



LEAVES, A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
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From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to newsletter@ief.org

Please share the Leaves newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

Members Corner

Thank you, Prayers, and Well-wishes to Cynthia Deissner

Cynthia Deissner who has regularly and skillfully produced this newsletter is no longer able to provide this service because she needs to care for her husband Jim who has become very ill. The board deeply thanks her for her years of dedicated service to IEF as newsletter editor, and wishes her strength for this difficult moment in her life.



Welcome

We warmly welcome the following new members and associates to the International Environment Forum:

New Members

Lucio Capalbo (Argentina)
Duane Dawson (USA)
Kathy Gilbert (New Zealand)
Patrick Bahati Ndeze (Israel)
Porooshat (Iran)
Evelyn Raezer (USA)
Pitta Sekhar (India)

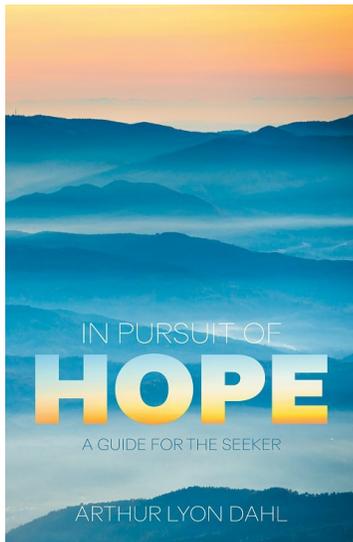
New Associates

Pall Asgeir Davidsson (Iceland)
Ashwin Deshmukh (Puerto Rico)
Robin Neiheisel (USA)
Roger Prentice (United Kingdom)
Rozhin Rasekhi (Canada)

We look forward to getting to know you better and invite your active participation with IEF!

In Pursuit of Hope: A Guide for the Seeker

The latest book by IEF President Arthur Dahl has just been published on 13 June 2019.



In Pursuit of Hope takes the reader on a quest in search of a more purposeful life amidst the environmental, social, economic and spiritual challenges of the 21st century.

A metaphorical journey across seven valleys and seven mountain ranges, this is a do-it-yourself guide for anyone who is seeking greater meaning in life. A companion for each step of the way, this book assists you to ask the right questions and provides you with tools to help you along your journey. While it is impossible to know your ultimate destination and what the future will bring, this book shows that you can make a difference, contributing to change within your own life, the lives of those around you, and the planet as a whole.

ISBN: 978-0-85398-620-1 Oxford: George Ronald Publisher, soft cover £10.99 / \$18.99 204 pages, 216 x 140 mm (8.5 x 5.5 ins)

Order from <http://www.grbooks.com/george-ronald-publisher-books/social-and-economic-development/inpursuitofhope-1557910160>

Bringing Environmental Issues to Scotland

From 20 May to 12 June 2019, IEF President Arthur Lyon Dahl crossed Scotland from East to West and North to South, visiting 22 communities in 22 days, making 24 presentations to over 330 students and 530 adults in schools and public meetings, visiting local leaders and academics to discuss the pressing issues facing humanity such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity, considering how individuals, communities and institutions should respond, and also examining the moral, ethical and spiritual principles which must underpin that response.

The time was ripe as Scotland had just declared a climate emergency shortly before his visit. The first day after his arrival, he presented the following "Time for Reflection" at the opening of the session of the Scottish Parliament:

Climate change today represents an existential crisis, with leading scientists calling for urgent action on all fronts, and our children on strike and marching in the streets for their endangered future. The rapid loss of the planet's biodiversity is equally frightening.

How can a growing, rapidly developing, and not yet united global population, in a just manner, live in harmony with the planet and its finite resources? Our present economic system and consumer lifestyle are having devastating consequences for the environment. We cannot exceed the capacity of our planetary ecosystem without expecting dire consequences. The limited availability and inequitable distribution of resources profoundly impact social relations within and between nations in many ways, even to the point of precipitating upheaval and war.

Faced with such challenges, we must set aside self interest and partisan disputation that diminish the will to act, and strive to achieve unity of thought and action informed by the best available scientific evidence and grounded in spiritual principles.

Baha'u'llah, prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith, warned over 100 years ago that "The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men."

In a globalized world, acceptance of the oneness of humankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for the reorganization and administration of the world as one country, our common home. Only

strengthened global governance for peace, security and the environment can assure the national autonomy and diversity so important to all of us.

We are trustees, or stewards, of the planet's vast resources and biological diversity. We must learn to make use of the earth's natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, in a manner that ensures sustainability and equity into the distant reaches of time. This attitude of stewardship requires that we give full consideration to the potential environmental consequences of all development activities. We must temper our actions with moderation and humility, realizing that the true value of nature cannot be expressed in economic terms. We need a deep understanding of the natural world and its role in our collective development - both material and spiritual. Therefore, we must see sustainable environmental management not as a discretionary commitment that we can weigh against other competing interests, but rather as a fundamental responsibility that we must shoulder - a prerequisite for our spiritual development as well as our physical survival.

The video is available on the Scottish Parliament web site at <https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/time-for-reflection-may-21-2019>

Arthur's itinerary, organised by the Scottish Baha'i Council, included Edinburgh, Stirling, Dumfries in the South, Glasgow, Newton Mears, Balfron, Helensburgh, Broadford and Portree on the Isle of Skye in the West, Grandtully and Aberfeldy in Perthshire, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen in the East, Lerwick and Levenwick on the Shetland Islands in the North, Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands, Inverness, Linlithgow, and Drymen. The tour concluded with meetings in Glasgow with Interfaith Scotland and with the Edinburgh Interfaith Association on the roles of faith communities in encouraging climate change action. Meetings were often co-organized by local churches, Friends of the Earth and other associations, reported in the press and on the radio, and even publicized by Extinction Rebellion.

The general theme of Arthur's presentations was **Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century**, summarized as follows.

The technologies of information, communications and transportation have reduced our world to a neighbourhood, but we are still trying to manage it with institutions and values from an earlier age. The twin environmental challenges of climate change and rapid loss of biodiversity, together with their impact on social relationships, threaten our future sustainability. Social problems including increasing inequality, migration and xenophobia are fracturing our communities and societies. Economic globalisation and our consumer lifestyle are pillaging the environment and exploiting the poor while failing to create meaningful employment. We expect responsible government at the national level but refuse to create the same responsible governance under law for global problems including peace and security. Continuing business as usual will end in catastrophe of one form or another.

A fundamental transformation is needed in our society and economy, as called for in the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, including eliminating poverty and leaving no one behind. This can only be achieved if we make our lifestyles more sustainable, and also transform our values, resisting the superficial attractions of the materialistic consumer society and giving priority to principles of justice, equity, generosity, moderation, service and unity in diversity. The motivation for such a transformation can best be found in the moral, ethical and spiritual principles common to the great religious traditions and most recently elaborated in the Bahá'í Faith. Science tells us that time is running out and rapid change in all aspects of society and the economy is necessary to save us from environmental catastrophe. The lack of spirituality is behind the rising frustration, fear, hate, rejection and division threatening social catastrophes. We need to counter the forces of disintegration with stronger forces of integration, of solidarity and unity, starting with ourselves, our families, and in our own communities.

The actions to be taken at all levels must be informed by the best available science and grounded in spiritual principles, which include the acceptance of the oneness of humankind. Setting aside self interest and partisan disputes and striving for unity of thought and action are required in order for us to reorganise our planetary affairs and administer the world in our collective role as its trustees or stewards, moving towards a global governance which embraces national autonomy and diversity.

Principles of moderation and humility together with an increased understanding of Nature will help us to be more sustainable. *“We must see sustainable environmental management not as a discretionary commitment that we can weigh against other competing interests, but rather as a fundamental responsibility that we must shoulder, a pre-requisite for our spiritual development as well as our physical survival.”* (Baha’i International Community).

He adapted this presentation depending on the audience, with additional details or stories from his experiences to illustrate a point, such as the lessons to be learned from coral reef ecosystems, and where relevant his experience as a winner of the New Shape Prize of the Global Challenges Foundation for proposals on global governance for the 21st century. In the islands he added an island dimension. The presentations usually concluded with lists of specific things that each individual could do to live more sustainably, some already available on the IEF web site.

Scotland is already a place with a strong sense of community, looking to set an example for climate responsibility. It will not be easy with an economy largely dependent on North Sea oil and a heavy reliance in agriculture on cows and sheep, both major methane emitters. Hopefully Arthur’s visit has increased the awareness of the challenges ahead and the motivation to make the changes required.

IEF member wins Educator's Challenge



IEF member Joachim Monkelbaan and his partners in the Sustainability Leadership Lab were one of the winners of the Educator's Challenge of the Global Challenges Foundation on 16 May 2019. This is the second time that IEF members have won prizes from the Global Challenges Foundation.

Systems Scientist Fritjof Capra: Achieving Multiple SDGs at the Same Time

The newly-released video *“The Heart of the Matter, A Systems Approach to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”* by scientist Fritjof Capra offers a Nature-based systems approach that is relevant to achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) simultaneously and by the 2030 deadline.

The video talk, written and narrated by Fritjof Capra, PhD, a world-renowned physicist, systems theorist, educator and author, shows how our global problems are systemic problems — all interconnected and interdependent — and that the SDGs, therefore, must also be seen as systemically interconnected. Indeed, the shift from a fragmented, piecemeal approach to integrated, systemic solutions will be critical to enable us to deal with a number of goals concurrently and achieve the 2030 Agenda. This project is the culmination of 30 years of research by Dr. Capra who has received many awards for his work.

Here are the links to the video *“The Heart of the Matter. A Systems Approach to Achieving the*

Sustainable Development Goals:”

Two-minute preview: <https://vimeo.com/capracourse/heartpreview>

Full 29 min. video talk : <https://vimeo.com/capracourse/heart>

The Latest on Greenhouse Gases

The monthly CO₂ emissions are consistently above 3ppm in 2019, reaching 3.42 ppm in May, with NOAA reporting the mean atmospheric CO₂ now at 411.26 ppm, up from 407.84 a year ago, a 5 million year high. Global emissions and atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ and methane are tracking the worst case scenario (RCP8.5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This is at least a hundred times faster than the increase after the last glaciation. If this growth spurt continues longer, it will be a 50% increase in growth rate compared to the last decade. Global CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels increased 2.7% in 2018. Both the Arctic and tropical rain forests seem to be switching from carbon sinks to carbon sources.

Source: email dated 12 June 2019 from petercarter46@shaw.ca

A Citizen's Call for a Global Sustainable Economy

A Petition addressed to the European Parliament, the UN Secretary-General, and several heads of state.

The International Environment Forum was asked to publicize the following petition. You may sign it here: <https://www.change.org/p/a-citizen-s-call-for-a-global-sustainable-economy>

Petition:

In the jobs vs. environment debate, neither side is wrong: the problem is the forced choice, and the 20th-Century economy that spawned it.

A major new UN report (the IPBES Global Assessment) revealed that humanity now faces a crucial turning point in how we manage the economy amidst pressing environmental degradation including wildlife declines, global climate change and associated storms, fires, and droughts. Institutions of the world have not kept pace to sustain progress and fairness in the face of such complex collective problems—but they could. We, citizens from around the world, call upon governments, international bodies, and companies to transform our economy to a global sustainable economy to fix these problems at their source.

For too long, citizens of many nations have been saddled with guilt and false choices created by an economic system not fit for purpose. Faced with a devil's choice between our livelihoods (and lifestyles) and sustaining the environment for nature and future generations, we have been choosing our livelihoods. In the current economy, tragic tradeoffs arise when the local protection of communities and environments fuels the export of not only jobs but also dirty, dangerous, and unjust production. The benefits of this economic growth are short-lived, but many costs are long-lasting, widespread, and unjust. Floods, dam collapses, oil spills, forest loss, coral reef bleaching, and persistent toxic pollution affect us all but particularly the most vulnerable, while a few grow wealthier.

It's time to draw a clear line in the sand: NO MORE RACE TO THE BOTTOM. No more economic activity that undermines the viability of a species or ecosystem ('biodiversity') or nature's benefits for people (or 'ecosystem services'), without directly addressing the problems such activity creates. Anywhere.

No more excuses. It is possible to reduce the impacts and mitigate the effects of most industrial activities. Agriculture can build soils and take carbon dioxide out of the air, working against climate change. Mining done well can leave almost no trace (particularly with snow roads). And multi-species aquaculture can clean up nitrogen pollution while producing safe nutritious seafood. Goods and services with fewer negative impacts and more positive ones would likely cost more, in money terms.

But safeguarding nature would pay us back in the form of clean air, clean water, less flood damage, fewer landslides, richer soils and beautiful beaches, forests and other natural areas. It is one of the best investments we could ever make for future generations.

This transformation will not be easy. Many powerful corporations, governments, and individuals benefit from the current system, and currently our institutions make it too easy for the selfish and short-sighted to sway votes, decisions, and policies. But creating genuine and lasting wealth for all is achievable, if governments and businesses commit to do so and follow through. Citizens will need to hold them to account and help where we can. And many of us can. The costs of progress should not be borne by those without such good fortune.

It's time for a principled stand. We—the signatories—call on everyone everywhere to help build a global sustainable economy. Specifically, this means:

- Governments: Face up to the magnitude of climate and environmental change, and measure all of your policies against this yardstick. Build the full true costs of climate, social, and ecological impacts into every aspect of the economy: then, markets will generate prosperity that lasts. Follow the guidance of trusted experts, such as the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Put in place fair and effective measures to prevent damaging development in and from your jurisdiction, and work with other states to ensure that such commitments are upheld everywhere. Stamp out corruption and loopholes that foster short-termism and the few benefiting at the expense of the many. Invest in conserving and restoring natural systems, which reduce the impacts of climate change and yield many other benefits.
- Companies, businesses: Work within your sector and with governments and experts to develop and enforce standards that ban damaging development and build a circular economy—one that recycles and reuses waste. Innovate and work with nature—adopt extractive and productive processes that nourish the planet's life support systems, not degrade them. Call out the cheats, who give whole sectors bad reputations. Show principled leadership, and we will reward it.
- Voters, consumers, citizens: We will do our part. We will support only those politicians and businesses that pledge to build a global sustainable economy, so we aren't faced with any more tragic tradeoffs. We can't yet ensure that our consumption is free of negative impact, although that's what we seek. But we will staunchly support those businesses that foster that vision by documenting, minimizing and repairing their impacts on nature and people. If we can afford to mitigate our own impacts to seed this change, we will. We will speak out about economic structures that promote a race to the bottom, particularly when we encounter divisive debates like jobs vs. the environment. We will seek and embrace solutions that enable economic development while sustaining and restoring nature—win-win, not win-lose.

It is time to make this planet a prosperous, sustainable one—not an unjust and degraded one chock full of (apparently) cheap stuff. We, the citizens of this planet, call on governments and businesses to lead this economic transformation. We pledge to support you if you do. And we pledge to do our own part to meet this monumental challenge, as our ancestors rose to meet theirs.

News from IISD – SDG Knowledge Hub

Global Pact Talks Forward Recommendations to UNEA-5

The third and final Substantive Session of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) established by UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 72/277 ("Towards a Global Pact for the Environment") completed its mandate and adopted its recommendations to the UNGA, following its consideration of possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation. Co-Chair Francisco Duearte Lopes, Portugal, conceded that the outcome was weak but welcomed the consensus as the basis for next steps. The OEWG recommended that UNGA forward the recommendations to the UN Environment Assembly for

its consideration in 2021, in the context of preparing for the fiftieth anniversary of the UN Environment Programme in 2022.

Source: [Global Pact Talks Forward Recommendations to UNEA-5, Lynn Wagner, Ph.D., IISD 28 May 2019](#)

Heidelberg Event Addresses Vertical and Horizontal Cooperation as a Driver for Climate Action

The International Conference on Climate Action focused on how vertical and horizontal cooperation can strengthen climate mitigation and adaptation actions. Deliberations showed that enhanced collaboration between different government levels is needed to further strengthen the roll-out of solutions and their upscaling. Takeaways from workshop discussions shaped the Heidelberg Outcomes and the Partnership Declaration on Collaborative Climate Action, which will inform discussions at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit and UNFCCC COP 25.

Source: [Heidelberg Event Addresses Vertical and Horizontal Cooperation as a Driver for Climate Action, Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. IISD 28 May 2019](#)

Statement by the Vatican on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Pope Francis' Encyclical Laudato si'

On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Laudato Si, the international Conference of which will be held at UNEP's premises on 15-16 July, the Vatican has issued an important statement which highlights the critical physical 1.5°C threshold that is also a Moral and Religious threshold. This comes at a time where some countries and cities have considered climate change as an emergency requiring immediate action at all levels.

The statement concludes:

There is still hope, great hope, and there is still the time to act and avoid the worst effects of climate changes. "Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start" (LS 205). We must "revive" the best resources of our human nature, the innate virtues of love, compassion, generosity and altruism. The greatest resource of man is that the Lord of life does not abandon him, He does not leave him alone, because He is joined definitively with him and with the earth, and His love always leads to finding new roads (see LS 245).

You can read the whole statement here:

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/05/24/190524b.html>

Official Statement by the Scientific and Technological Community (STC) Major Group Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019, Geneva, Switzerland

"Better data is needed for risk-informed development and science-based decision-making at all levels." This was the key message from the Scientific and Technological Community (STC) Major Group. The STC actively promotes an enhanced science base for effective disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development at global, national and local levels.

This is the concluding paragraph of the statement:

Disaster risk reduction is especially important because of its strong links with development, and the SDGs. Risk creation is the result of complex interactions between social and economic processes, and the natural environment. The conceptualisation, identification and understanding of risk therefore demands an interdisciplinary integrated approach from science, collaboration between science and

policy, and a cross-sectoral approach from government. Data exchange is a cornerstone activity for this, and has to be freed up through innovative platforms to support analysis and synthesis of risk occurrences and possible entry points for breaking risk-producing processes. By understanding and reducing risk through enhanced data, science and technology supports aligning policy for implementation of the targets of the Sendai Framework, and major global agreements as part of sustainable development.

For the full statement, visit <https://council.science/current/news/official-statement-by-the-scientific-and-technological-community-stc-major-group-global-platform-for-disaster-risk-reduction-2019-geneva-switzerland>

On the Road to the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference: Imagining the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The 2019-2020 biennium is crucial for global biodiversity governance. Despite many positive actions by Parties and stakeholders, most of the Aichi targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 are not on track to be achieved by 2020. In the absence of further significant progress, this failure will also jeopardize achievement of the SDGs and ultimately the planet's life-support systems. The international community, under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is set to review successes and failures in the context of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and negotiate a global biodiversity framework for the post-2020 era. The 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference, to be held in October 2020 in Kunming, China, will be a critical moment for environmental decision making. What steps are needed to reach a meaningful agreement? What commitments should be made and how can they be achieved? What can be done to inspire and ensure action on the ground?

The CBD is specifically discussing the following questions for their post 2020 framework:

- What should the new set of biodiversity targets look like? How can they maintain ambition while being specific and promote action on the ground? How should they align with other global targets, including the SDGs?
- How can the international community finally tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss? Are biodiversity mainstreaming and cooperation among multilateral environmental conventions the only possible options?
- What is the role of voluntary commitments for biodiversity? Should they be included in the post-2020 framework?
- What should be the place of means of implementation? How can biodiversity commitments and targets be coupled by specific commitments on finance, capacity building and technology transfer?
- What mechanisms, tools, and review mechanisms can support implementation at the national and local level?
- How can the post-2020 framework strengthen integration among the Convention and its Protocols? How can the Convention framework maintain its relevance in view of scientific developments and new technologies?
- How can the post-2020 framework integrate different worldviews, in particular those of indigenous peoples and local communities?
- How can the broader public be engaged in biodiversity governance? What is needed to catalyze societal action for biodiversity?

To read more about the history of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its plans until 2020 and beyond, visit [On the Road to the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference: Imagining the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Elsa Tsioumani, Ph.D., IISD 30 May 2019](#)

Source: On the Road to the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference: Imagining the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, by ELSA TSIUMANI, PH.D. 30 May 2019