

Climate Change

What you can do

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International Environment Forum

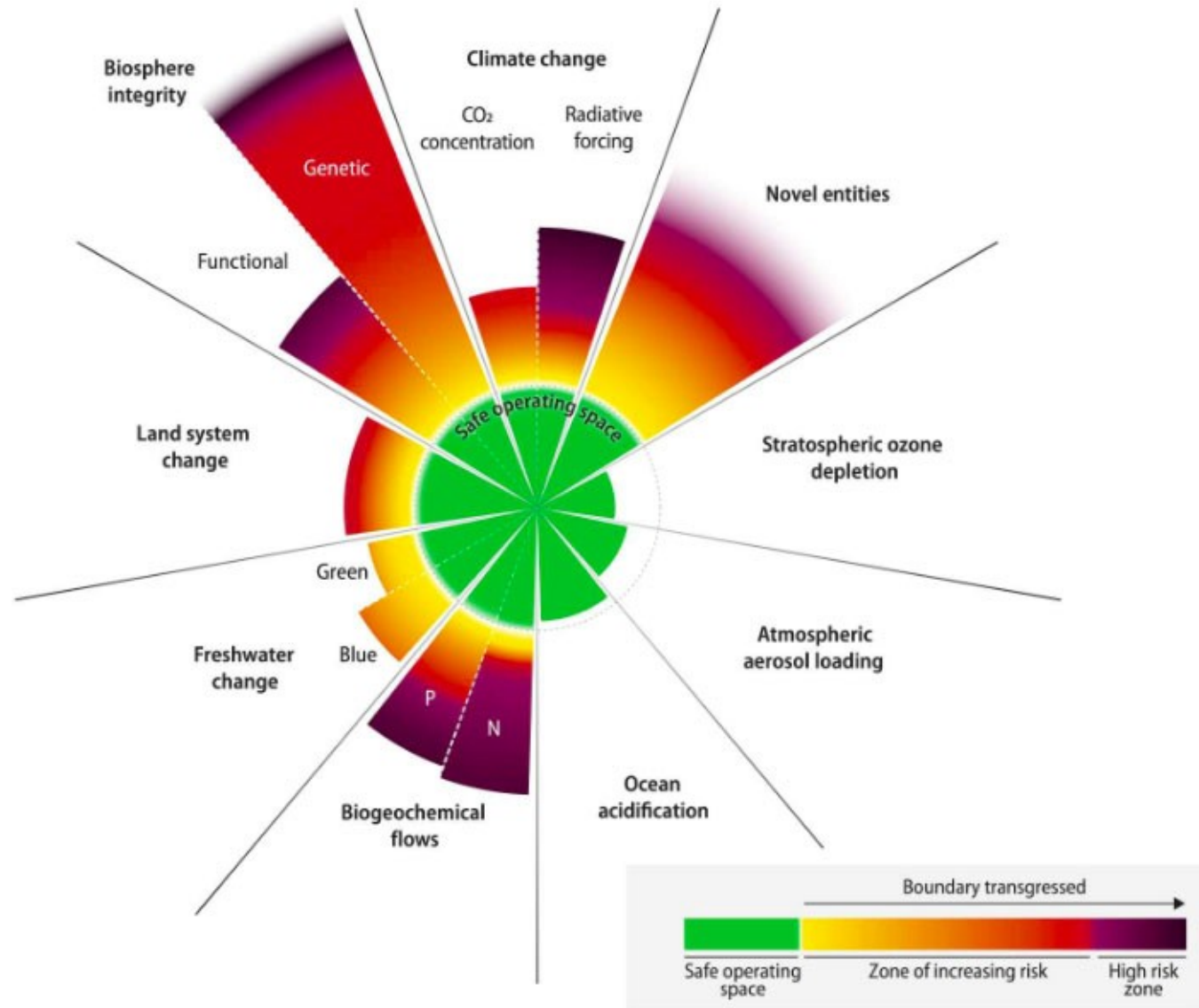
IEF Youth Team

Environmental Crises

The biosphere represents a complex planetary system with great diversity integrated at multiple levels, but now at risk from combined environmental crises. The latest science defines the risks and calls urgently for better planetary governance.

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES

Current status of the control variables for seven of the planetary boundaries. The green zone is the safe operating space, and the red is a high-risk zone.



IPCC 6 Synthesis Report

- Urgent action is needed to address loss and damage -- climate impacts so severe they cannot be adapted to.
- Global GHG emissions must peak before 2025 to stay below 1.5°C.
- The world must rapidly shift away from burning fossil fuels — the number one cause of the climate crisis.
- We also need urgent, systemwide transformations to secure a net-zero, climate-resilient future.
- Climate change — as well as our collective efforts to adapt to and mitigate it — will exacerbate inequity should we fail to ensure a just transition.

Resolving climate change

"A fundamental component of resolving the climate change challenge will be the cultivation of values, attitudes and skills that give rise to just and sustainable patterns of human interaction with the environment. ...the problem of climate change has powerfully demonstrated the need for integrated and systemic approaches."

Transformation based on justice

Against the backdrop of climate change, environmental degradation, and the crippling extremes of wealth and poverty, the transformation from a culture of unfettered consumerism to a culture of sustainability has gained momentum.... ..it is a transformation that will require an earnest examination of our understanding of human nature and of the cultural frameworks driving institutions of government, business, education, and media around the world. Questions of what is natural and just will need to be critically re-examined. The issue... will need to be considered in the broader context of an ailing social order—one characterized by competition, violence, conflict and insecurity—of which it is a part.

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One of the most pressing problems of humanity in the current century is how a growing, rapidly developing, and not yet united global population can, in a just manner, live in harmony with the planet and its finite resources. Certain biological realities present themselves when an organism negatively affects or exceeds the capacity of its ecosystem. The limited availability and inequitable distribution of resources profoundly impact social relations within and between nations in many ways, even to the point of precipitating upheaval and war.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

Climate Change

And particular arrangements of human affairs can have devastating consequences for the environment. The question of the impact of climate change, and to what extent it is man-made and its effects can be ameliorated, is today a major aspect of this larger problem. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh directly and indirectly touches on a range of such concerns in a manner that speaks to a harmony between society and the natural world. It is essential, therefore, that Bahá'ís contribute to thought and action regarding such matters.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

Climate Change

On the matter of climate change and other vital issues with profound implications for the common good, ...humanity would be best and most effectively served by setting aside partisan disputation, pursuing united action that is informed by the best available scientific evidence and grounded in spiritual principles, and thoughtfully revising action in the light of experience.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

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A phenomenon as complex as climate change cannot be reduced to simple propositions or simplistic policy prescriptions. Even when there is agreement on some underlying facts, there may be a diversity of views about what to do in response to those facts.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

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...more remarkable is the fact that at a time when nations have difficulty reaching agreement on many important issues, the governments of nearly every country on earth have reached political consensus on a joint framework, in the Paris accord, to respond to climate change in a manner that is anticipated to evolve over time as experience accumulates.... The agreement represents a starting point for constructive thought and action that can be refined or revised on the basis of experience and new findings over time.

(Universal House of Justice, letter of 29 November 2017 https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/20171129_001)

BIC Statement on Climate Change

- in the face of the destructive impacts of climate change – exacerbated by the extremes of wealth and poverty – need new approaches centered on the principles of justice and equity
- moral challenge which calls for the transformation of thoughts and behaviors so as to allow our economic and social structures to extend the benefits of development to all people

(Bahá'í International Community. 2008)

BIC Statement on Climate Change

- forge a coherent ethic for the resolution of the climate change crisis, beyond a world community driven by a largely economic and utilitarian calculus, to one of shared responsibility for the prosperity of all nations.
- recognize the broader human agenda – which subsumes those of climate change, poverty eradication, gender equality, development, and the like – and seeks to use both human and natural resources in a way that facilitates the progress and well-being of all people

(Bahá'í International Community. 2008)

Did 'Abdu'l-Bahá know about global warming?

“Should the fire of the love of God be kindled in Greenland, all of the ice of that country will be melted, and its cold weather become temperate...”

'Abdu'l-Bahá (1916), *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, 5, p. 28

(He is also reported to have said that palm trees would grow in Chicago and Montreal.)

Environmental Justice

- climate victims contributed the least
- there is no going back
- the past is no guide to the future
- your challenge as youth is to invent a more just future

How to meet 1.5°C target?

- Stop using fossil fuels
- Travel light and less
- Rebuild everything (buildings, infrastructure, cities)
- A new industrial revolution, less steel/cement
- Regenerative forests, farms and food system, plant-based diet, land/forest carbon sinks
- Balance remaining emissions by removing carbon from atmosphere (but how?)
- Change our lifestyles, reducing our energy demand

Voluntary simplicity

Take from this world only to the measure of your needs, and forego that which exceedeth them.

(Bahá'u'lláh)

Contentment

[The true seeker] should be content with little, and be freed from all inordinate desire.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 193-194)

Eat less meat

As humanity progresses, meat will be used less and less, for the teeth of man are not carnivorous.... It is, therefore, quite apparent according to the implements for eating that man's food is intended to be grain and not meat. When mankind is more fully developed, the eating of meat will gradually cease.

(` Abdu'l-Baha, Promulgation of Universal Peace, pages 170-171)

Things you can do

- Walk, bicycle or use public transport
- Make your personal residence energy efficient (light bulbs, appliances, no standby, heating/cooling, etc.)
- Choose electricity from renewable sources if available
- Consume less, buy local
- Consider the energy implications of everything you do

Vision of the future

A flourishing global civilization in harmony with the natural environment is a vision toward which growing numbers are laboring. The world that beckons is one of integration and balance, beauty, and maturity. It is a world with a redefined sense of progress, filled with communities and individuals working together with the support of institutions toward the realization of their highest aspirations.

(Bahá'í International Community. *One Planet, One Habitation: A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World*, 1 June 2022, para. 42)

International Environment Forum (IEF)

IEF is a Baha'i-inspired professional organization for environment and sustainability founded in 1997, with over 500 members in 90 countries. It is accredited by UN in the science/technology major group. It addresses:

- Interface of science and ethics
- Climate change and environmental sustainability
- Extremes of wealth and poverty, a just economy
- International environmental governance

It works for the fundamental systems change needed to transition to a sustainable society

