

**International Symposium
on
Climate Change and World Development**

From Rome to Paris: a Call for Strong and Urgent Climate Action

A high-level, international Symposium was held in Rome on 27-29 May to review the realities and risks of climate change, to identify weaknesses in the current negotiating process, to propose policies and measures for rapid and effective climate action and to underline the risks and costs of further delay. The intent is to broaden support for a strong international agreement at the crucial UN Conference on climate, COP 21, which takes place in Paris in November. The Symposium was held on the initiative of President Mikhail Gorbachev, with support of the Italiani Foundation, the European Space Agency and the New Policy Forum. A representative of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace attended.

The broadly-based Expert Group of 23 international and Italian experts, scientists and practitioners that came together for the Symposium (see Annex) issued the following Call for Action, addressed to political leaders, negotiators, business leaders, activists and ordinary citizens around the world:

- **The emerging climate crisis is already generating devastating impacts on human lives, especially of the poor and disadvantaged. It is aggravating threats to the global environment, increasing the risks of instability and conflict and damaging the prospects for succeeding generations.**
- Policy makers must face the fact that human-induced climate change is occurring faster and more extensively than anticipated. If this is not corrected, the climate will be destabilized in coming decades with catastrophic consequences for all countries, rich or poor. Specific concerns not being adequately addressed in COP negotiations are:
 - The impacts we see today are the consequence of a temperature rise of “only” 0.8°C since pre-industrial times.
 - The target of the international negotiations, to hold the temperature rise to 2°C, is too high: it represents the boundary between dangerous and extremely dangerous climate change. 1.5°C would be a more secure safeguard, and a more demanding target.
 - Current policies, in the absence of urgent corrective action, will lead to a temperature rise of 4°C-5°C, which would probably destroy the unique conditions which have allowed the development of human civilization during the last 10.000 years.
 - We do not only face a challenge of gradual global warming: there is an increasing risk that the complex systems driving the climate may pass points of no return, triggering self-reinforcing processes and sudden disruptions beyond human influence. This may already be in progress with some systems.
 - To avoid catastrophic outcomes, our economies must decarbonise rapidly, breaking our addiction to fossil fuels. Only around 35% of present fossil-fuel reserves can be burned if we are to have a 66% chance of staying below the 2°C target – not good odds for the future of humanity. To have a more realistic 90% chance, the budget of carbon we can burn reduces to zero. A high percentage of reserves will become economically unviable, removing any justification for further exploration and development of new reserves.
 - The fossil fuel investments being made today will have dangerous consequences for decades to come. The climate negotiations should reflect a much greater sense of urgency and move rapidly towards precautionary action and sensible risk management. An international agreement in Paris at COP21 should be implemented immediately: this cannot wait until 2020 as currently planned.

- Leaders and negotiators in Paris should take full account of the changed global context as demonstrated by up-to-date science and evidence in the real world, and of the objectives set out above. They should agree on much more **ambitious targets for emission cuts, on a clear, and inclusive longer-term strategies to manage the climate issue, and on stable and predictable signals and practical measures to stimulate finance, investment, innovation and action.**
- **Climate change is a risk, and an opportunity, unlike anything previously experienced by humanity.** It is not principally an environmental issue, as apparently assumed by some negotiators. It will fundamentally transform global society, economy, business and finance. Paris 2015 should unambiguously establish **climate change as a top priority** for international cooperation and action.
- A stable global climate is **a precondition for the achievement of other human goals**, such as the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of a stable and productive world economy, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. And, to achieve a strong climate agreement in Paris, it will be essential to safeguard international cooperation by avoiding a drift towards confrontation.
- **A human-centered, rights-based approach** must lie at the core of any agreement, founded on justice between rich and poor, and between present and future generations. And the role and full participation of women must be ensured in every aspect of the response to climate change.
- **A new paradigm for economic growth is needed** with a coherent overall strategy and revised institutional arrangements, built around climate change in its wider economic, environmental, social and development context. To resolve the climate crisis we must address its fundamental causes which lie in the roots of our societies, our economies and our behaviour.
- Leaders in Paris should map out the broad lines for the **radical transformation of our energy systems** which is essential to achieve a carbon neutral world by around 2050. The technologies and capacities are largely available to build the low-carbon economies of the future but they must be deployed at scale, which is unlikely with traditional market mechanisms. Hence strong and rapid action is essential to accelerate change, along with the removal of fossil fuel subsidies;
- **Budgets for research, development and innovation should be greatly increased** in order to generate disruptive, breakthrough technological solutions for transformative change and to deploy them rapidly to scale so as to avoid the “lock-in” of inefficient solutions for decades to come.
- **Climate finance is crucial for mitigation and adaptation**, to build resilience and to undertake the restructuring of economies and energy systems. Paris 2015 must initiate an orderly transition to a climate-secure, global energy system which can eradicate energy poverty and meet the needs of a growing world population. Trillions of Dollars were found in two years to stabilize the banking system. What is it worth to preserve a stable global climate and a viable environment for human development?
- **Leadership and vision must be strengthened** in all walks of life to push through fundamental changes in our societies and economies to meet the climate challenge. Leaders must mobilise citizens to achieve a critical mass of support in favour of the transformation to new, low-carbon, sustainable economies, and citizens must press their leaders to safeguard the future by acting to avert the threats of climate change;
- Through and beyond Paris, we must recognise the moral and spiritual dimensions of the climate and ecological crises we face and **we must establish a new relationship of harmony and mutual respect** between humanity and nature and with each other.

We have the capacities to avert the worst effects of climate change. Indeed, the transformation to a zero-carbon world is an unprecedented social and economic opportunity. We are gambling with the future of humanity. After twenty years of denial and delay, we must find the will, the commitment and the cooperation to act, rapidly and effectively. Paris 2015 can be decisive in presenting a vision, laying out the pathways, mobilising support and initiating the action on which the future of humanity now depends.

This Call for Action is endorsed by the Expert Group Members as follows (1):

Dr. Giulietto Chiesa, Italy: Former Member of the European Parliament, New Policy Forum.

Dr. Valerio Calzolaio, Italy: Former Vice-Minister of the Environment, four times Member of Parliament.

Dr. Frederick Dubee, Canada: Senior Advisor, Global Compact, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, United Nations. Vice-Chair International Green Economy Association (IGEA) and Chairman of the Annual World Congress of Biodiversity (BioD-2013).

Ian T. Dunlop, Australia: Former senior international oil, gas and coal industry executive. Former Chair of the Australian Experts Group on Emissions Trading and CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors from 1997-2001.

Ivan Faiella, Italy: Bank of Italy, Economic Structure and Labour Market Division, energy and environmental economist.

Grazia Francescato, Italy: Former President of WWF Italy and former leader of the Italian Green Party.

Dr. Tim Jenkins, UK: Director, The Great Transition Project and External Affairs, the New Economics Foundation

Dr. Georgios Kostakos, Greece: Executive Director, Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability; previously with the United Nations, including as senior adviser on climate change and sustainability.

Martin Lees, UK: Adviser to the President of COP20; Rector Emeritus, UN University for Peace; former UNASG for Science and Technology, Moderator of the Gorbachev Task Force on Climate Change.

Dr. Alexander Likhotal, Russia: President, Green Cross International.

Jeremy Leggett, UK: Founding President of Solarcentury Electric Co; Chairman of Carbon Tracker, Author and Activist.

Flavio Lotti, Italy: Organiser of the March for Peace Perugia-Assisi as well as National Coordinator of the Table of Peace.

Dr. Khalid Malik, Pakistan: Former Director of the UN Human Development Report Office to 2014; UN Resident Coordinator in China, 2003 – 2010.

Francesco Martone, Italy: Former Chairman of Greenpeace Italy, former independent Senator of Liguria for the green party.

Dr. Dirk Messner, Germany: Director, German Development Institute, Co-Chair, German Advisory Council on Global Change.

Dr. Teresa Ribera, Spain: Director, Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, Paris; former Secretary of State for Environment, Madrid.

Bill Ritter jr., USA: Former Governor, Colorado; Director, Center for the New Energy Economy, Colorado State University.

Francesco Rutelli, Italy: Former Vice Premier in the centre-left coalition, former Ministry of Culture, former Mayor of Rome.

Dr. Roberto Savio, Italy: President Emeritus, International Press Service, Member, New Policy Forum.

Dr. Angelo Schiano, Italy: President Fondazione Italiani.

Dr. Gianni Silvestrini, Italy: Former Advisor to Premier Romano Prodi for Green Economy issues; Editor in Chief of Qualenergia, the daily newspaper of green economy and green energy.

Dr. Dimitri Zenghelis, U.K. : Co-head Climate Policy, Grantham Research Institute, LSE; former lead author of the Stern Review.

Note 1: The Experts were invited and participated in their personal capacities. Their endorsement of this Call for Action does not therefore engage the organisations with which they are affiliated.