

On the way to Rio+20

1ST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAUREATES



EUROPEAN
ENVIRONMENT
FOUNDATION

The Declaration on Rio+20

ADOPTED BY

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAUREATES

10 MARCH 2012
FREIBURG, GERMANY



63 Laureates of international environmental prizes have taken part in the
1. International Convention of Environmental Laureates
held from 08 - 11 March 2012 in Freiburg, Germany

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FREIBURG CALL FOR ACTION

Twenty years after the first Rio-Convention and forty years after the Stockholm UN-Conference we recognize a failure of this format of intergovernmental process to lead the world towards a just and sustainable future. We, as a group of 63 environmental laureates from 37 countries, represent evidence that solutions exist to the problems the world is facing.

We believe the challenge is to identify and build on the experience that already exists amongst the pioneers of change that this group of laureates represents. This should harness new communication concepts, promote continuous dialogues and be open to all members of society.

Our three day Convention in Freiburg calls upon the Rio+20-meeting to come up with actionable means to achieve sustainable development in the following critical areas:

- ◆ We urge governing bodies on all levels, as well as business and civil society, to become pioneers of change and successful social innovators.
- ◆ We have to move towards equitable budgets per capita for energy, emissions, land use, water and resources.
- ◆ To be sustainable, economic development must reduce overconsumption, be based on an ethical and fair financial system, eradicate poverty, and be in harmony with nature.
- ◆ Sustainable Development is a key security issue for all nations and has to be treated and funded as such.

The environmental laureates present at this convention pledge to convene annually in Freiburg to monitor the progress in these areas, and to draw attention to positive examples of change in order to accelerate the innovation process.

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COMMITMENT TO ACTION

We are greatly alarmed to be witnessing the development of several closely related, mutually compounding crises. Fortunately, positive developments can also be observed, which could counteract these problems and offer new opportunities (see amendment).

The world is approaching a new revolution in both industry and security. Unlike in previous centuries, we are no longer able to rely on national security to protect people against external threats. But we have the opportunity to predict the fast-approaching changes, alter their direction to our advantage and speed them up. In doing so, we must not only promote sustainable technologies but also sustainable social innovations. A wide range of measures is necessary for this and they must be implemented on a global and international scale, as well as a national, regional and local scale, down to the level of consumers.

The following principles should be considered when implementing such programs and measures: Preference should be given to solutions, programs and measures which have positive synergy effects that will benefit several objectives at the same time. For example, economic recovery programs should champion the accelerated introduction of sustainable technologies as opposed to prolonging the use of out-of-date technologies which are harmful to the environment. The guiding principles are:

- ◆ **Pioneers of change**

We urge national governments, local governing bodies and municipal authorities not to wait until others take action, but to become pioneers of change and successful social innovation, and to galvanise younger generations, encouraging them to fight for their present and future rights.

- ◆ **Global budgets**

International programs and agreements, and national and individual consumption should focus on the principle of global budgets and equal per capita values with regard to emissions, land use, consumption of resources, etc.

- ◆ **Green economy or a more sustainable economy**

The market economy is the most flexible and successful economic system. Fighting poverty is the most important economic challenge and will take us towards slower population growth. Furthermore, a green economy requires clear national and international political and legal conditions: internalising external environmental and health care costs (user-pays principle), considering preventative measures (precautionary principle), removing environmentally harmful subsidies, promoting sustainable technologies, limiting the monetary economy to its traditional role, prohibiting speculation on raw materials and stock markets, introducing a Tobin tax. Increases in wealth are possible, particularly in less developed countries, in parallel to increases in energy efficiency and resource efficiency, and decreases in the use of energy and resources. New key indicators of progress like the Human Development Index (HDI) must be used in addition to traditional GDP indicators. At the individual level, focus on educational and work programs that transfer daily human activities from a focus on gaining wealth and status to a focus on gaining health, happiness, and stability (both social and ecological).

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- ◆ **Global food security**
Protecting original seeds, safeguarding and modernising subsistence farming, reducing the production of feed crops on arable land, decreasing the unequal distribution of land, only allowing the industrial use of biomass if it does not compete with food supply.
- ◆ **Promotion of sustainable technologies**
and technology transfer, as well as the abandonment of unsustainable, risky technologies such as nuclear power and genetic engineering in agriculture. Particular focus on, and definitive targets for, energy efficiency, renewable energy, resource efficiency and recycling concepts as well as healthy products and production processes, sustainable food supply and water management (rainwater harvesting, artificial water recharge, water recycling). One example is photovoltaics, which can be used globally and even grid-independently. It is experiencing rapidly decreasing installation costs and incurs no fuel costs. Decentralised energy concepts using wind energy or cogeneration units offer other alternatives. The most important starting point is to construct houses, plants and engines in such a way that they use much less energy in the first place (“negawatt instead of megawatt”).
- ◆ **Stopping the depletion of natural resources as quickly as possible**
Forests are being destroyed and agricultural land is being lost at a dramatic rate; “reconstruction” is either impossible or only partly possible and the costs of this are extremely high. Moreover, protection is needed for rare earth elements and all other kinds of resource. The construction and design of products and production processes in a manner that allows materials to be used in a technical or biological cycle is a goal that must be achieved (“cradle to cradle”).
- ◆ **Green Security Funding Program**
The developed countries must make a sufficiently large and long-term budget available if the funding of measures to promote sustainable development, stop deforestation and transfer technology is to be possible. The funding of developments needed in the area of technology transfer and infrastructure development also requires a large amount of private capital investment. In order to speed up the introduction of energy efficient technologies and renewable energy sources, a global economic stimulus and investment package, entitled Green Security and spanning several years, should be put in place. The Stern Review has proposed that a yearly contribution of 1% of the world’s gross domestic product be set aside for this. This corresponds to a total of around 620 billion USD (in 2010) and less than half of the world’s annual military expenditure (approximately 1,500 billion USD). The package should be financed through contributions from the Tobin tax, energy taxes and a reduction in military expenditure. By jointly running global green security programs, the national rivalries for limited resources will largely vanish and thus render most of the remaining military budgets obsolete.
- ◆ **UN institutional reforms in the area of environment/sustainability**
The United Nations must give international environmental protection and sustainable development issues the same priority as health, nutrition and employment policies. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) must develop into a UN agency with more rights and resources; an international court for the environment must be set up to investigate environmental offences. The comparatively weak UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should be replaced with a powerful Sustainable Development Council chaired by the UN Secretary-General.

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AMENDMENT

We are greatly alarmed to be witnessing the development of several closely related, mutually compounding crises.

- ◆ There is a great imbalance in the wealth and poverty of nations in the world. Around 1.4 billion people are living in extreme poverty. A sixth of the world's population suffers from malnutrition. The Millennium Development Goals established for the global community are not expected to be met.
- ◆ In the coming decades the global food situation is likely to worsen as a result of the world's population rising to an estimated 9 billion people, the increasing loss of agricultural areas (especially in Africa), a global rise in meat consumption, escalating competition with the industrial use of biomass and the anticipated loss of crops due to climate change (droughts, floods, hurricanes).
- ◆ We live on Planet Water. All life is water-based. But humanity is altering the hydrologic cycle. Climate change, temperature rises, acidification and pollution in oceans, and the biological death and contamination of rivers and underground water due to human intervention are creating a severe water crisis for human communities, as well as for other species and ecosystems.
- ◆ Climate change as a long-lasting crisis is in full swing and is a particular threat to developing and emerging countries. Despite the internationally agreed aim to reduce global warming, significant ecological and social changes still need to be made. International climate change negotiations are laborious and slow, their outcomes uncertain.
- ◆ Biodiversity is under threat worldwide. A particular cause for alarm is the great extent of the disappearance of forests – home to most of the earth's plant and animal species. Deforestation not only threatens the global climate, but also local climates and ways of life. Seas, fish stocks and other areas and populations are also in danger.
- ◆ Global energy consumption is rapidly increasing, pushing up energy prices. At the same time, access to sufficient energy is necessary for economic development and general subsistence. Together, these observations highlight the need for energy efficiency and a global switchover to renewable energy.
- ◆ Other resources, such as widely used metals, are also expected to become more expensive. Some are even becoming scarce, as is the case with strategic raw materials (some rare earth elements, platinum group metals, lithium, cobalt, gallium, etc.). In this area there is a looming threat of competition for resources and conflicts over distribution.
- ◆ Uranium mining, nuclear accidents, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear waste are threatening the genetic code of many species, including our own.
- ◆ Many indigenous population groups, cultures and languages are in danger.

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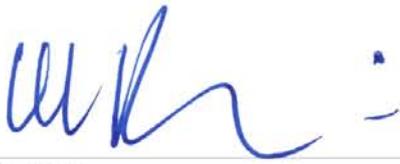
- ◆ For the second time in the space of just a few years, the world is experiencing major financial crises, this time triggered by the excessive debts accumulated by many countries, as well as speculative financial markets that are decoupled from the real economy.
- ◆ The developments listed above are threatening security within and between nations, as well as provoking new global conflicts of distribution. Never before in the history of mankind was the security of natural living conditions (“green security”), for both present and future generations, so greatly in the hands of those currently alive. The world’s population is growing towards a figure of around 9 billion people whilst at the same time we continue to reduce the planet’s ability to sustain us. If things continue as they are, we will soon have shrunk the earth’s capacity to the half that required for this population, instead of increasing it.

Fortunately positive developments can also be observed, which could counteract these problems. Examples include:

- ◆ improvement of the economic situation and the reduction of poverty in large emerging countries,
- ◆ increasingly successful resistance against dictatorships and exploitative regimes,
- ◆ growing bilateral and global cooperation,
- ◆ new possibilities for sharing and gaining information (e.g. Internet, Social Media), improvement in sharing information worldwide, support for democratisation, analysing problems academically and predicting critical developments,
- ◆ new technology, notably in the area of energy efficiency (which is unfortunately not currently being used enough) and in the renewable energy sector (alongside a drastic drop in solar and wind energy prices).

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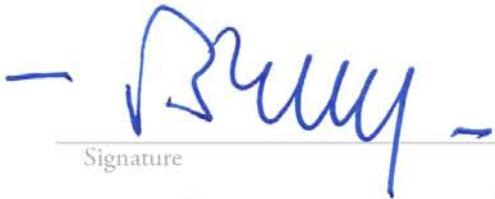
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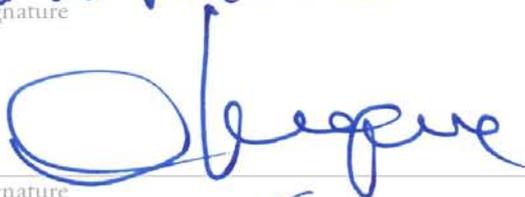
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Hans-Berner SCHÖCK

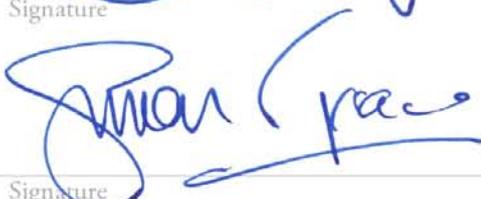
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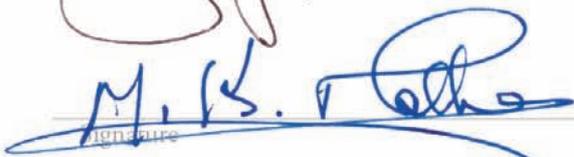
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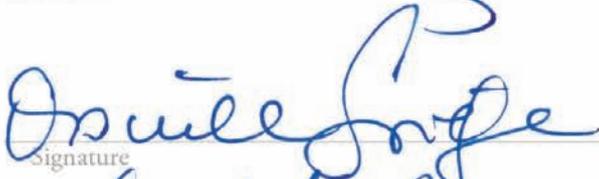
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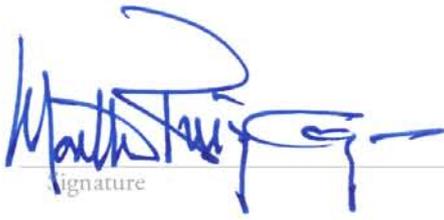

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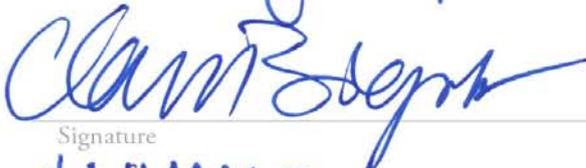
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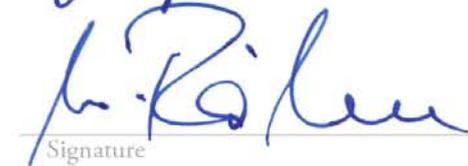
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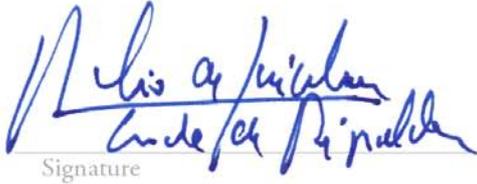
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