

Saving our Shared Future
Best Policies to Regenerate Our World

“Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own – indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.”

Wangari Maathai, 1940 – 2011, WFC Honorary Councillor, Nobel Peace Prize Lecture 2004¹

Our unique challenge

We are the guardians of all future generations of life on earth. The consequences of our decisions today will have greater and longer-term consequences than ever before.

The interlinked crises now facing us threaten all our achievements, plans and hopes. Healthy ecosystems provide us with life support systems such as food, water, oxygen, medicinal plants, renewable resources, livelihoods and spiritual comfort, but biodiversity is declining precipitously. Our topsoil - the foundation of civilisation - is being eroded at an unprecedented rate. Our forests that provide livelihoods for 1.6 billion of the poorest are being rapidly decimated. The fine-tuned eco-systems of oceans, rivers and lakes are being dismembered by overfishing and pollution. Billions of our fellow-humans are still without basic life support systems. Nuclear weapons remain an existential danger, with about 2,000 still on high-alert launch-ready status. Monocultures have converted whole landscapes into deserts. Climate chaos is making growing areas of our planet increasingly insecure and uninhabitable.

Accounting for the costs

Trillions of dollars of costs externalised at the expense of nature and of future generations now have to be accounted for. Many of our “assets” and much of our “wealth” will disappear once these costs are internalised. But if they are not, economic “growth” will become *uneconomic* growth, increasingly spent on damage repair and prevention. Our present value creation is now dwarfed by our creation of future debt. There are many signs that the damage to our planet is now reaching irreversible tipping-points, over-whelming the resilience of our natural environment.

Human societies have always lived by unifying stories, providing them with meaning and values. Yet our modern story describes a world without deeper meaning, evolved by chance, where morals are only emotions. The status quo triumphs because no moral argument against it has validity.

¹ The full Nobel Peace Prize Lecture can be accessed at: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-lecture-text.html

There is now an ever-widening gap between the modern story of never-ending progress and growth, and our own experiences and perceptions. We have elevated increased consumer 'choice' to our highest goal. Yet this goal is increasingly in conflict with maintaining a liveable planet.

Good governance

In times of crisis, big changes can be easier than small steps, as only they are seen as adequate and thus able to inspire and mobilize. There are many historical examples of such changes growing rapidly from small beginnings.

Across the world we share key values. We want and expect respect and trust. We want to hand over a healthy planet to our children. We want to feel valued. We want to be co-creators of our future. We want to lead meaningful lives. We are not powerless victims of unstoppable forces. We can still create a different human story of global citizenship, empowering us to deliver sustainable well-being for all without exceeding planetary limits.

The global community is now debating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015. The transformative human development called for by these goals requires coherent, wide-ranging policy reforms which tackle root causes. The WFC Global Policy Action Plan aims to identify the policy changes required to ensure that our regulations, laws and institutions reflect our aspirations.

A shared global future

The World Future Council works to highlight, adapt and spread the best and most effective laws and policies from around the world, which can overcome and reverse the planetary challenges we face.

There is ultimately no faster way to make change happen than through binding legislation. Laws are both the harbingers and fruits of the change of heart, mind and conduct we need. As Aristotle said, '*Law is order and good law is good order*'. With the best laws and right policy incentives we can mobilise human inventiveness and entrepreneurship for human development and a healthy planet. Building public support for coherent policy action – and assisting policy-makers in implementing it – is the indispensable meta-initiative to ensure that our efforts to promote human development, human rights and peace and security are not squandered.

New hierarchies of risk and danger force us to re-think our decisions, actions and institutions. Therefore, we in the World Future Council have joined together – from different continents, walks of life, backgrounds and generations – to build an alliance around this emergency policy agenda which constitutes the integrated minimum set of 'best policies' that can provide the positive tipping-points to secure our shared future. In a crisis, "*it is not enough to do your best. You have to do what is necessary,*" as Winston Churchill reminded us. To do less would mean consciously bequeathing to our children a world of radically diminished options and resources.

THE GLOBAL POLICY ACTION PLAN

The following breakthrough policies represent a combination of tried and tested laws and policies that have been successful in one or more countries, and optimal policy solutions identified through our extensive research. Their purpose is not to promote any specific agenda but to identify inter-linked reforms which progressively enable us to change direction, preserve a habitable planet and build a shared human future.

A world of true wealth – Future Finance

1. New Money Against Performance:
 - a) Debt-Free Money Creation by Central Banks to be legalised to fund environmentally sustainable development, job creation, research and infrastructure investments².
 - b) The “New Money” proposal based on adapted, interest-free IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)³ to provide immediate funding for a rapid shift to renewable energies in developing countries (including Bio-fuels when they do not threaten food security).
2. Taxes on labour to be gradually reduced (10% p.a.) and shifted to non-renewable resources, land values and to taxes on the uses and abuses of the global commons (Green Tax Shift and Green Budgeting).
3. The State Pension Fund Divestment Law of Norway⁴ banning investments of public money in corporations involved in unethical practices which harm present and future generations, to become the basis of a global investment treaty, in order to ensure that our invested savings do not threaten us.

A world of equity and dignity – Future Justice

4. High Commissioners/Ombudspersons for Future Generations⁵ to be elected by the United Nations and national parliaments to integrate a long-term perspective in policy-making and represent the rights of future generations in political decision-making.
5. The Statutes of the International Criminal Court⁶ to be amended to criminalise acts that deliberately cause irreversible damage to nature and the livelihoods of future generations (Law of Ecocide⁷).

² For further information please see WFC Briefing Paper “Money, Debt, People and Planet”:

http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Future_Finance/Future_Finance_Money_Debt_People_and_Planet.pdf

³ For further information please see WFC Proposal “Breaking the Climate Finance Funding Deadlock:

http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Breaking_the_funding_deadlock.pdf

⁴ Ethical Guidelines for the Norwegian Government Pension Fund (2004): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5669.html>

⁵ For further information on Ombudspersons for Future Generations please see: <http://www.futurejustice.org/our-work/ombudspersons-for-future-generations/>

⁶ Statutes of the International Criminal Court: <http://www.icj-cij.org/documents/index.php?p1=4&p2=2&p3=0>

⁷ For further information on the Law of Ecocide please see: <http://eradicatingecocide.com/overview/what-is-ecocide/>

A world of peace

6. Nuclear weapons⁸, to be outlawed in national legislation (as in e.g. New Zealand⁹). The nuclear-weapons-possessing States to fulfil their obligation to commence negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention to ban and eliminate all nuclear weapons in a phased, verifiable and irreversible manner. The Arctic, N.E. Asia, and the Middle East to be established as Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones, based on existing such zones¹⁰.
7. The \$1.6 trillion p.a. military spending to be shifted gradually through a global treaty to fund environmental, food and water security and the protection of the common heritage of humankind (oceans, atmosphere and outer space).

A world of stewardship

8. Securing Food and Water: Policies that ensure access to safe food and water to be adopted, based on the Future Policy Award 2009¹¹ winning best policies:
 - a) Belo Horizonte (Brazil) Food Security Programme¹²
 - b) Tuscan (Italy) Seed Protection¹³
 - c) Cuban Urban Agriculture laws¹⁴ as well as
 - d) Right to Water policies of e.g. Ecuador¹⁵ and Bolivia¹⁶ and the Water Users Associations rules of Tunisia¹⁷ and China¹⁸.
9. Protecting biodiversity and reversing soil erosion by adopting legislation based on the
 - a) Costa Rica 1998 Biodiversity Law¹⁹ (Gold Future Policy Award 2010)
 - b) UN Strategic Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2020²⁰
 - c) US 1985 Conservation Reserve Programme²¹

⁸ For further information on nuclear weapons please see: <http://www.futurepolicy.org/disarmament.html>

⁹ New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Arms Control, And Disarmament Act (1987): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5670.html>

¹⁰ For further information on nuclear-weapon free zones please see: <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5667.html>

¹¹ For further information on the Future Policy Award, please see: http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/future_policy_award.html

¹² Belo Horizonte Food Security Programme (1993): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/3385.html?&L=0>

¹³ Tuscan Regional Law No. 64/2004 (2004): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/3399.html?&L=0>

¹⁴ Cuban Urban Agriculture Law No. 142 (1994): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/3407.html>

¹⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Article 3, 12 and 32 among others (2008):

<http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html>

¹⁶ Constitution of Bolivia, Article 16 and 20 (2009): <http://www.scribd.com/doc/73770823/Bolivia-2009-Official-Translation>

¹⁷ For further information on the reform of irrigation policy in Tunisia please see:

<http://www.gwptoolbox.org/images/stories/cases/en/cs%2019%20tunisia.pdf>

¹⁸ For further information on Water Users' Associations in Rural China please see:

http://www.academia.edu/1711408/Water_Users_Associations_in_Rural_China_a_legal_anthropology_approach

¹⁹ Costa Rican Biodiversity Law (1998): http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/FPA2010_brochure-en-lowres.pdf#page=7

²⁰ UN Strategic Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2020: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/2011-2020/Aichi-Targets-EN.pdf>

²¹ US Conservation Reserve Program (1985): http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/crpfactsheet0213.pdf

10. Reversing deforestation and forest degradation by adapting and adopting exemplary legislation, highlighted by the 2011 Future Policy Award:

- a) Rwanda National Forest Policy²²
- b) Gambia Community Forest Policy²³
- c) USA Lacey Act²⁴, banning the trade in illegally harvested timber
- d) Swiss Federal Act on Forests²⁵

11. Restoring the health of our oceans by spreading these award-winning policies (Future Policy Award 2012):

- a) Palau Protected Areas Network and Shark Haven Act²⁶
- b) The Philippines Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Act²⁷
- c) Namibia Marine Resources Act²⁸
- d) California Ocean Protection Act (COPA)²⁹
- e) South Africa Integrated Coastal Management Act (ICM)³⁰

A world of climate stability

12. Initiating an Inclusive Global Transition to Renewable Energies, assisted by the following best policies:

- a) Feed-In Tariffs³¹, to provide investment security and speed up the decentralised production of renewable energies, combined with a Global Feed-In Tariff fund for developing countries, within the new Green Climate Fund.
- b) Solar Home Systems and solar building codes requiring collectors on all new or renovated buildings (as in e.g. Spain³², Portugal and California).
- c) Full energy cost accounting to include the costs of burning non-renewable fuels with alternative uses, while under-utilising the renewable energy potential.³³
- d) Fossil fuel and nuclear subsidies to be phased out.

²² Rwandan National Forest Policy (2004): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5671.html>

²³ The Gambia Community Forest Policy (1995): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5678.html>

²⁴ US Lacey Act (2008): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5677.html>

²⁵ Swiss' Federal Act on Forests (1991): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5671.html>

²⁶ Palau's Protected Areas Network Act (2003): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5852.html> and Shark Haven Act (2009): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5857.html>

²⁷ The Philippines' Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Act (2010): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5854.html>

²⁸ Namibia's Marine Resources Act (2000): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5855.html?&L>

²⁹ California's Ocean Protection Act (COPA, 2004): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5844.html>

³⁰ South Africa's Integrated Coastal Management Act (ICM, 2008): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/5856.html>

³¹ For further information on Feed-In Tariffs please see: <http://www.futurepolicy.org/2693.html>

³² Spanish Technical Building Code (2006):

http://www.estif.org/fileadmin/estif/content/policies/downloads/CTE_solar_thermal_sections_ENGLISH.pdf

³³ The WFC's initial study estimates this natural capital loss to exceed US \$ 3 trillion p.a.:

http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Climate_and_Energy/Cost_of_non_use_of_RE.pdf

- e) Energy audits on existing buildings to become mandatory, providing owners with retrofitting guidelines, information on reducing consumption and obligatory targets³⁴.

A world of entrepreneurship – Future Business

13. The “Cradle to Cradle” principle³⁵ of ecologically intelligent design and production to become the legal norm, in order to incentivise the transition to circular economies.
14. The “Top Runner” policy mandating ongoing resource-saving product improvements by banning the least efficient products, to become legally binding (as in e.g. Japan³⁶).
15. B (Benefit) Corporations³⁷ with broader business mandates to be legalised (as in e.g. several US states³⁸, Chile).

A world of learning and good governance

16. Environmental literacy testing to be mandatory for economics and business school graduates and for candidates for public office.
17. School curricula to include environmental literacy, human rights and peace education, fostering cross-cultural understanding and mediation skills.
18. The rights of women, children, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and small farmers to be protected and promoted, by ensuring equal educational opportunities and legal access.
19. Equal access to birth control to be ensured, so that every child born is wanted.
20. Candidates for public office to be given public funding and the right to equal media access, once they can demonstrate public support. Private funding to be dis-allowed in order to reduce incentives for corruption³⁹.
21. Valuing and accounting for natural and social capital to be given at least equal weight to GDP in government decision-making⁴⁰.

³⁴ Germany’s Energieeinsparverordnung (2009):

[http://www.bmu.de/service/publikationen/downloads/details/artikel/energieeinsparverordnung-enev/?tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=1892&cHash=44f5e74d50fbacf1bae85b54a53ddf86](http://www.bmu.de/service/publikationen/downloads/details/artikel/energieeinsparverordnung-enev/?tx_ttnews[backPid]=1892&cHash=44f5e74d50fbacf1bae85b54a53ddf86)

³⁵ For further information on the “Cradle to Cradle” principle please see: http://c2ccertified.org/about/what_is_cradle_to_cradle

³⁶ Japan’s Top Runner Program (1999): <http://www.futurepolicy.org/2719.html>

³⁷ For further information on Benefit Corporations please see: <http://benefitcorp.net/quick-faqs>

³⁸ USA State by State Legislative Status of Benefit Corporations: <http://www.benefitcorp.net/state-by-state-legislative-status>

³⁹ For further information please see Global Corruption Report, Transparency International, 2004 (PDF page 17 ff.):

http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/pub/global_corruption_report_2004_political_corruption

⁴⁰ The WFC is actively working on the EU BRAINPOoL (Bringing Alternative Indicators into Policy) Project to develop Beyond GDP indicators. For further information please see: <http://www.brainpoolproject.eu/>

We *Can* Regenerate our World – Together

We are often told that we cannot change our world – or human nature. Yet both are changed all the time. New norms, technologies and lifestyles spread across continents. Public attitudes shift. Culture is not static, but adapts and evolves continually, as does human consciousness.

It is claimed that the reforms required are too costly. But, whatever a society can do, it can also finance! Only political and public will is needed. New money can be created without causing inflation if it is used to fund new production, and to reduce the unaffordable waste of unemployment in a world where there is so much to do.

The current global (dis)order, with its rules and regulations, training and qualification systems, and its foreign, security, development, transport, economic and innovation policies, is based on premises that are rapidly disappearing.

It is essential, possible and affordable to change course now. We propose a global media information campaign to raise awareness about the realities and choices we face, and to mobilise support for the key policy changes required.

Since its establishment in 2007 the World Future Council has worked closely with national and international policy-makers, as well as scholars and civic groups to successfully identify, debate, introduce and implement breakthrough policies. We need to amplify and accelerate this effort globally. We welcome partnerships with governments, inter-governmental organisations, civil society, academia, media, and youth groups, for implementing this Global Policy Action Plan to protect our shared future and regenerate our world.

“In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground.

A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

That time is now.”

Wangari Maathai – Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, 2004

“We probably have a decade to ensure that the world is liveable.”

Ex-President Mary Robinson, Wangari Maathai Memorial Lecture, 2013

The World Future Council

The World Future Council brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy-making. Its 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision-makers with effective policy solutions. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany.

Website: www.worldfuturecouncil.org

WFC policy toolkit and database of future just policies: www.futurepolicy.org

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