

Conclusions of the International Conference for a Green and Inclusive Economy organized by Green Cross International at Geneva on 6-7 October 2015

The courage and compassion of the people of Paris following the 13th of November atrocities in 2015 are an inspiration. Our resolve to come together to create a better, safer future can only be strengthened in the wake of this tragedy, and the terrible suffering and insecurity that afflicts so many people on Earth. This Declaration is one of peace, hope and solidarity for the City of Paris and all who gathered at COP21.

A green and inclusive future is possible! We have the knowledge, technology and public support to achieve it: what we are waiting for is the political leadership to take us forward. This must be delivered in Paris in the form of an ambitious, binding and universal climate change agreement backed by ample climate finance. It is time for a fundamental transformation of our economic, financial and energy systems. Such a transformation is not a choice: it is a moral, economic and environmental imperative. In December, humanity has an appointment with its future—we cannot miss this momentous opportunity to launch a new era of global climate action.

This is the clear and determined message put forward by over 2,700 people participating at the International Conference for a Green and Inclusive Economy, held in Geneva on 6 and 7 October 2015.

As the birthplace of the Red Cross, the European home of the United Nations, and the site of the world's largest network of environmental organisations, Geneva is a city that represents the world's ability to come together to overcome adversity; it is calling for a science-based, people-driven global strategy to combat the biggest threats we face, while helping to lead the way in making the fundamental changes needed.

This diverse gathering included representatives of the City and Canton of Geneva, the United Nations and its institutions, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), universities, civil society, technology, business and the military, but was united in its simple message that Paris Climate 2015 must:

1. Acknowledge that our current economic model is failing humanity and destroying the conditions that have allowed life to flourish on the planet we share. Leaders need to affirm that the vast majority of remaining fossil-fuels must be left in the ground, and that economies cannot continue to grow exponentially on a consumption basis. We CAN shift to a new economic system without global collapse, but we CANNOT avoid environmental collapse if we rely on piecemeal optimization of the existing model.
2. Commit to ambitious, legally-binding emission reductions that will fulfil the 2010 agreement to limit global temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius. The current Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)—if they are implemented in full and on time—put us on a pathway to approximately 2.7-3°C of warming by 2100; this is an entirely unacceptable and unsafe outcome that should not be the basis of the final Paris Climate agreement. World leaders have the power to go further: with so much at stake, they must do better.
3. Demonstrate solidarity with the countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts, and assign the resources required to share the burden of both mitigation and adaptation. A strong agreement in Paris must include accordingly ambitious, targeted financial commitments to be delivered without further delay.
4. Reaffirm commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While combating climate change is just one of the 17 SDGs, failure to do so has the power to sink them all. It would be

unforgivable for our governments to meet the SDGs only to fail to commit to the climate action required to meet them.

5. Achieve an inspirational closure to two decades of disappointing, divisive climate negotiations, and launch a new era based on solidarity, innovation and the will to change. Today the principal barriers to global climate action on the scale required are not technological or financial, they are political. The world was looking to Paris Climate 2015 to deliver the unequivocal, compelling policy signal that it is time to commit unreservedly to a sustainable, low-carbon future.

The future is not preordained. It is up to us. Alongside the direct plea to decision-makers at Paris Climate 2015, the Geneva gathering was overflowing with ideas and examples of the solutions and innovations needed to build a green and inclusive future. At the heart of all proposals are people—the immense capacity of humanity for creativity, ingenuity, adaptation, hard work, and care for others. Action on climate change can be a catalyst to transform and reform our societies, to shift the currently undemocratic balance of power, and to promote the human rights and wellbeing of all people.

In the mammoth undertaking of transforming our economies and behaviour, there will be central roles for states, for cities, for regions, for the private sector and for civil society. But those with the most at stake are the young, and the generations to come. This is why our Conference is proud to support the new “Universal Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities of Humanity”, with its strong insistence on intergenerational solidarity, which was represented at the Geneva Green and Inclusive Economy conference by Scouts from all continents, and presented to world leaders at Paris Climate 2015. <http://droitshumanite.fr>

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