

24th April 2013

Rio+20: Report on Intergenerational Solidarity and Future Generations

Dear Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

We are writing on behalf of representatives of four Major Groups who all support the establishment of a UN High Commissioner or Ombudsperson for Future Generations. We look to the report on intergenerational solidarity and future generations (para 86 of 'The Future We Want') as a key tool to ensure that intergenerational equity becomes an integral part of UN policy making processes. We would like to take this opportunity to share our views on the scale of the ambition required from the report to help guide the UN and its Member States to create fair conditions for all future generations.

The call made at Rio+20 for the report shows there is a clear need to increase awareness on intergenerational justice and equity and methods to embed long-term thinking in decision-making and across governance structures and systems. We trust that the report will help to identify practical and implementable models to do this.

For sustained human and environmental wellbeing, Ombudspersons for Future Generations have proven very effective in introducing a long term perspective into policy making, linking citizens with governments, and working as a catalyst for sustainable development implementation. At the UN level, a High Level Representative for Future Generations would not be a spokesperson for youth and related issues, but would facilitate a broader discourse to identify common interests of present and future generations. Research highlights the important contributions made by national Ombudspersons or Commissioners already working in several countries: and we trust the report will reflect this.

The lack of precedent for this position at the international level should not limit ambition. A defined role, supported by a small staff can help inform UN institutions and procedures to better engage and apply long term thinking, strengthening programmes and policies to promote inclusive, sustainable human development for current *and* future generations.

Rather than expecting existing staff and processes to include this agenda, we are convinced that greater impact can be achieved through a designated body, with a dedicated mandate and expertise, to bring immediacy and focus. An independent, high level representative with the mandate to work with Member States will be more able to catalyse reflection and meaningful commitments that can reach beyond the short term, as well as provide early warnings about challenges and solutions for their redress.

To secure governance for the long term, the report should propose to:

- Introduce an institution which serves to protect the wellbeing of future generations at the UN level.

- Highlight the value of existing institutional models at the national level which best serve to protect the wellbeing of future generations.

Finally, for a robust and constructive report, we respectfully request that a full consultation process should be held to profit from the valuable expertise and perspective of civil society on this issue.

On behalf of the undersigned organisations,

Yours sincerely



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Founder & Chair
World Future Council

Lalanath de Silva, Director, The Access Initiative

Anna Watson, Coordinating Group, Alliance for Future Generations
(Capacity Global, Climate Outreach and Information Network, Compass, Environmental Law Foundation, Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development, Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland, Gaia Foundation, Intergenerational Foundation, Involve, Peace Child International, Public Interest Research Centre, Schumacher Institute, Stakeholder Forum, Think 2050, UK Youth Climate Coalition, World Future Council, WWF-UK.

For individual members see: <http://www.allianceforfuturegenerations.org/our-members/>

Leida Rijnhout, Executive Director, ANPED - Northern Alliance for Sustainability

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World Future Council



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International Federation
For children, their rights
and equitable development

The Access Initiative



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for women



Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development



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