a Decarbonization Agenda
2. Upgrade existing global governance structures
3. Establish an Environmental Governance Agency
4. Prioritize Transformative Education that promotes Empathy and Empowerment

According to the [IPCC 2023](#) report, the world has warmed 1.1°C and will likely surpass 1.5°C before mid-century. Rising global temperatures will increase the probability of breaching [planetary boundaries](#) and crossing tipping points that, once crossed, will result in irreversible changes to the Earth's biosphere and life support systems.

Our natural ecosystems are already under stress. By 2064, unabated deforestation could devour the Amazon, which produces 20% of the Earth's oxygen. The triple environmental crises are largely fuelled by unsustainable production and consumption. However, despite numerous environmental and climate conventions and treaties, action has staggered under the combined constraints of limited ambition and accountability. Since 2019, SDG progress has slowed, particularly SDG 12, 13, and 17, the lowest performers even in major economic groups like the G20.

Hence, redefining our relationship between people and the Earth, and consumption and production, are critical to realign the world economy in a way that respects planetary ecological boundaries. We need effective and enforceable global environmental governance mechanisms, regulations, and possibly even new institutions to address these challenges. The transboundary nature of climate and environmental impacts makes it critical for local and national action to be aligned with regional and global conventions.

Our recommendations seek to drive system-wide changes in global environmental governance – focusing on top-down and bottom-up solutions, building on the UN Secretary General's recommendations in Our Common Agenda (OCA) that seek (a) to reinforce and expand the application of “common heritage” principles, (b) to drive intergenerational action to protect the global commons through inclusive and effective multilateralism, and (c) to ensure that environmental justice abides by human rights obligations, ensuring the protection of marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples, women and girls, persons with disabilities, and ecologically vulnerable populations.

This requires a deepening of the UN75 Declaration commitment to “listen to, and work with, young people...” and heighten their participation and representation in the global discourse leading to the Summit of the Future's Declaration for Future Generations to ensure that current generations protect and regenerate the planetary resources to meet the needs of future generations. As the Secretary-General said, “The choices we make, or fail to make today, could result in breakdown or a breakthrough to a greener, better, safer future. The choice is ours to make.”

Recommendations

1. Promote a Decarbonization Agenda based on the mission of “[decarbonization without deindustrialization](#)” to deliver [jobs, growth and sustainability](#) in the Global South and beyond. Developing and least-developed countries must, with the support of technology co-development and

financial transfer, leapfrog to a 100% renewable electricity network to power clean energy infrastructure, including EV fleets and green hydrogen networks to achieve a just transition. The Decarbonization Agenda seeks to reduce consumption, outlaw planned obsolescence, reduce waste, re-skill the workforce, and drive global sustainable production and manufacturing opportunities.

Next Steps:

- *Mainstream greening of all components of the economy. This includes ensuring that national budgets align with inclusive growth and green policies to support the sustainable transformation of sectors through responsible reuse, repurpose and recycling programmes. Improve welfare through direct environmental benefits; and nudge individuals and businesses towards sustainable business models and choices.*
- *Embed SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production, in all aspects of the economy to drive sustainable production in the Global South and constrain unsustainable and wasteful consumption in the Global North. Externalities on all products and services should be priced into the cost to encourage a transition towards sustainable choices such as public mobility, resource efficiency, circular economy etc.*
- *Establish a [global clean energy de-risking facility](#) funded through international public money to accelerate access and flow of low-cost de-risked public and private capital at scale.*
- *Shift the narrative of “technology transfer” to “[co-development](#)” to bridge the technology divide. This includes pooling resources among countries, ease of licensing, co-owning intellectual property rights (IPRs), sharing of co-benefits, and pooling resources through innovative financial and non-financial incentives to reduce the cost of technology development and aid in accelerating the pace and scale of technology access, development, and use, globally.*

2. Upgrade existing global governance structures to enhance the role of enforcement mechanisms. Strengthening the role of regional and international courts to apply law emerging from international policy considerations and taking steps needed to enable their jurisdiction across countries is indispensable in tackling the climate crisis.

Next Steps:

- *Accept the concept of a [common heritage of \[hu\]mankind](#) in relation to climate, as recommended in the [Vanuatu resolution](#), to get access to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to make rulings on threats and destructive incursions in the global commons. We recommend that all future UN treaties include a provision for arbitration by the ICJ and encourage all UN member states to accede to the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ as, to date, [74 UN member](#) countries have done.*
- *Include Ecocide as the 5th crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We recommend the promotion of a cross-jurisdictional crime of Ecocide to ensure protection of ecosystems through nationally and culturally appropriate criminal enforcement mechanisms. Ecocide law, with international, regional and national enforcement mechanisms according to the principle of subsidiarity, can represent a strong example of effective polycentric governance and protection for the global commons.*
- *Strengthen engagement with the regional court systems which often are able to advance certain matters more quickly than global processes.*
- *Advance the resolution on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This most recent human right has great potential to inspire meaningful change. CSOs will continue to contribute legal content and perspectives.*

3. Establish an Environmental Governance Agency with binding, supranational authority to provide effective, integrated, equitable and accountable global governance of the Earth System including both the capacity to regulate and to mobilize the necessary resources. While setting up such an Agency

has proven politically difficult, the robust scientific analysis by the IPCC, IPBES etc., on planetary boundaries and approaching tipping points confirm the urgent need for such an institution now.

Next Steps:

- Create a [Smart Coalition](#) of like-minded organizations and states working on global governance issues based on the learning from setting up the ICC and the Landmine ban. The Smart Coalition should be initiated before the Summit of the Future to advocate for establishing the Agency and deliver a polycentric governance system, with responsibilities allocated across governance levels based on the principle of [subsidiarity](#). The [Climate Governance Commission](#) recommends the Agency work across levels of environmental governance to ensure the protection of the global commons for the benefit of all. The Agency would also analyze obstacles to progress based on the science of the integrity of the Earth Systems and the principles of [Earth Trusteeship](#).
- Set up a UN Parliamentary Assembly (articulated below) to complement the Agency and ensure inclusive deliberation, justice, legitimacy, and accountability.
- Create a global responsible research programme on climate-altering technologies, which brings together diverse and inclusive voices, including indigenous communities and experts from developed, developing and emerging economies, for robust scientific assessment and international cooperation between States, intergovernmental bodies and the UN (UNEA), international institutions (Climate Overshoot Commission), global conventions (London Convention/ Protocol, CDB, and Kunming-Montreal Protocol) and academic and financial institutions to prevent uni- and multilateral action of unproven geoengineering technologies.

4. Prioritize Transformative Education that promotes Empathy and Empowerment to drive a democratic demand for proposals on global governance. Lack of empathy – between people, and between peoples and the environment – is one of the biggest crises in the world today. Equally, if someone feels disempowered to act, they are the objects of another’s goodwill rather than the authors of action. As we think of our common future, we must realize that today’s youth play a transitive role in the collective ancestry of future generations. They, alongside older generations, need to be ready to create and adopt new and effective modes of global governance to protect and regenerate the biosphere.

Next Steps:

- We urge UN Member States to implement the recommendation emerging from the [UN Transforming Education Summit - Action Track 2](#) which calls on UN Member Governments to “empower learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to be resilient, adaptable and prepared for the uncertain future – through an emphasis on foundational learning for basic literacy and numeracy, education for sustainable development which encompasses environmental and climate change education and skills for employment and entrepreneurship”.
- Implement and track the progress of SDG Goal 4, Target 7 to “ensure that, by 2030, all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development”.
- Embed the planetary emergency at the heart of all National Curricula through innovative learning experiences combined with appropriate examination and assessment. Empower youth and teachers to deliver intergenerational transformative education programs to local communities to generate universal solidarity to protect and regenerate the biosphere.
- Ensure the transfer of knowledge and good practices from diverse parts of the world and from one generation to the next to promote a more harmonious interaction with the natural world.

To read the whole report, go here: <https://c4unwn.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Interim-Peoples-Pact-for-the-Future-Compressed.pdf>

The Peoples' Environment Narrative

50 Years with UNEP and Civil Society
Towards Stockholm+50 and Beyond

On World Environment Day, 5 June 2023, Stakeholder Forum and Jan-Gustav Strandenaess published *The Peoples' Environment Narrative: 50 Years with UNEP and Civil Society*, a book of 940 pages, 43 articles with a number of sub articles, and the participation of 113 authors, including three IEF members. The book reflects on the outcomes of work by civil society, the global NGO community and other stakeholders including governments and representatives of the UN system to commemorate 50 years of work for the environment by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) with a focus on the Stockholm+50 conference in June 2022.

After five introductory chapters, there are two in **A contextual and fact-based background to the commemoration of 50 years of work for the environment**, as well as two introductory chapters and fourteen case studies of **UNEP and Civil Society: A Necessary Partnership**, including [*Sustainable Consumption and Production - not only a challenge for UNEP*](#) by Victoria W. Thoresen, [*and Oceans and UNEP*](#) by Dr. Arthur Lyon Dahl. Then there is a section on **Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders' recommendations - tapping on what needs to be approved**, followed by **Five Legacy Papers** including a chapter "UNEP, Science and the Environment: a necessary partnership to save the planet?" by Prof. Raymond Saner and Prof. Lichia Yiu based partly on an interview with IEF President Arthur Dahl. **Five outcomes by UNEP** follow, then **Civil society and non-state stakeholders - key environmental concerns for the future**, including a chapter by Daniel Perell on [*One Planet, One Habitation" - Climate initiatives of the Baha'i International Community at Stockholm+50 and beyond*](#). A last substantive section describes **What really happened with Stockholm+50 and the 50th anniversary?**, followed by acknowledgements, pictures and bios of contributors to the book.

The book can be downloaded from the [IEF website](#) (44 MB).

Source: Jan-Gustav Strandenaes and Isis Alvarez (eds), 2023. The Peoples' Environment Narrative: 50 Years with UNEP and Civil Society
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D29_EJ15XJ2U3pcWxYhzfDSB7mW8x-0a/view

Community-based coral adaptation approaches in Fiji

News from Austin Bowden-Kerby
IEF member in Fiji

The Fiji government is committed to working with communities to close 30% of all Fiji waters to fishing. Three board members of our Bahá'í-inspired organisation, [Corals for Conservation \(C4C\)](#), were on the ground back in 2000 when Cuvu community chiefs and elders established the first community based tabu areas in several generations on Fiji's coral reefs. The workshops were carried out before C4C's time, by FSP-Fiji, an organisation which was headed by present C4C board chair Verona Lucas, with a team facilitated by present C4C board member Simi Koto, and supported by C4C's marine scientist Austin Bowden-Kerby. It was an amazing spiritual experience and many tears of joy were shed as the first five Tabu areas in 2-3+ generations were set. Those community-based

efforts were encouraged by the government, and spread throughout Fiji, causing an amazing transformation and resulting in over 300 tabu areas by 2020. The board of C4C believes that the time has come to take this to the next level, as explained below.

We are now working again with communities in Moturiki, (Uluibau and Daku villages), through the Lomaiviti Provincial Office, and also with Naidiri village in Malomalo, and Nanuya and other villages in Malolo, through the Nadroga Provincial office. Each of the mentioned communities have reset and marked their tabus, thanks to the groundwork of Simi Koto. The Malolo elders have expressed interest in wanting to go further and permanently set aside their customary sacred reefs at Mamanuca i Cake (pronounced Mamanutha i Thake), a huge 400 km²+ area. The Moturiki elders also want to permanently set aside the Daveta levu/ Nasautabu sacred reef area into permanent no-take status, if they can get the area returned to them as the proper owners. Reestablishing these former permanent culturally-based tabu areas, would be the next big step for Fiji, if it can happen. However, this may require new legislation, as the present gazetting legislation might be seen as violating the spirit of these sacred reefs, being the very heart of the Vanua.



I will turn 70 next year, and with not so many years left, I have launched our new coral focused model in December, via a scientific publication, which has brought UNEP International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) recognition, as the first formal coral focused and community-appropriate climate change adaptation model. I have now been appointed to two UNEP ICRI committees: the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) advisory board and a new committee drafting the "Coral Reefs Breakthrough", which will be launched at COP 28. We will ask for at least ten billion dollars to be earmarked to save coral reefs from extinction due to climate change. In perspective, the Webb telescope cost ten billion dollars, and our thinking is that the survival of coral reefs in the face of climate change is at least as important!

Here is the [link to the scientific article](#), plus a new film on our "[Reefs of Hope](#)" strategies. Proof of concept experiments are ongoing, funded this past year by UNEP, to verify the science. The specifics of the strategy explained in the film, were developed at Malolo, a double barrier reef system which has a very strong thermal gradient and with mostly unidirectional currents: a cool outer barrier reef, warm middle barrier reef, and very hot fringing reefs. We will need to modify the strategies and adapt them somewhat based on the ecological and

physical realities of specific reef sites, as our reefs are not all the same. The Coral Coast may for example be quite different, with much more sharing of coral larvae between hot reef areas and cooler reef areas, so flexibility must become part of any coral focused program. This is clear in the film more than in the paper. However, the basic principles remain the same everywhere: to locate, protect, and work with bleaching-resistant corals and to propagate them within Locally-Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs).

We now have nurseries filled with bleaching resistant corals to at least 31-33°C, (some to 36-37°C) in Malolo, Malomalo, and Moturiki. The recent bleaching enabled us to include the Moturiki community to identify and collect the unbleached *Acropora* corals. So we have re-established a former community

nursery which is now filled with heat resistant corals. As mentioned in the film, we have also been trialing a coral growing method on A-frames within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Ten Fisheries Officers attending our "Coral restoration for climate change adaptation" course last year were taught this method at the Plantation Island Resort site. We have learned since then that we can accelerate the change by planting them with more dense coral 'thatch', so as to make them convert quickly into "bure ni ika". In Naidiri village, which is easily accessible, you can view these structures created before COVID, and the numbers of fish sheltering inside them is truly amazing! The community got so excited that they went out and bought their own mesh and made some more! We now have to do more work on which fish species are most impacted, and whether carnivores might become overabundant and thus impact the MPA negatively. We will need nighttime vs daytime data and also to trial some modifications, to see if we can influence which species of fish shelter in them as bedrooms. But not to forget that the most important factor is to increase the cover of bleaching resistant corals within the tabu areas, to reboot coral reproduction for declining species, and to help the reefs adapt to climate change on their own, as explained in the links.

The youth and resort work have both shown us that with guidance and training, the tabu areas all over Fiji might now be enhanced with fish habitat and with corals, not only to increase their functionality, but at the same time to facilitate adaptation to warming seas by propagating heat-adapted corals. So we finally have a way to involve communities in the fight to respond to climate change!

The next step will involve a unified vision and strategy: that we make a joint statement that the time has arrived to add coral reef adaptation work into community based coral reef tabu areas, as an a coral-focused climate change adaptation measure, and to write this up as a [Decadal Action](#) for endorsement and UN approval. C4C will be writing this up for others to review and/or endorse, as we should do this as a joint process. Following this UN process will open the doors to funding via several potential sources.

This new support system puts fishing communities at the forefront of action to combat climate change impacts on coral reefs. With unity of vision and coordinated action, we will then be able to achieve amazing things. This new way of involving communities in adapting to climate change, while increasing the functionality of LMMAs, might just end up planting several million heat-adapted corals over a decade of action, if hundreds of communities with tabu areas had training and funding for this program. This would be a very exciting development.

