



**TAKE  
ACTION!**

# URGENT ACTIONS FOR A MORE SECURE WORLD



**WHAT NEXT FOR THE UN?**  
*BUILDING A MORE SECURE WORLD*

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ACTIONS

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In January 2020, the London and South East Region of the United Nations Association (UNA LASER) started planning to hold a UN Day event to join in the UN Secretary-General's global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want. To ensure wide participation in this 75th anniversary year, we invited Peace Child International and UNA-UK to join us in organising this event.

We were already feeling threatened by the devastating effects of global warming. Then, as we became socially isolated in response to a pandemic, our increasing feelings of insecurity led us to try to identify actions to build a more secure world. We focused on 6 key areas of insecurity: health, food, environment, economics, peace and the digital world.

Being forced to hold the event digitally enabled us to expand the event – both in content (including contributions from all over the world) and also in time (holding a workshop every evening for a week, each focusing on a different aspect of security). We decided to consider not only the actions of global cooperation – identifying what is up to 'them' – but also how each of us can contribute in our own lives, and communities and countries to build the more secure future we want. Our [website\\*](#) included information and discussion, with blogs and dialogue following up the events. Our week-long UN75 digital festival culminated in a round table discussion, an intergenerational dialogue, a celebration of *The UN, Past, Present and Future* and a conference with feedback from the workshops, launching this *Urgent Actions for a More Secure World* Action Plan.

## COMMON THEMES

The imperative of 'bottom-up' approaches was common in Action Points from all the workshops. From the "High-Level Champion for Civil Society" and UN Youth Council proposed by the Together First Stepping Stones Report, to the Local Green New Deals, food-sharing events, local mental health provision and the proposed 'Digital UN' operating through online International Citizen Assemblies, there was considerable appetite for input by "We the Peoples" into UN deliberations.

'Digital' was a word that came up frequently in the Action Points: encouraging the use of digital technologies to support existing public services; noting the importance of educating for digital literacy; bridging the digital divide; recognising the need for protection of individuals' rights in the digital space. The proposal for a UDHR 2.0 was disputed, but there was unanimous support for action to address abusive online behaviour and to work towards a framework of digital regulations pertaining to current digital trends and threats with binding enforcement mechanisms, like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

\*Hyperlinks can be followed using the digital copy, found at [www.whatnext4un.org](http://www.whatnext4un.org)



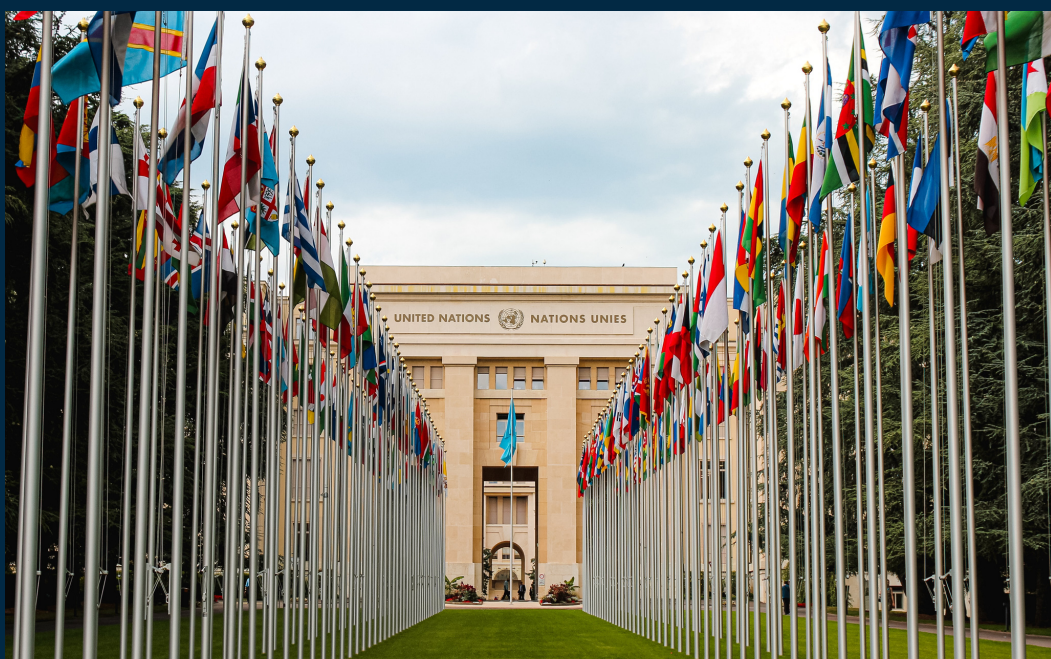
The commitment to intergenerational dialogues highlighted the importance of education about issues that will be of increasing importance in the next 75 years. The Environment Workshop illustrated the potentially powerful role of creativity in examining challenges and creating change. The Festival appealed for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to become mandatory at all levels of schooling.

We need 'joined-up thinking', recognising the links between the issues. For example food policy needs to consider health, environment and business; it needs to support sustainable food production, soil protection, healthy diets and food waste-reduction. Progress on health and food require economic security and a peaceful environment. Economic security is needed, too, for subsidies to support the transition to a green economy.

If not now, when? For all the actions it is important to identify and exploit opportunities for their implementation. Individual actions can start immediately in our daily behaviour and relationships with each other. Opportunities for community actions arise in our interactions with our many communities – education, employment, entertainment, business, faith and belief, political activities, friends, families and neighbours, membership organisations. We all share responsibility for our nation's actions through our voting, campaigning and lobbying. The lead-up to COP 26 – in Glasgow in November 2021 – provides a major opportunity for action at national and international levels.

## TAKE ACTION FOR A MORE SECURE WORLD!

Join in the discussion and help take forward actions  
for individuals, communities, nations and the UN!



# HEALTH MATTERS

## THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What have we learned from the pandemic that will help us all to improve health care?

Dame Sally Davies, our workshop chair, made it very clear:

“As the impacts of COVID-19 continue to traverse the world and a second wave moves through Europe, we have a choice to make. Will we simply respond to the ‘here and now’ or do we take a moment to stop, look up, and see beyond the horizon of this pandemic towards the next one? “Because, there will be a ‘next one’. COVID-19 is neither the first nor the last health emergency we will face. Scientists estimate that we will face a health emergency at least once every five years from here on.”

## SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Our 5 workshop panels looked at different facets of health that have been impacted by the pandemic: Health Emergencies/Pandemic Preparedness; Universal Access to Healthcare, including digital; Universal Mental Health for all; Maternal, New-born & Adolescent Healthcare; Non Communicable Diseases.

From all the panels emerged the need for governments/communities/individuals to listen, work together and learn from one another. There is no size that fits all. Planning must include ‘bottom up’ consultation, rather than being all ‘top down’. Community engagement should be prioritised, with those leading it being representative of all the community. National planning should be in place before any pandemic begins.

Policy makers should engage with communities on the communities’ priorities. Their top priorities might not always be disease prevention; they could be issues like access to food, education, or sexual health. It is important to empower communities, building up the capacities of local actors. They need the skills and the knowledge to respond to problems in their own areas, their own countries, their own communities.

They can’t always rely on the availability of international experts when they face a challenge; also, their own solutions might be more appropriate in their local context.

‘West’ is not necessarily best. We need to study how countries who have experienced earlier epidemics have learned to prepare. For instance, [this is a UNICEF plan](#) supplied by one of our panelists working for UNICEF in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Health challenges are often complex. Healthcare professionals need to work with social workers and economists.

Universal health care currently tends to over-emphasise curative work; there needs to be more investment and work preventing diseases and promoting good practice. That would optimise the results from investment in healthcare. Promotion of preventive health can use digital means – social media, other new media – as well as influencers and the networkers that are available to promote important aspects of health care.

The UN Secretary-General said the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted “the utterly inadequate health systems” around the world and he argued that universal health coverage (UHC) is essential for nations to deal with future health crises. We cannot wait till 2030.



# Actions

## INDIVIDUALS

The ability and willingness of each of us to engage in conversations and partnerships on health across generations is important. This will help break down barriers and reduce stigma. Peer education – such as on mental health, nutrition, exercise, sexual health – is powerful. Young people can be effective agents of change: for themselves, their peers and the wider community.

To improve their mental health, young people prefer talking to ‘buddies’ rather than going to hospitals. This has made the [Friendship Bench](#) (started in Zimbabwe) a highly effective community intervention. [Peer education programmes](#) in secondary schools also work well.

Each of us can use digital tools to stay healthy during a lockdown. We should each become well informed, while taking precautions to protect ourselves from the virus and building healthy lives – right now, as well as beyond the pandemic. We must take care of the people in our families and communities that might need extra help during this time.

## COMMUNITIES

Community education and health care for all must be a priority. It is important to have plans in place before a pandemic begins; and then to promote social mobilisation projects, with community engagement, ensuring representation of all sectors. Digital tools can be used to help people stay informed and prepare for healthy lives right now, as well as beyond the pandemic. We need to promote community-volunteering to care for vulnerable community members. Nutrition NHS have an excellent app and online course to promote physical activity: [Couch to 5K: A Running Course for Beginners](#).

## NATIONS

COVID-19 is a harsh reminder to all countries that investing in universal health coverage (UHC) is not an optional extra; it is the foundation of stable, prosperous and peaceful societies and economies. The COVID-19 pandemic must be a turning point for all of us; a catalyst for making UHC in all countries a reality, and not just an aspiration. The pandemic has exposed the importance of addressing social inequalities and the weaknesses of health systems in all countries. Governments need to stop dividing communities and must engage all sections of their communities. There should be transparency around significant plans that they implement with a form of feedback mechanism. Watch and learn how some non-Western countries are coping and planning. [See WHO – 7 Countries We Can All Learn From to Fight Future Pandemics](#).

## THE UN/ INTERNATIONALLY

The WHO Emergency committee urged countries to avoid politicization of the pandemic response, which was seen as a major detriment to global efforts. Nor should they let the pandemic slow their other ongoing work. What the pandemic has demonstrated is the importance of public health promotion and dealing with problems of health inequity. Using digital technologies could be a quicker and more cost-effective entry point in many developing countries. They can help civil society, patient groups and associations to increase the accessibility of primary healthcare services. Meanwhile, as anti COVID vaccines are being produced, it is imperative that these should be made available to low- and lower-middle-income countries (LLMICs). We must not jeopardise decades of economic progress – for both LLMICs and advanced economies alike.



# A FOOD AWAKENING

The UK's Global Food Security programme led the Food Security workshop, which consisted of two cross-stakeholder, multidisciplinary, intergenerational panels. The first panel discussed the global and national actions that could be taken to transform the food system to meet today's global challenges, while the second panel discussed local and individual actions. These actions had been drafted earlier by an expert working group consisting of 20 food producers, campaigners, community leaders, academics, and youth representatives. Workshop attendees were invited to contribute to the action plan and the panel discussion.

## SHIFTING TO SYSTEMS THINKING

The first theme was the recognition that food system transformation has the potential to address multiple global challenges due to its systemic nature and universal importance. The panel identified the need for 'food system thinkers', who are able to navigate the complexities and uncertainties in the food system to affect widespread systemic change. Increasing food system transparency and food system education were also identified as key strategies to bring about food system transformation - not just for consumers, but for all stakeholders in the supply chain.

## EMPOWERING MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

Another recurring theme was the importance of actively engaging and empowering marginalised communities when reshaping the food system to meet global challenges. This theme is underpinned by the recognition that problems and solutions identified by one community are not necessarily applicable in another community, as these communities may experience the food system very differently. Strategies to engage and empower marginalised groups include enabling communities to identify their own problems relating to the food system, as well as develop their own solutions.



These solutions can then be implemented through establishing community projects or the involvement of marginalised groups in the policymaking process at the local, national and international levels. Collaborative approaches to food system transformation also help to ensure that the changes made are culturally appropriate and sensitive to context, as well as being capable of highlighting and dismantling the socioeconomic and racial injustices perpetuated by the current food system.

## LISTENING TO YOUTH

The third key theme that emerged during the workshop was the need to listen to youth voices in decision-making about the future of the food system. It was stressed that youth representatives should not be invited to attend as a box-ticking exercise, but that their presence and contributions should be actively sought and valued at every level of decision making. The youth representatives also highlighted that youth experts do not need to possess an in-depth knowledge of the food system in order to challenge the status quo, and that the best way to learn about the food system was to get involved in a food movement.

## BALANCING GLOBAL AND LOCAL

The cross-stakeholder expert panels discussed the globalisation of the food system and the ideal balance between local and global food systems. Local food production systems are often considered more sustainable and fairer than globalised food production systems due to their increased transparency and the greater public awareness of externalities (such as the environmental, health and social costs). Nevertheless, many local food producers struggle to compete with the ever-increasing productivity and ever-decreasing food prices of (often large-scale) international food producers. Strategies to support local, small-scale food producers include: community-supported agriculture and consumers; consumers buying directly from food producers; and government subsidies for small-scale producers.

Although local food systems are important to address global challenges, they do not necessarily serve communities who live in the UK as a result of immigration. Acknowledging the cultural value of food, it was agreed that it is important that communities who prepare and consume traditional foods to connect with their heritage should be able to retain physical and economic access to a global food market into the future.

### BEING CAUTIOUS ABOUT 'TECHNOFIXES'

There were recurring warnings regarding the glamorisation of technological fixes to the food system (most of which are not yet fully developed or understood). Besides facilitating business-as-usual and the concentration of power in the food system, these techno-fixes are also capable of distracting attention and diverting funds from simpler methods that have already been proven to work, such as agroforestry and regenerating soil health. The focus on new technologies can also cut food system workers out of discussions about food system transformation, as workers are not deemed to play an important role in highly mechanised futures. Although technology will undoubtedly play a role in the future food system, the focus should shift to rapidly adopting and upscaling sustainable practices and behavioural changes that are known to help address global challenges.

### RECOGNISING THE ROLE OF POLITICS IN FOOD

The impacts of politics on the food system was evident during the discussion, with both panels highlighting the vital role of state support in achieving positive food system change. Various strategies were suggested, such as introducing a universal right to food, subsidising healthy, sustainable diets, and financial support for small-scale food producers. Although businesses play a key role in transforming the food system, the first panel highlighted the folly of relying on the market alone. They also discussed the role of international legislation, particularly its futility if individual nations are not enforcing them. The panel expressed a preference for providing strong incentives that support the global adoption of sustainable, healthy and just practices in the food system, instead of punishing nations that are unable to meet the desired standards.

The importance of context-sensitive food system interventions and the dangers of imposing Western-centric ideals on non-Western food systems were also raised, as well as the need repeatedly to challenge the assumption that "West is best".

## Actions

### INDIVIDUALS

1. Join a local, national or global movement/network to help fight injustices in the food system.
2. If you can, learn to cook with plant-based whole foods, utilise food 'waste', and eat seasonally.

### COMMUNITIES

1. Organise local food-sharing events to explore the cultural importance of food in the community, and collaboratively identify culturally appropriate changes that members can make to address the health-, sustainability-, and accessibility issues in the food system.
2. Establish community-led food growing, -sharing and -composting schemes.

### NATIONS

1. Establish food system education (incl. dietary health, food sustainability and food justice) as a core subject in the national curriculum.
2. Adopt a whole-government food policy framework that supports sustainable food production, healthy diets, food waste-reduction, agricultural diversification, small-scale producers, high trade standards, and a just transition for food system actors.

### THE UN / INTERNATIONALLY

1. Establish a global reward & recognition scheme to incentivise food system transparency and embed the SDGs in the food system.
2. Work with all members of civil society, particularly marginalised groups, to build a social revolution that promotes global citizenship through food.



# SAVE LIFE! GRAB THE WHEEL!

## WHY MUST WE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY?

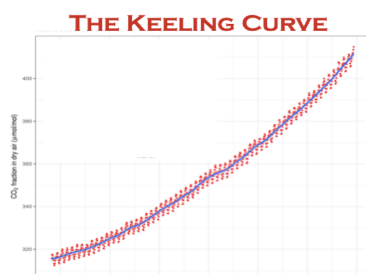
The black panels, taken from David Attenborough's Witness Statement, *A Life on our Planet*, show the destructive changes we've achieved in his lifetime. But the graph beneath shows that his lifetime is a tiny blip in the long course of human history: up to 1800, human economies were fuelled from sustainable sources. After 2100, all energy will have to come from renewable sources again as major sources of fossil fuels (oil, gas & coal) will have run out. Though it would still be possible to keep fracking and mining some fossil fuels, catastrophic climate change will have made the planet uninhabitable long before then.

## WHY DO CARBON EMISSIONS KEEP INCREASING?

Burning fossil fuels generates carbon emissions – which can be measured by carbon parts per million (ppm). Before the Industrial Revolution, the atmosphere contained 280 ppm. We are now at around 415 ppm – and show no sign of reducing that number – even though the scientists tell us we have to get it back to 350ppm. The Keeling Curve (see below) shows carbon ppm in the atmosphere over time. It shows we have a problem: the Curve has been moving inexorably upwards since records began. All the windmills, all the solar panels – everything we greens have done these last 50 years to stave off the climate emergency - have not, to date, made the slightest dent in the upward climb of the Curve.

## HOW CAN WE STOP THIS INCREASE?

Green taxes on unsustainable behaviour are an essential first step in the journey to phasing out Fossil Fuels by 2030 – or earlier if possible. We know from the experience of moving from leaded to unleaded petrol in the 1970s that raising the tax on leaded petrol, and reducing it on unleaded, quickly caused a dramatic public shift from leaded to unleaded. Green Taxes on unsustainable behaviours is necessary.



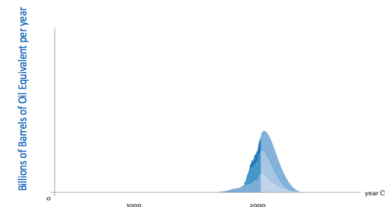
**1937**

WORLD POPULATION : 2.3 BILLION  
CARBON IN ATMOSPHERE : 280 PARTS PER MILLION  
REMAINING WILDERNESS : 66 %

**2020**

WORLD POPULATION : 7.8 BILLION  
CARBON IN ATMOSPHERE : 415 PARTS PER MILLION  
REMAINING WILDERNESS : 35 %

Global Production of Fossil Fuels: AD 0 to AD 3000



Personal Carbon Budgets (PCBs) are the next step: we need to calculate what is the average amount of carbon each human being on the planet can emit in a year to keep below the 2 degree threshold of global warming: a fairly easy calculation to make. Once we have that figure, those who wish to exceed their PCBs can buy carbon budgets off other people. This kind of green tax is a great leveller which would save the planet at the same time. Eventually, governments are going to have to make it a criminal offence to produce, sell or use fossil fuels. It's the only way to save life! Humanity has to end its addiction to oil, coal and gas.

We have to create a Green Economy: as we've seen, fossil fuels will run out by the end of this century. And long before they do, burning fossil fuels will trigger catastrophic climate change. So – we have no alternative but to make it work: it's our only hope! We shall make mistakes. But we cannot give up. Future generations depend on us making a green, sustainable economy work.

Like every other UN Member state, the UK has to present enhanced INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) at the UN Climate Summit that the UK is hosting in Glasgow in November 2021. The INDCs nations agreed at the Paris COP would give us between 3 and 4 degrees of global warming – far, far more than the planet can stand. In the UK, we have a golden opportunity to show global leadership and get all nations to deliver INDCs that will constrain global heating below 2 degrees or, better yet, below 1.5 degrees.

Greta Thunberg, Schools Strike 4 Climate, Fridays for the Future – even many adults – think that young people are the best chance we have of saving the environment. Perhaps the answer is for them to 'grab the wheel' themselves to steer humanity away from the cliff edge towards a green, sustainable society.

As Sir David Attenborough attests: "We could be a victim of the 6th Great Extinction...."

We need Education for Sustainable Development. Young people learn best through doing things. Experiential Education – like growing things, making things, selling things – embeds lessons more permanently in a child's brain than being told things in a classroom. Also, in their classrooms, children are seldom learning about the most serious threats that they will face in their lifetimes: Climate Change, Resource Depletion, how to conserve the eco-systems on which all life depends. They learn little about any of that. Nor about the Sustainable Development Goals which have to be met to secure their future. Instead, as they have put it: "You teach us about the Battle of Hastings which happened a thousand years ago – but you teach us NOTHING about the battle for survival which we are fighting right now..."

### **THIS IS THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL DECADE IN HUMAN HISTORY**

We are entering the most consequential decade in human history: by 2030, we will have made the decisions that determine whether or not humanity has a long-term future on this planet. David Attenborough powerfully explains how the 6th Mass extinction could occur in the lifetimes of young people born today. He explains that we must restore biodiversity. "Rewilding the world is simpler than you might think! And the changes that we have to make will only benefit ourselves and the generations that follow." Re-wilding, such as through Local Green New Deals – alongside education – is at the heart of the solution.

# Actions

### **INDIVIDUALS**

1. Expand the role of creativity in conservation;
2. Encourage Personal Carbon Budgets – so each individual rations their carbon emissions;
3. Encourage the creative engagement of individuals in to learn about their local environment;
4. Encourage intergenerational communication and friendships to engender long-term understanding of local micro-environments and their conservation;
5. Educate individuals to support ethical / sustainable practice by businesses, like boycotting fast fashion;
6. Lobby governments to commit to more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions ahead of the Glasgow Climate COP in 2021.

### **COMMUNITIES**

1. Create a Local Green New Deal – an umbrella community stakeholder initiative, involving local government, planners, businesses, schools, shops and community groups working together to green their community by a certain date;
2. Create local tax incentives to encourage businesses to go carbon neutral;
3. Encourage collaboration and campaigns within communities to establish and protect green spaces like orchards, parks and community gardens;
4. Engage intergenerationally with farmers to promote agro-forestry and ways of managing farms so that they nurture and protect local wildlife;
5. Encourage every community to become a Transition Community: set time-tabled goals to achieve sustainability with targets for plastic-free / carbon-free / meat-free + other targets agreed by all;
6. Incentivise imaginative initiatives by setting aside funds for community-driven green events and installations.

### **NATIONS**

1. Introduce environmental education / Education for Sustainable Development(ESD) as a core, continuous, examined component of every child's curriculum from Primary School to A-levels;
2. Create national programmes of rewilding incentivised by post-Brexit environmental grants;
3. Implement a Just and Fair Transition to a Green Economy: remove all fossil-fuel powered cars by 2030; impose punitive taxes on carbon use, and criminalise production, sale, use of Fossil Fuels by 2035;
4. Set up experiential environmental learning programmes for all young people – by, for example, monitoring biodiversity, the weather, crop yields etc. Promote accuracy in Eco-education at all levels.

### **THE UN / INTERNATIONALLY**

1. Create a "We the Peoples...." citizen-led digital UN, operating through international citizens' assemblies - addressing issues that threaten the survival and prosperity of all life on earth;
2. Recognise ecocide as an international crime under the International Criminal Court;
3. Encourage nations to phase out all pollution subsidies as quickly as possible and to use subsidies to support the movement towards a green economy.

# SECURE JOBS IN A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

## SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

People and nations around the world face myriad challenges, all needing urgent attention. While economic security is but one of these challenges, ensuring people have stable, sufficient, and predictable financial situations enables progress to be made far more easily on all the challenges. Whether the issue is health, democratic institutional resilience, peace, or digital access, the challenges are far more difficult if the population is destitute, or faces a great deal of economic uncertainty.

The most affordable and scalable intervention to promote economic security is to encourage employment growth. This allows people to stabilise their financial situation and provides self-reinforcing incentives for the broader economy to support that stability. Employed people also contribute to the economic stability of their communities, through their work, financial activities and taxes. Providing this employment is a huge challenge.

However, employment can be precarious, and thus deny employees stability. Employment can be exclusionary, and thereby deepen divisions in society. Employment can be antisocial, helping some prosper at the cost of others' wellbeing, environmental security, or even international peace. People need 'decent work'; employment needs to be sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.

## ENCOURAGING INCLUSION

The priority given to bringing job access to groups previously excluded – by gender, race, class, migration, or religion – is vital, but it is only a start to addressing the uneven access to gainful employment that creates much uncertainty and insecurity. Inclusion begins with accessible and productive education to prepare people to provide for society's needs.

## CREATING GROWTH

There are real concerns about an emphasis on growth, particularly in light of the climate change emergency. However, with the global population expected to grow by 2 billion people in the next 30 years, if there are not an additional 65 million new jobs each year, we will exacerbate an existing employment crisis for the young. The fact that global youth unemployment has currently reached 13.7% conceals marked unevenness in the distribution of jobs, with many countries having over a third of their employable young people out of work. The social problems, and long term economic issues this crisis creates will only deepen if the job growth shortfall is not addressed. Also, many jobs can actually support sustainable development.

There need to be accessible paths to financial investment, particularly for people from traditionally underprivileged groups seeking investment for new businesses. That access comes in the form of being able to secure financing on terms that are not prohibitive for the borrower. To do this, it is necessary to lower the risks that currently lead sources of financing to avoid investing in new or small-scale enterprises without charging an excessive risk premium. If the risk is not reduced but the charges are lowered, the existing shortfall in investment will get worse; the rationale for the investment must be addressed.

## RESILIENT EMPLOYMENT

Ensuring stable employment does not mean freezing economies in their present state. Attempting to prop up obsolete or counterproductive industries or enterprises out of concern for their employees ignores the loss of a positive feedback loop between capital returns, labour compensation, and community prosperity that is required for economic growth to be sustainable. Instead of subsidies for dying industries, governments should invest in people, helping to identify transferable skills and manage individuals' economic transitions.

Likewise, ignoring the climate crisis to secure existing jobs is an unacceptably short-term strategy that neglects the concerns of people who work in other sectors that will be compromised by runaway climate change. Protecting polluters will hurt farmers, fishers, and tourism, all for the sake of preserving jobs that will inevitably have to end as the globe pivots to a greener economic model.

Increasingly, albeit unfortunately late, the global community is deciding that short term economic stability is not worth magnifying climate-driven dislocation and the harms to the natural world. At that point, individual nations (and sectors) must look to their own transition risks, and begin their own process of realigning their economic activity around their international carbon-reducing commitments.



# Actions

## INDIVIDUALS

Individuals should invest in local businesses, ideally though regional/community financial markets. We should also engage with new residents of our communities, whether co-nationals, migrants, or refugees. Individuals could start new businesses and offer different levels of employment.

## COMMUNITIES

People should establish regional/community financial markets in the form of partly member-run, partly local government-owned regional stock markets that aim at helping participating small-capital ventures (members) exchange equity for capital. People should support local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) wherever possible.

## NATIONAL

Countries should implement national 'transition services' in the Swedish model, which provide those made redundant with coaching and support through sectoral job security councils. School education should include the skills and understanding necessary for people to establish and run effective small businesses. Nations should also set up a national, public and transparent ledger of all national and subnational government debt issues, contractual obligations, and revenue sharing agreements, to improve the accountability and governance around public debt. To protect the economic security of refugees, countries should reinforce their national commitments (such as in health care and education) to the UN Refugee Convention, and its 1967 Protocol.

## INTERNATIONAL

There should be a UN Convention on Pandemics that: expands the Responsibility to Protect to epidemics; provides for enforcement of national obligations to arrest communicable diseases both to its own residents and also to the people of other countries; reinforces and reforms the WHO to take the lead on proactive monitoring and intervention to preempt potential pandemics, and coordinate pandemic responses.



# LET'S BUILD PEACE!

For long-lasting improvements in issues like health, food, the economy, the environment, digital transparency, peace is vital. We use the UN's Culture of Peace Initiative to divide peace into manageable elements: Education for Peace; Sustainable Development; the Equality of Women; Human Rights; Disarmament and Security; Democratic Participation; Tolerance and Solidarity; and the Free Flow of Information. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001-2010 to be the UN Decade for the Culture of Peace.

## 1. EDUCATION FOR PEACE

### Need for capacity development

Education shapes and transforms society, playing a key role in peacebuilding. Capacity development issues for conflict prevention should aim to improve individual skills and organisational procedures, mitigating the risk of conflict. It must also assist educational planners on conflict prevention measures, ensuring they have skills and knowledge necessary for the development of curricula that reflect principles of peacebuilding, tolerance and human rights.

### Strengthening the role of youth

Education policy-makers and planners can benefit from emerging thinking on how young people learn to adapt their education and training systems as part of the technological age, and thereby help them become leaders and role models in society both within and outside school. Youth can be mobilised to contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities with different groups of students, acting as mentors and mediators to younger children and peers, participating in intra-community projects, especially in sensitive areas, and humanitarian and emergency aid, taking on electoral responsibilities, and managing cultural of peace centres.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Security Council: an obstacle

The UN Security Council's delay in supporting the Secretary-General's call for a Global Ceasefire shocked all, especially as UNICEF reported 250 million children were caught in the armed conflict.

The UN's 70-years old Uniting for Peace resolution, first used in 1950 when the Security Council failed to act, allows the General Assembly to take over in such cases and 'use all means to maintain international peace and security'. Further use of the Uniting for Peace option could make it clear to the five permanent member states that they should reform - or get out of the way.

### Smart Sustainable Cities

By 2050, 70% of us will live in cities; the Smart Sustainable Cities project offers an effective solution to the world's growing urban population. By integrating technology with sustainable management strategies to use resources more efficiently, we help the environment in a holistic way, from improving waste management to optimising traffic flow and sanitation systems. This resonates with the UN's SDGs, and with civic leadership, secures an important condition for the Culture of Peace Initiative.

## 3. EQUALITY OF WOMEN

### Women on the front foot

Whereas the UN's challenge had traditionally been the protection of women, it agreed in 2000 to bring women to the forefront in overcoming the challenges to peace, especially in peacekeeping. In 1993, women made up 1% of UN peacekeepers, now 6%, and 10% in UN police but for 2028, it plans to raise this to 15%, with 20% in police units. To expedite this, the UN will bring in better recruitment, retention and training and provide better accommodation, sanitation, health care and protective equipment.

### Women on the front line

These initiatives help women in the communities where UN peacekeepers are deployed. The claim, once thought as extravagant, that 'There is no sustainable peace without the full and equal participation of women' is now accepted. In Sudan, it was brave women who were the driving force in the protest movement. In African SADC states, 50% of election candidates must be women. Women leaders in African states are true game changers. We must support them.

## 4. HUMAN RIGHTS

### Support the UN Peacebuilding Commission

Early operationalising of pre-emptive conflict prevention can work towards an ideal environment of 'Positive Peace' in which elevated economic and societal outcomes, paired with a diminished number of grievances, lower levels of violence and the will to resort to it. Positive peace is a society free from the structural problems that would lead its citizens to resort to violent actions.

Expand Accountability Mechanisms to Defend International Human Rights Through building on initiatives such as the Responsibility to Protect, UN member states must commit to upholding human rights standards, initiate unanimous international responses when violations begin to occur, and cultivate a normative shift towards a culture that rejects human rights violations and resort to conflict as viable options.

## 5. DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

### Support the #ICANSAVE My City campaign

By happy chance, UN Day witnessed the ratification of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and was welcomed by many. The most effective support for this is through the #ICANSAVE MY CITY campaign started by ICAN which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Using social media, all should campaign for their own city to join the programme Lethal Autonomous Weapons (killer robots) Young people should support initiatives like Pugwash, currently organising an ethical science festival for young people and extending their mission beyond nuclear weapons to tomorrow's horror weapon, the killer robot. University UN societies across the country could lead workshops for younger people in the surrounding areas.

## 6. DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

### Youth involvement

More than ever before, the UN seeks to link with today's youth. Research shows that the young and those in developing countries are more optimistic about the future than their elders. And yet, new surveys report young people in the USA, UK and Australia questioning the value of democracy. In response, we must ensure youth is represented even in the highest fora, starting with a UN Youth Council, despite local and national cultural obstructionism.

### Listening to minorities

The Black Lives Matter initiative challenges everyone to review their perceptions of others.

### Communities link up worldwide

The Open Government Partnership linking governments and civil society in 78 countries encourages rich and poor to showcase successful case studies and identify 'bright lights': those communities which are exemplars of reform. More voices, more progress.



## 7. TOLERANCE AND SOLIDARITY

### Tolerance

Tolerance is an important peacemaker. This involves not the indifference we sometime show another, but rather curiosity in the other, a desire to understand the other side of the argument. Be the first to try to understand the other person!

### Solidarity

When the UN was founded, all had lived through a pandemic, a global depression, genocide and world war. They knew all about solidarity. How do we rate? Some countries took months to show such solidarity in joining the COVAX programme even though 'vacci-nationalism' is not only unfair, but self-defeating. In preparing for the next pandemic, let's show the same solidarity as shown in 1945!

## 8. FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

### Sharing best practice

Firstly, many feel that there has been too much attention focused on how the media conducts its reports on conflict management rather than examining how well it reports on those processes which are important, such as community peacebuilding and state-building institutions. To generate more effective media development in post-conflict environments, especially where internet access is poor, media-military dialogues can help to build trust and understanding between these two sectors and beyond, to the communities they serve.

### Media regulatory reform

This should play a role in political settlements in fragile states. The regulatory framework should accommodate proportionate political coverage of parties and mechanisms to include minority political and cultural interests. There must be clarity in setting guidelines for licences to accommodate all media actors, including the small and independent.

# THE DIGITAL FUTURE WE WANT

## WHAT DOES 'DIGITAL SECURITY' MEAN TO YOU?

Context and background are important when discussing issues of security. Our perceptions of security are different. At our workshop in October 2020, we illustrated this with an [introductory video](#) of cases we had collected from around the world that we called What does digital security mean to you?

Just like other issues that were discussed during the week – peace, food, environment, economics, health – digital security must be examined through an intersectional lens. Past generations have sought solutions to immediate problems, using the same method and logic for all of them; we know this cannot work. For some people, digital security refers to the right to privacy and the knowledge that private information is not being made available without consent. This is a western-centric problem as we seek to see our rights enforced by judicial institutions that were designed for this kind of challenge. For others, digital security is the most basic right to express oneself online without fearing negative repercussions, such as revenge porn, surveillance, harassment, violence, arrest. These kinds of concerns are predominant in countries which lack independent judicial institutions which will protect citizens and their right to free speech when expressing themselves online. For some, digital security refers to a safe, free, and accessible platform; for others, it is the idea that we should have the same kind of access as anyone else, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, economic background.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

This breakout room focused on abuse and human rights, like the ones we find offline. Perhaps abuse, racism, sexism, hatred are more prominent online, especially as certain public figures have appeared to legitimize this discourse.

The physical separation between the abuser and the abused can mean humanity is taken out of the equation and the damage being done is not measured in the moment and might never even come to light. [Yasmine Quirhrane](#) – an activist who deals with women's rights and religious rights – spoke about the hatred and abuse she faces online for being a Muslim woman and for speaking out against racism and bigotry. This leads to the major question of who is responsible for monitoring this kind of behaviour. [Bishakha Datta](#) – also an activist – is worried about some of her personal information being leaked or falling into the wrong hands.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fast being integrated into large parts of our daily lives. Used to predict scenarios, AI is equipped with machine-learning technology whereby the machine can learn and adjust to different scenarios. How it learns will depend on the variables it is given. [Joy Buolamwini](#) has explained how the lack of diversity in design teams is leading to human bias being integrated into the machines.

## TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

This breakout session focused on the relationship between users and the technology. Transparency requires information to be freely available and understandable for users. Most countries do not give information to users regarding the use of their personal data by the government or by private companies. This means that there is no regulation and no protection. For example, in Egypt or Venezuela the regimes routinely use technology to spy on and detain activists. The only existing piece of regulatory legislation of its kind in the world, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), is not designed in a manner that is comprehensible and understandable by most people.

The use of the internet and online platforms overwhelmingly comes without any kind of subscription price. The most important social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. – are free. Nevertheless, some of the wealthiest companies in the world are now technology platforms. They are indeed businesses and we must ask ourselves then, how do they make their money? The business plan is quite simple.



The currency that many platforms rely on today is data, which can only be acquired through users and through them accepting that their data be used for various monetization purposes like advertising. Users are in fact not the 'customers' of these business, they are the 'commodity' being sold. Most of the money made by these companies come from third-party businesses who pay for analytics and data produced by technology platforms and allow for personalised content and targeted content to be presented to users. Although some states are beginning to take a close look at these issues (the EU through the GDPR) by and large there is no consensus amongst states that international law can apply to the cyberspace, thus rendering some companies immune to international regulations and in some cases to national legislation. Is it possible to design technology with integrated protection against exploitation? Could there be consensus amongst states on how to regulate tech companies?

Online platforms become echo chambers of false information – such as that divulged by different political parties to delegitimise their opponents or by foreign entities which seek to interference in politics – so verification becomes difficult.

### **CYBER-SECURITY**

This breakout session focussed on the criminal activities that might take place online and affect users directly. Many fear that our technology might be hacked or infiltrated by third parties; regulation to limit this kind of activity is not usually adequate. Furthermore, some states' internal laws might be used to exploit our technology itself; this can take the form of surveillance and invasion of privacy.

Most companies do not want to take responsibility for the possible criminal or bad activities that take place on their platforms, as that would open them to intermediate liability, making them vulnerable to lawsuits based on what is being said or done through their platforms. One cannot rely on governments to implement meaningful regulation on tech companies, as these companies often contribute massively to a country's wealth, or they have power superior to that of their state. This is where the need for an international consensus becomes paramount.

There is also a user responsibility to educate and raise awareness with regards to the dangers of using online platforms, teaching people how to be responsible online. Young people need to be educated in 'Digital Hygiene', learning how safely to navigate the online space.

## **Actions**

### **INDIVIDUALS**

1. Raise awareness through education on digital hygiene, thus promoting 'digital literacy';
2. Be firm in what they demand, and hold their local representatives to account for this;
3. Push for a multi-stakeholder framework for digital regulation in their states.

### **COMMUNITIES**

1. Lobby governments to engage in the implementation of frameworks (such as GDPR in the EU) that will protect users and create better enforcement mechanisms;
2. Lobby for the implementation of education on the dangers of AI and the use of their data;
3. Address abusive online behaviour (racist, sexism hate speech, misinformation), with reporting mechanisms for abuse in digital spaces.

### **NATIONS**

1. Share best practices through capacity building amongst nations and empower international organisations through funding to build a safe and secure global digital architecture while bridging the digital divide;
2. Hold companies housed on their territory to account, implementing regulations to prevent Big Tech from becoming monopolies and more powerful than States;
3. Work towards a universally accepted normative framework on digital regulations and commit to providing binding enforcement mechanisms.

### **THE UN / INTERNATIONALLY**

1. Continue to provide expertise and funding through programmes pertaining to current digital trends & threats and dedicate more resources and means to Special Rapporteurs on digital issues (such as privacy, human rights, promotion of the right to freedom of opinion and expression);
2. Build the pathway/structure for a multi stakeholder approach in addressing digital issues;
3. Update our human rights to include proper and necessary digital human rights: UDHR 2.0.



# ACTIONS

## As INDIVIDUALS, we should:

1. Share solutions to problems with our local communities (such as Zimbabwe friendship benches to address depression) and voice our priorities to decision-makers;
2. Know our (and others') human rights - such as for healthcare - and how to lobby for them with decision makers;
3. Join local, national or global movements to help fight injustices (such as in the food system or in fast fashion)
4. Decide what it is important to us to demand (such as a framework for digital regulation) and join with others to achieve it, holding the powerful to account;
5. Whenever involved in negotiations, seek to ensure clear understanding of each other's positions;
6. Lobby our representatives (like MPs and Ministers) to commit to ambitious international actions (such as: supporting Countdown to Midnight to ensure more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions ahead of the Glasgow Climate COP in 2021; and engaging in the implementation of frameworks such as GDPR in the EU that will protect users);
7. Learn to cook with plant-based whole foods, utilise food 'waste', and eat seasonally;
8. Adopt Personal Carbon Budgets – whereby we each individually ration our carbon emissions;
9. Support and Invest in local businesses and support ethical trading.

## COMMUNITIES should:

1. Share best practice with other communities (such as in normalising and addressing mental health needs) and learn what works for others;
2. Recognise the needs of diverse populations (such as in education and healthcare); and how to meet them (such as in types of jobs and the employment support needed);
3. Encourage imaginative initiatives, by setting aside funds for community events, protecting green spaces and solutions (such as for environmental issues);
4. Work together to address urgent local issues (such as creating Local Green New Deals to green communities by a certain date). This could include local government, planners, businesses, schools, shops and other community groups;
5. Respond to coordinated activity – led, for example, by local politicians or university students – by joining key campaigns (such as the #ICANSAVE My City campaign, moving public opinion towards support for the ratification of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons);
6. Organise local food-sharing events to explore the cultural importance of food in the community, and collaboratively identify culturally appropriate changes that members can make to address the food system's wider issues in health, sustainability, and accessibility;
7. Reduce carbon emissions and work towards going carbon-neutral (such as for local institutions and businesses);

# ACTION PLAN

8. Give local support to agro-forestry and farms to help them nurture and protect wildlife;

9. Become a Transition Community, and set goals for the community to achieve sustainability within a milestone time table (such as for growing, sharing and composting food);

10. Establish local financial markets that are community owned;

11. Mobilise the private sector to do the work (such as raising capital) governments are failing to do to create integration;

12. Address abusive online behaviour (such as racism, sexism hate speech, misinformation), implementing reporting mechanisms over these issues in the digital spaces.

## **NATIONS should:**

1. Contribute to – and learn from – the sharing of best practices and capacity-building (such as in health care and food policies) between nations;

2. Invest in equitable public services (such as in health and education systems) and think long-term, ensuring that minorities are fully represented in all civic reviews;

3. Use digital technology to support rather than replace existing public services (such as health services);

4. Ensure that education systems include, in their core, key contemporary challenges (such as in: physical and mental health, food systems, dietary health, ESD, digital literacy including the dangers of Artificial Intelligence and the misuse of data);

5. Set up a national, public and transparent ledger of all national and subnational government debt issues, contractual obligations, and revenue-sharing agreements, to improve the accountability and governance around public debt;

6. Hold companies operating on their territory to account by making and implementing regulations to keep Big Tech from becoming over-powerful monopolies;

7. Reinforce and restate national commitment (such as in health care and education) to the UN Refugee Convention, and its 1967 Protocol;

8. Encourage city leaders in richer countries to embrace the Smart Sustainable Cities project and similar initiatives and to share their experience with disadvantaged cities;

9. Adopt a whole-government food policy framework that supports sustainable food production, healthy diets, food waste-reduction, agricultural diversification, small-scale producers, high trade standards, and a just transition for food system actors;

10. Create national programmes of rewilding (incentivised by environmental grants);

11. Implement a 'Just and Fair Transition to a Green Economy' (using subsidies and phasing out all non-green subsidies): establish plans to remove all fossil-fuel powered cars from our roads by 2030; impose punitive taxes on carbon emissions; and penalise the production, sale, and use of fossil fuels by 2035;

# ACTION PLAN

12. Implement a national 'transition service' in the Swedish model, which provides – to those made redundant – coaching and support through sectoral job security councils;

13. Include women in all conflict resolution and civic management training programmes, as they have shown they are 'forces for peace';

14. Work towards a universally accepted normative framework concerning digital regulations and commit to providing binding enforcement mechanisms.

## **INTERNATIONAL organisations, led by the UNITED NATIONS, should:**

1. Identify and seek to combat root causes of problems globally (such as the causes of ill health);

2. Encourage projects (such as in health) to be community-led;

3. Establish global reward and recognition schemes to incentivise change and embed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in economic systems (such as the food system);

4. For issues requiring social transformation (such as food production, distribution and use), work with all members of society, particularly marginalised groups, to promote shared ownership and responsibility;

5. Building on widespread education on global challenges and possible solutions, create a citizen-led, digital UN, operating through international citizens' assemblies, giving a voice to the voiceless;

6. Ensure youth is represented even in the highest fora, despite local and national cultural obstacles;

7. Provide expertise and funding, using multi-stakeholder approaches, to tackle new and emerging issues (such as creating safe and secure global digital architecture while bridging the digital divide);

8. Recognise ecocide as an international crime, especially in view of the vital need to protect forests, oceans and air quality;

9. Agree a UN Convention on Pandemics, that:

a. expands the Responsibility to Protect to cover epidemics;

b. obliges each nation to try to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (to safeguard its own residents, as well as the populations of other countries);

c. reinforces and reforms the WHO to provide it with tools to lead on proactive monitoring and intervention to halt potential pandemics, as well as to coordinate pandemic responses;

10. Encourage nations to raise awareness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding in education institutions and other civic society settings, with negotiators (international and inter-personal) demonstrating evidence of their understanding of each other's position;

11. Encourage media regulatory reform where it promotes post-conflict peace settlements and their implementation, and which denies access to those using the media for non-inclusive factionalism.

# USEFUL LINKS

## **WHAT NEXT FOR THE UN? *Building a More secure World:***

Actions, Festival videos, Blogs, Discussion

### **Health Security**

World Health Organisation (WHO);

### **Food Security**

World Food Programme; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

### **Environmental Security**

UN Environmental Programme; COP 26;

### **Economics Security**

International Labour Organisation;

### **Peace and Security**

UN Peacekeeping; UN Security Council; UNESCO Culture of Peace

### **Digital Security**

Rights-Based Internet Policy; Secretary-General's Digital Roadmap

### **General**

Security Development Goals; Education for Sustainable Development;  
Smart, Sustainable Cities

## **Short Videos on each of the topics used at the conference:**

### **Health Security**

WHO Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19;.

### **Food Security**

The State of Food Security (FAO);.

### **Environmental Security**

Climate Change – Make a World of Difference (UN Stories);.

### **Economic Security**

Green jobs, the key to sustainable development (ILO);.

### **Peace and Security**

Action 4 Peacekeeping (UN Peacekeeping);.

### **Digital Security**

Information and Communication Technology for Development (UNCTAD).



Peace Child International  
empowering young people

