

FROM GLOBAL WARNING TO GLOBAL POLICY

Turin, 28-29 March 2008

The Future Belongs to All

Final Statement

The Conference on the topic “From Global Warning to Global Policy” was convened by the World Political Forum and the Club of Rome and chaired by President Mikhail Gorbachev in Turin on March 28-29 2008. It gathered representatives from parliaments and other political institutions, science, education and global civil society, business and finance from different continents and from professional interests ranging from research to action. It focused on the underlying causes of our inability to take effective action to avert the intensifying problems which threaten sustainable development and peace and, indeed, the future of our civilization.

The participants concluded that the world has entered a period in which the dramatic scale, complexity and speed of change caused by human activities threaten the fragile environmental and ecological systems of the planet on which we depend. It is urgent therefore that the world community should agree rapidly on strategies and effective action to avert irreversible change in world systems, brought about by accelerating climate change, the ecosystems crisis, the depletion of energy resources and the diminishing availability of water, the degradation of environments across the world, persistent poverty and deprivation and the rising gulf between rich and poor within and between countries. Also, global population is in the midst of a transition from explosive growth to a new paradigm of development, never before experienced by humankind.

Over many years, warnings have been raised but governments, political elites and societies have generally proved unable to take proactive action to prevent the negative impacts that have been identified. The end of the Cold War did offer a unique chance to discover the common challenges, to redefine more meaningful futures and priorities, reorient the commitment of societal resources, and to take concerted action to make the world a common home for all. The reason for this failure lies largely in lopsided priorities, neglect of social and ethical imperatives, partial and inadequate solutions and a single-minded focus on material and financial goals. But we are now in a radically new situation: the global scale of the problems we face is such that, if we wait for the impacts to be evident, it may not be possible to prevent massive, irreversible consequences.

And yet never in the history of mankind have we had so much knowledge on the state of the planet, on the needs and aspirations of people and on how these needs can be met. In fact, today’s technologies, if properly used, would be fully capable of providing for a decent and full life for all, even within the finite limits of our planet. The problems of endemic poverty, malnutrition, starvation and marginalization, disease and lack of education, access to water and other natural resources, participation or access to the instruments of development can be solved – but they will require a different level of determination, the commitment of political will and responsibility and substantial transformations of the political and economic systems that exist today.

Encouraged by the numerous positive solutions proposed by science and technology, by the potential of civil society and the full participation of people in community processes, and by the contributions of socially responsible business in fields such as innovative food production, renewable energy sources, water and health, **the participants at the Turin conference believe** that the time is ripe to introduce a new political architecture that bridges the local and global.

We call upon those who have the power of taking decisions to face their responsibilities and to make the hard choices that are now required. We call upon those who form public opinion to confirm that human survival, the eradication of poverty and the right to a decent life for all are matters of top priority. **We underline** the central importance of the availability of water as critical to health and food production for millions across the world. **We stress** the importance of the active engagement of women and of younger generations in the large scale action which must be initiated to promote the efficient implementation of sustainable development along the lines set out in the Earth Charter. **We invite** the education community, religious and moral leaders and the media to promote planetary transparency and glasnost and to stimulate education campaigns to alert the world's civil society to the crucial importance of the present moment in world history.

We are convinced that the needs and aspirations of all for a secure, equitable and sustainable future can be attained, if we are willing to make the **political quantum leap** that the world expects and that future generations deserve.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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