



LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
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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.

Words to Remember

A plethora of destructive forces and events, including environmental degradation, climate change, pandemics, the decline of religion and morals, the loss of meaning and identity, the erosion of the concepts of truth and reason, unbridled technology, the exacerbation of prejudices and ideological contention, pervasive corruption, political and economic upheaval, war and genocide, have left their traces in blood and anguish on the pages of history and the lives of billions. At the same time, hopeful constructive trends can also be discerned, which are contributing to that “universal fermentation” which Shoghi Effendi said is “purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of the Day when the wholeness of the human race will have been recognized and its unity established”. The diffusion of the spirit of world solidarity, a greater consciousness of global interdependence, the embrace of collaborative action among individuals and institutions, and a heightened longing for justice and peace are profoundly transforming human relationships.



The Universal House of Justice, 28 November 2023 Letter

Image: Azalea Garden, Kingston, May 2024

28th IEF CONFERENCE – Spread the Word!

You are warmly invited to attend the upcoming 28th IEF Conference! Please, share the news about the conference with your friends, family, and communities! Perhaps your community has a newsletter where you can announce the conference and share information about it.

For publicity, you can use the following conference flyer as a [jpeg](#) or [pdf](#) file. Refer people to the IEF Conference page for updated information and registration: <https://iefworld.org/conf28>



The flyer is a rectangular graphic with a blue border and a light blue to yellow gradient background. At the top, it reads 'INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM' in bold blue letters, followed by '28th Annual Conference' in a larger, bold blue font. Below this, it says 'A World-Embracing Vision for a Sustainable Future' and 'Alongside the UN Summit of the Future' in smaller blue text. The dates 'SEPTEMBER 14 - 28, 2024' are prominently displayed in bold blue. A central white box with a blue border contains a list of four events, each with a date in a blue circle, the month, and the time in blue text. To the right of each date is the event title in blue. At the bottom of the flyer, there are logos for IEF (a green swirl), ebbf (a blue starburst), and the U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs (a black starburst). A blue button on the right says 'Learn More and Register at: https://iefworld.org/conf28'.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
28th Annual Conference
A World-Embracing Vision for a Sustainable Future
Alongside the UN Summit of the Future
SEPTEMBER 14 - 28, 2024

14 September 1 PM EDT / 7 PM CEST	Interactive event: A Vision for a Sustainable Future - A Conversation with Youth
17 September 11:30AM EDT / 5:30PM CEST	Panel: Developing a Vision for Global Collaboration
22 September 1 PM EDT / 7 PM CEST	Panel: Building Futures in Communities
28 September 1 PM EDT / 7 PM CEST	Panel: Where do we go from here? - Deeds not Words

  ebbf  U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs

Learn More and Register at: <https://iefworld.org/conf28>

CONFERENCE EVENTS

Saturday, 14 September, 1pm EDT / 7pm CEST

A vision for a Sustainable Future - a Conversation with Youth

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/IEFConference-Youth>

At the beginning of our conference, IEF will kick off with a forum showcasing the perspectives and ideas of our youth. Join us for this engaging event to listen to the youth's opinions on social activism and a sustainable future, and interact with them regarding the topics they bring up.

Moderator: [Khela Baskett](#) will be joined by youth from around the world.

Tuesday, 17 September, 11:30am EDT / 5:30pm CEST

Developing a vision for global collaboration

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/IEF-GlobalCollaboration>

The speakers will delve into the fifth topic of the Pact for the Future, which revolves around transforming global governance, offering insights from a Baha'i perspective. Their discussion will emphasize the significance of global cooperation in ensuring environmental sustainability, a crucial element for human welfare and even survival.

Speakers:

[Professor Payam Akhavan](#): International Human Rights Lawyer

[Sovaida Maani Ewing](#): Director of the Center for Peace and Global Governance

[Joshua Lincoln](#): Senior Fellow Center for International Law and Governance (CILG) at the Fletcher School of Global Affairs, Tufts University

Moderator: [Wendi Momen](#)

Sunday, 22 September, 1pm EDT / 7pm CEST

Building Futures in Communities

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/IEF-BuildingFutures>

Panelists will report and reflect on various local projects aimed at enhancing environmental sustainability and human well-being. These initiatives include reforestation projects in Colombia and Iceland, coral reef rescue in Samoa, community gardening in Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, and relief work following recent flooding in Brazil. They will offer insights and real-life experiences related to Baha'i-inspired methods for social action.

Speakers:

[LEONG Lau Kheng Janice](#), Senior member of the Baha'i community in Singapore, social activist

[Halldór Thorgeirsson](#), Chair Icelandic Climate Council

[Ayman Reyhan](#), Cluster Coordinator for the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program in Ajman, UAE

[Lucas Umpierre Center](#), biomedical scientist with PhD in Molecular and cellular biology

[Louisa Yazdani](#), Psychologist, therapist for individuals and families, Brazil

[Dr. André Akhavan](#), physician specialized in anesthesiology and pain medicine, Brazil

Moderator: [Peter Adriance](#), former Representative for Sustainable Development, U.S. Baha'i Office of Public Affairs, retired

Saturday, 28 September, 1pm EDT / 7pm CEST

Where Do We Go from Here? - Deeds not Words

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/IEF-DeedsNotWords>

In this closing session of the IEF conference, the panelists will report about and reflect on the Summit of the Future and its main outcome document, the Pact for the Future. They will explore how IEF can apply Baha'i principles to the Summit outcomes and support any projects or initiatives launched.

Speakers:

[Arthur Lyon Dahl](#), Environmental scientist, President of the International Environment Forum
[Liliane Nkuzimana](#), Representative of the Baha'i International Community's UN Office in New York

[Monica Maghami](#), International regulatory lawyer, focused on sustainability and technology

Moderator: [Victoria Thoresen](#), emerita and former UNESCO Chair for Education about Sustainable Lifestyles

For more information about the IEF Conference, go here: <https://iefworld.org/conf28>
The conference page will be continually updated as the information on speakers is coming in.



Brazil: Capacities built in times of calm become vital during flood crisis

July 19, 2024

Source: <https://news.bahai.org/story/1741/>

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil — In April, the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil experienced its worst floods in 80 years, causing unprecedented destruction and significantly impacting the economy and public safety.

The immediate provision of goods and services, supported by the government, civil society organizations, faith communities, and countless volunteers, became a lifeline for many.

Amid this collective response, villages and neighborhoods in affected areas where Bahá'í community-building endeavors had taken root quickly discovered how the qualities and capacities for fostering strong bonds of friendship, a spirit of devotion, and a sense of oneness in periods of calm could be channeled into coordinated relief actions during the crisis, extending beyond material aid to help people remain hopeful, persevere, and recover.

Liese von Czékus Cavalcanti, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil, noted, "The difficulties caused by the floods did not obscure the joy that comes from serving one's fellow human beings.

"This joy reflects a deeply rooted concern for the well-being of others and an unwavering faith in the power of the human spirit to transform distress into hope."

This power was channeled into action through the determination and resourcefulness of groups of families who were vital to the recovery efforts.

Mrs. Cavalcanti highlighted that the spiritual principle of consultation was essential to these efforts, stating, "Consultation allowed us to bring together diverse perspectives and make unified collective decisions."



A view of some of the relief efforts in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil (Image Credit: Baha'i World News Service)

In these communities, where consultation is a lived principle, families had gained experience in welcoming many people into thoughtful discussions on collective development, drawing on the perspectives of young and old, women and men, and people of all backgrounds. During the crisis, these capacities allowed entire communities to understand their reality better, communicate effectively, resolve issues, achieve a sense of ownership, and tackle challenges efficiently.

These groups of families acted as vital links, distributing food, water, blankets, and other necessities. Many people volunteered in temporary shelters, preparing meals, sorting donated clothes, and assembling hygiene kits.

Among those at the forefront of these efforts were the youth, whose keen sense of justice had been nurtured through Bahá'í moral educational programs. They worked tirelessly to bring relief to neighboring communities facing tremendously difficult conditions, as heavy flooding had overwhelmed much of the infrastructure.

The elderly also played a significant part, regularly visiting isolated individuals to offer company and comfort.

These efforts were facilitated by ad-hoc networks comprising families, Bahá'í Local Spiritual Assemblies, and other Bahá'í agencies at the local and regional levels.

These networks included a sub-network of doctors who, in collaboration with national private sector organizations, provided some 5,000 online medical consultations.

As part of ongoing development efforts, the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil is exploring ways to support local Bahá'í agencies in strengthening community resilience. One initiative in Rio Grande do Sul is focused on health promotion, particularly the prevention and treatment of secondary diseases caused by water contamination. A health team has been assembled to train individuals to serve as key resources for disseminating crucial information on disease prevention and promoting overall well-being.

Reflecting on the response to the crisis, Mrs. Cavalcanti states, "These tireless efforts were driven by love and a vision of the oneness of the human family inspired by the Bahá'í teachings."

She added: "Countless people left their homes each morning, cars filled with relief items, hearts filled with love. While resources were vital, it was hope expressed through unity and service that truly sustained them."

Transition Towns: An Agriculture Working Group Perspective

Webinar with IEF Member Bill Sharp

Sunday, August 25 at 1:00pm EDT / 7pm CEST

Transition Towns is an international movement designed to help communities gain greater resilience and local economic self-reliance. This presentation will briefly describe the Transition movement and related programs offered by [Transition Centre](#) through a multitiered program, from forming a local group to developing and implementing a comprehensive sustainability action plan founded on local foods.

With a focus on Bahá'í principles related to the tillage of the soil, a village agrarian response, and the small and resilient community and its economy, Bill will give a short review of Paul Hanley's recently released book on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 'Adasíyyih project. In conclusion he will bring these streams of thought to a synthesis. Ample time will be available for questions and comments.

Bill Sharp is co-founder and Director of Transition Centre (TC), a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation (www.transitioncentre.org).

How to join the webinar: Subscribers to the ABS Agriculture Group Mailchimp page will receive an announcement with the link the week before presentations. People are free to unsubscribe at any time. Sign up here to receive a link: <https://agriculture-working-group.mailchimpsites.com/>

Reefs of Hope: A Conversation with Dr. Austin Bowden-Kerby

Interview with Austin Bowden-Kerby by Christine Muller, both IEF members
Source: [Wilmette Institute Newsletter 10 July, 2024](#)

We are fortunate to have a conversation with Bahá'í scientist Dr. Austin Bowden-Kerby in Fiji, who, together with his Bahá'í-inspired NGO, leads the Reefs of Hope project, the first UNESCO-endorsed coral-focused climate change adaptation program.

CM: Austin, you have spent your whole life researching corals and trying to restore coral reefs. Please, tell us, why are coral reefs so important and what is the current condition of coral reefs around the world?

ABK: Coral reefs are living structures that build entire island nations. Corals take calcium carbonate from the ocean water and make intricate architecture which hosts incredible biodiversity, including 25% of all marine species (fish, crustaceans, echinoderms, and mollusks). Coral reefs provide vital food for indigenous communities throughout the tropics and provide white sandy beaches vital to tourism and recreation. If the world loses coral reefs, over 500 million people will be directly impacted. Coral reefs are predicted to become the first ecosystem to collapse in the face of climate change.

Coral reefs have been in a condition of gradual decline for the past 40 years, but until recent times the decline was mostly due to pollution, physical damage, and overfishing. Only in the past decade has ocean warming due to climate change become the primary factor in the decline of corals.

CM: What are the reasons that the corals are bleaching and dying?

ABK: Corals are animals, but they get most of their energy from the sun! They host tiny plants in their bodies (microalgae) in a partnership. The microalgae provide food to the corals through photosynthesis, and the coral animal host provides shelter and nutrients to the algae. This mutual relationship is called symbiosis. When the water gets too hot, the photosynthesis of the algae breaks down, and instead of producing sugar, they produce hydrogen peroxide! This chemical burns the coral, so the coral kicks the algae out to protect itself. The partnership is over! But without the algae, the bleached white corals often starve to death. If the bottom-shaded areas of the coral colony maintain some algae, the corals sometimes survive and recover, but survival depends on how severe the bleaching is.

CM: What are you currently doing to rescue corals?

ABK: We focus on the corals found in the hottest areas of the reef, extremely shallow areas where hot tub-like conditions regularly occur during low tides. The coral populations in such areas are heat-adapted. However, with ocean warming the temperatures are getting so hot that these hot pocket coral populations are in jeopardy and are being killed by temperatures sometimes reaching above 38°C (101°F). Our solution is simple; where these heat-adapted corals still exist, we move them out to cooler waters nearby as a precaution, as the ocean continues to warm rapidly.



With Bula Nursery, the largest coral rescue nursery ever made, we have proven that the strategy works, as the hot pockets where we collected the corals got to >35°C (95°F) last February-April, and 80% of the hundreds of thousands of corals we left behind bleached severely and died. In contrast, the 1,300 nursery corals we rescued were unimpacted, as the water remained under 32°C (89°F).

The materials for the nursery were provided by a resort, and our team of indigenous marine biologists decided to use the materials to spell out the biggest word ever written under the sea with the structures. Bula means “life” in Fijian, and Bula Nursery has become our cry to action! Sadly, we are the only project using these *Reefs of Hope* coral rescue methods, but we hope that others will soon join us in rescuing more corals, because time is running out!

We have succeeded in this phase one of coral rescue. Phase two is now ongoing: collecting corals from among the few that survived mass bleaching and securing them into the cooler waters of the nurseries, both to protect them from the worsening heat waves and to save them from over-abundant predators that are actively devouring many of the survivors.

As our heat-adapted corals grow, branches are trimmed every year to plant into patches on the cooler degraded areas of the wider reef system, with the goal of restoring coral reproduction and fish habitat to reboot natural recovery and adaptation processes.

CM: *Witnessing the destruction of these beautiful reefs and knowing about the dire scientific predictions of future global warming, what keeps you going and what gives you hope?*

ABK: As Bahá'ís, we were clearly told by the Guardian many decades ago about the present “cancerous materialism” that would cause great instability on the planet. We were also told that world peace would be established. I firmly believe that world peace is at hand, that it is our collective destiny, as explained in the [Promise of World Peace](#) document, which would come either as the result of collective decision-making or if negotiations failed through “unimaginable horrors.” After disarmament and planetary unity are at last achieved, immense resources will be redirected, and massive and positive changes will occur in human societies. The restoration of nature will become a major focus, as human prosperity and well-being is tied directly to a prosperous natural world. So with coral reefs, all we have to do now is to keep each species of coral alive and in a diverse condition, so that nature can heal. We cannot restore reefs, until we begin to solve climate change and ocean warming, so all we can do with the corals is to buy some time, and hopefully we can inspire others to join in, as our own efforts are miniscule in proportion to what is needed. This is why Reefs of Hope tries to put coral reef-dependent communities and the tourism industry in the forefront of action.

If I did not have a firm belief that massive change will happen, I do not think I could go on, as I have seen such horrific destruction of coral reefs as they continue to die in the repeated and intensifying marine heat waves. But what gives me hope is that I have seen the corals we have moved into cooler waters continuing to thrive! I also see positive signs of change in awareness emerging in people. If people are the problem, then people are also the solution.

In recent months, we have finally begun to convince the scientific community and the UN that there is more that can be done than simply monitoring the collapse in increasing detail. Now that some of them realize that corals can be saved by moving them, I have hope that more support will be forthcoming.

CM: *Before we end our conversation, would you, please, share with us some ideas of what all of us can do to help the corals?*

ABK: Support efforts to control greenhouse gas emissions, but more importantly focus on building world peace and unified and aware communities.

Climate change is much more of a problem than most of us realize, and it is the result of crass materialism. Currently, CO₂ (carbon dioxide) levels and a ten-meter (32-foot) rise in sea levels are already locked in. There is nothing we can do to save Florida, Bangladesh, and entire atoll nations unless we remove CO₂.

It is absurd that the burden of action is on the individual, when governments should be in the lead. Every year more carbon is released than the year before, and just about all governments and all political parties in power are in the back pocket of the fossil fuel industry. Even those acknowledging the problem continue to allow oil exploration and to give substantial subsidies for offshore oil exploration and drilling. So partisan politics is not a solution, as it has become a root cause of the problem. We live at a time when a nuclear war seems to be a hundred times more likely than any meaningful agreement on the phasing out of fossil fuels.

It is clear that in order to save the planet and to prevent a mass extinction event, we need to build a new global order with non-partisan and non-corruptible governance structures, and that is the entire purpose and aim of the Bahá'í community. One planet and one people—unity in diversity, sharing one atmosphere and one ocean!

So this is the time to get very active in building up a new order to replace the one that is collapsing, and that can be done in so many ways. A tiny seedling is more powerful than a huge yet dead and rotting tree, already at the stage of falling apart. We need to focus our efforts on nurturing the new tree, not on propping up the dead one. Although the efforts of so many in that area are commendable and might buy us more time, no one can do what we can; namely, to build an alternative model destined to transform the fortunes of humanity and establish balance with each other and with nature.

CM: We thank you very much, Austin, for sharing with us how you are using sophisticated science and the values and inspiration of your faith to save corals and to let the world know about the urgency of taking action on climate change! I know you have much more to share, and I hope we can continue our conversation another time.

In the meantime, our readers can explore the following resources:

[Reef of Hope Decade Action](#) on the UNESCO Ocean Science for Sustainable Development site, with links to the Reefs of Hope scientific paper and a four-minute film.

A [2-minute film](#) that was produced for the 8th June 2024 launching of Reefs of Hope on World Ocean Day.

A [22-minute film](#) with additional details.

A fascinating [video talk about Reefs of Hope with Austin Bowden-Kerby](#), recorded on June 1, 2024, by the Bahá'í-inspired International Environment Forum. To learn more about the important coral restoration work of Dr. Bowden-Kerby at his nonprofit Corals for Conservation, visit the [Corals for Conservation website](#).

Open Letter on the United Nations Pact for the Future

From C4UN
July 2024

To Heads of State and Government, United Nations Member States:

Excellencies,

As international leaders who have served as heads of state, ministers of government and leaders of intergovernmental and civil society organizations, we believe that the Pact for the Future, the main outcome document under negotiation for this September's Summit of the Future, must establish robust and accountable follow-up mechanisms in order to effectively revitalize global governance with the United Nations at its core.

The most recent draft of the proposed Pact presents over 50 "Action" paragraphs, each underpinned by concrete commitments. To ensure that the promises made in the Pact for the Future result in actionable steps led by Member States, international organizations and their partners, governments must ensure that the Pact's key Actions and Commitments are supported directly by concurrent implementation efforts, backed-up by clear benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms.

Society has demonstrated a capacity and commitment to work toward a successful Summit outcome, including through the introduction of a bold and far-reaching People's Pact for the Future. At the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Support of the Summit of the Future, held May 9-10 in Nairobi, Kenya, delegates established some 20 promising "ImPACT Coalitions," to raise the ambition and support follow-up on Pact for the Future Actions and Commitments. The people of the world expect governments to do their part. They must deliver on promises made and implement their commitments, thus building trust and ensuring the wellbeing of present and future generations.

The Summit of the Future presents both an important milestone and another step in the long journey toward greater justice, security, and sustainable development for all nations and peoples. Success will hinge on robust Summit follow-up. With the active, sustained engagement of civil society around the world who share the vision and aspiration of more effective multilateralism, UN Member States should ensure a clear, well-designed and dynamic roadmap to implement the Pact for the Future.

Sincerely,

For the list of 58 signatures, see the source below.

Source: Coalition for the UN We Need

<https://c4unwn.org/initiatives/2024-open-letter-on-the-united-nations-pact-for-the-future/>

Global public consensus for climate action

UN News
20 June 2024

Global survey reveals 'truly astonishing' consensus for stronger climate action

The overwhelming majority of people around the world want an end to geopolitical differences when it comes to fighting climate change, the results of a landmark public opinion poll conducted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has shown.

Peoples' Climate Vote 2024, the biggest ever standalone public opinion survey on climate change, also showed that 80 per cent of the respondents support more ambitious climate action.

"The Peoples' Climate Vote is loud and clear," said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

"Global citizens want their leaders to transcend their differences, to act now and to act boldly to fight the climate crisis."

The second edition of the survey polled communities around the world on how nations are tackling climate change that is triggering extreme weather, flooding, and temperature spikes across the planet, affecting countries large and small.

'Truly astonishing' consensus

The UNDP chief said the survey results "reveal a level of consensus that is truly astonishing".

"We urge leaders and policymakers to take note, especially as countries develop their next round of climate action pledges – or 'nationally determined contributions (NDCs)' under the Paris Agreement," Mr. Steiner said.

"This is an issue that almost everyone, everywhere can agree on."

Quick transition to clean energy

Conducted with Oxford University and GeoPoll, the survey polled more than 75,000 people speaking 87 different languages across 77 countries with 15 questions on climate change.

The results offer a country-by-country snapshot of where the world's citizens stand, including on moving towards sustainability.

A majority of people in 62 of the 77 countries surveyed said they supported a quick transition away from fossil fuels to clean energy.

Climate anxiety

People across the world also reported that climate change was on their minds.

Globally, 56 per cent said they were thinking about it daily or weekly, including some 63 per cent of those from least developed countries (LDCs).

More than half of people globally said they were more worried than last year about climate change.

The corresponding figure was 59 per cent in LDCs, and up to 71 per cent across nine small island developing States (SIDS) expressed the same sentiment.

A total of 69 per cent of people surveyed said their big decisions like where to live or work were being impacted by climate change, with varied results across regions, from 74 per cent in least developed countries to 52 per cent in western and northern Europe and 42 per cent in North America.

The message is clear

At the global launch at UN Headquarters, in New York, Cassie Flynn, UNDP Global Director for Climate Change, said "the message is clear", explaining what's to come.

"As we move forward is to bring the voice of the people to the debate [on climate change]," she said.

"The next two years stand as one of the best chances we have as the international community to ensure that warming stays under 1.5°," she said. "We stand ready to support policymakers in stepping up their efforts as they develop their climate action plans through our Climate Promise initiative."

The first Peoples' Climate Vote took place in 2021 and surveyed people across 50 countries through advertisements in popular mobile gaming apps.

Source: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1151271>

The system within: Addressing the inner dimensions of sustainability and systems transformation

Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity, a Report to The Club of Rome, offers system change pathways to avoid ecological and societal collapse through 'extraordinary turnarounds' in key policy areas.

The material aspects of the global crises we face are well understood: energy systems, dangerous emissions, biosphere destruction, food security. Less well understood is why,

despite having the policy instruments, the technologies, and the resources available to address them, we are not responding effectively. This paper provides a perspective on system change that reaches beyond – or rather, within external structures and strategies, to the human mind that built and maintains them. It calls urgently for attention to the underexplored inner dimension of system change.

That inner conditions have played a central role in creating and maintaining our current crises seems in one sense too obvious to mention, and yet this fact is too often absent from high-level solutions analysis.

- The deep cultural narratives underpinning extractive and exploitative behaviours.
- The shifting values and evolutionary impulses underpinning escalating consumerism.
- The rise of individualism and fragmentation of collective identity.
- The biases and emotions that drive our political behaviour.

All are forever present and active, pulling the levers of our 'outer' world. And as vested interests are more than aware, they are susceptible to influence. As a matter of course we allow commercial and political forces to manipulate the human inner world in ways directly contributing to our polycrisis.

But as wisdom traditions and science unequivocally show, we are also capable of understanding, nurturing, transforming and maturing our views, qualities and capacities in ways that support the flourishing of the whole. The inner, then, is not simply an elective complement to system change approaches, but an inseparable, primordial and unavoidable aspect of human-made systems themselves. It is written through every 'external' structure and interaction and as such, in the language of Donella Meadows, co-author of *The Limits to Growth*, represents a deep leverage point for change. Indeed, while consideration of the inner has become lost amid more structural concerns in recent decades, it was integral to the vision of The Club of Rome, with inner change seen as foundational to necessary structural transformation.

While ambitious policy levers are much needed, sustainable change hinges on integrating material interventions with consideration of the human inner dimension: reckoning with the deep collective structures of thought foundational to failing systems, and nurturing the inner capacities necessary to overcome barriers to collective action and structural transformation. This paper highlights the overlooked inner dimension of system change, and supplies systems thinkers with the language to advocate for psychological, social and spiritual factors crucial to sustainable solutions. It discusses worldviews, mindsets, values, identity, religion and spiritual sensibility, reaching down to love and cultivating the heart, as root drivers of cultural behaviour. It considers their interaction with psychological and behavioural tendencies, and the transformative inner capacities that can be cultivated to intervene at deep leverage points. It explores ways of including the inner that can support more holistic views, models and interventions; giving the psycho-socio-spiritual conditions for collective action due consideration in the complex picture of system change. Finally, it introduces existing initiatives leading the way in integrating inner and outer dimensions of system change. Humanity's future wellbeing depends on restoring agency in this neglected inner domain.

Access the Paper: https://www.clubofrome.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Earth4All_Deep_Dive_Jamie_Bristow.pdf

Watch Launch Presentation (over 1 hour):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_yhNDQUEEc&list=PLSVaEtHMi2FOhcW2N_Lr0hjprWbljdo4x&index=55

Global Foresight Report 2024

United Nations Environment Programme
International Science Council
15 July 2024

As global crises join forces, world must adopt forward-looking approach to protect human and planetary health

New York, 15 July 2024 – As environmental, technological and societal change join forces to disrupt human and planetary health, the world must get better at tracking and responding to a host of emerging challenges, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Science Council (ISC).

Navigating New Horizons – A Global Foresight Report on Planetary Health and Human Wellbeing identifies eight critical global shifts that are accelerating the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.

The shifts include humanity's degradation of the natural world, the rapid development of technologies such as AI, competition for natural resources, widening inequalities and declining trust in institutions. These shifts are creating a polycrisis, in which global crises are amplifying, accelerating and synchronizing – with huge implications for human and planetary wellbeing.

Eighteen accompanying signals of change – identified by hundreds of global experts through regional and stakeholder consultations that included youth – offer a deeper glimpse into potential disruptions, both positive and negative, that the world must prepare for.

“As the impacts of multiple crises intensify, now is the time to get ahead of the curve and protect ourselves from emerging challenges,” said UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen. “The rapid rate of change, uncertainty and technological developments we’re seeing, against a backdrop of geopolitical turbulence, means any country can be thrown off course more easily and more often.

“By monitoring signals of change and using the foresight approach outlined in this report – including looking outside the traditional environmental space – the world can avoid repeating mistakes of the past and focus on solutions that can withstand future disruption.”

Signals of change

Key shifts and signals of change outlined in the report include:

The demand for critical rare earth elements, minerals and metals to fuel the transition to net-zero is expected to increase fourfold by 2040, increasing calls for deep sea mining and even space mining. This poses potential threats to nature and biodiversity, could increase pollution and waste, and spark more conflicts.

As permafrost thaws on a warming planet, ancient organisms that may be pathogenic could be released, resulting in major environmental, animal and human impacts. This phenomenon has already led to an outbreak of anthrax in Siberia.

While AI and digital transformation can bring benefits, there are environmental implications – such as increased demand for critical minerals and rare earth elements and water resources to meet data centre demands. The use of AI in weapons systems and military applications, and the development of synthetic biology, need careful review through an environmental lens.

Armed conflict and violence are rising and evolving. These conflicts result in ecosystem degradation and pollution, leading to repercussions for vulnerable populations.

Forced displacement is increasing human health and environmental impacts. One in every 69 people is now forcibly displaced – nearly double the figures from a decade ago. Conflict and climate change are key drivers.

Adopting foresight

However, the report finds that using foresight tools can help the world to anticipate and prepare for the next emerging challenges and future disruptions.

Peter Gluckman, President of the ISC, said, “Foresight provides a useful set of tools to step outside of short-termism to help identify future opportunities and risks provided that it is done in a truly pluralistic manner, transcending narrow institutional mandates, sectors and other artificial divides that constrain our framing of the problems and the solutions.”

The report recommends adopting a new social contract that engages a diverse range of stakeholders, including indigenous people; giving young people a stronger voice; and rethinking measures of progress to go beyond GDP.

Governments and societies can also introduce shorter term targets and indicators that allow them to be more agile in governance. Ushering in tools and actions to reconfigure financial systems and reroute capital flows – a positive signal of change in the report – could help to reduce inequalities, eradicate extreme poverty and address environmental crises.

Supporting agile and adaptive governance would require better monitoring and assessment of interventions. This includes integrating and improving monitoring on environmental change, and making data and knowledge more accessible.

Just as the impacts of multiple crises are amplifying harm to environmental and human health, the solutions are in sight and actions are underway that would address the global shifts and signals of change identified in the report. Foresight can help to accelerate these actions and spark many more.

Source: <https://council.science/news/global-foresight-report/>

Download Report: United Nations Environment Programme (2024). *Navigating New Horizons: A global foresight report on planetary health and human wellbeing*.

Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/45890>

