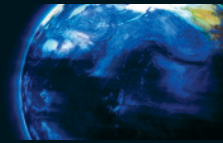




CAUX CALL TO ACTION 2010



Once in every few generations comes a moment when the world has to choose between major transformation or clinging to the status quo.

We – people of many backgrounds, countries and continents – believe that humanity stands at just such a tipping point. Such moments don't last long. If this chance of breakthrough is not seized, breakdown will surely follow.

Breathtaking advances in communications, science and – above all – in understanding have put an equitable, just and sustainable civilization within our reach. For the first time there is the technological, social and economic capacity to meet everyone's needs, and enable all to live fulfilled lives.

Yet, on its present course, the world is heading for growing suffering and eventual catastrophe as the climate irreversibly changes, agriculture is disrupted, hunger and division intensify, arms spending escalates and nuclear weapons proliferate. The economics of greed and the politics of self-interest and domination have disillusioned and disempowered people worldwide, brought us to the brink of ethical and financial bankruptcy, and threaten to drag us into increasing conflict and oppression.

We are concerned that the world's political establishments are failing to grasp both the urgency of the threat and the potential of the opportunity. But great changes for the good are brought about by movements of conscience and concern, such as ended the slave trade, fought for universal suffrage, and rolled back centuries of colonialism.

Our generation faces even greater challenges, but also has an unprecedented chance to make common cause to remake the world. In particular we need to address:

Poverty. Inequality and poverty are increasing both within and between countries. Inequality fosters crime, violence, disease and other social ills, while growing consumption in the wealthy countries does not increase happiness or overcome social divisions. Humanity has the capital and knowledge to ensure that everyone has enough. Economically enfranchising the poor will boost well-being worldwide.

Hunger. After falling in the 1990s, the number of hungry people has risen to more than a billion. Yet in most wealthy countries obesity has become an epidemic, and up to half the food purchased is thrown away. Enough is produced each year to feed everyone on earth well. Increasing production through sustainable agriculture – which restores soil and conserves water – can ensure that this continues to be the case.

Climate Change. The planet is warming fast, and rising sea levels and shifting rainfall will drive millions of people from their homes, slash harvests and disrupt societies. Yet the clean technologies needed to combat it already exist. Developing them will do much to produce the sustainable growth required to ensure a future of low carbon prosperity.

Resource depletion. Over-exploiting land, water, fisheries, forests and other natural resources will result in scarcity and growing conflict – and this threatens to get worse as the population rises to nine billion over the next few decades. Just an eighth of global defence spending would provide massively enlarged programmes to reduce poverty, pollution and population growth, protect biodiversity, plant trees, rebuild soils, restore fisheries, protect forests and stabilize water tables as we reorder our relationships with each other and nature.

War and conflict. After a short decline at the end of the Cold War, world arms spending is rising rapidly, encouraged by deeply entrenched vested interests. There must be a new determination to resolve conflict, especially in the Middle East. Reconciliation and justice are interdependent. We must genuinely commit to human rights for all and address injustice and oppression, enabling us steadily to reduce arms spending and progressively to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Many thousands of people have worked tirelessly to meet these challenges, achieving great things. But, between us, we have yet to generate the critical mass required for a decisive change of direction. A world wide coalition of people of conscience is urgently needed to unite all our efforts and multiply our effectiveness.

This has to start with ourselves. Each of us can generate change in our own lives and lifestyles. But we must not stop there. By banding together with other people and organizations, we can effect transformations locally, nationally and globally. We owe this to each other and to the future generations who will reap what we sow.

We therefore commit ourselves to living the change we long for, listening to conscience, working with integrity and generosity, and drawing on the strengths of our cultures and faiths. Recognizing that individual action is not enough, we dedicate ourselves to help build a movement of people to bring about the global transformation that is so desperately needed.



www.cauxcalltoaction.net



On 16 July 2010 this statement was supported by the Caux Forum for Human Security, an annual gathering of 300 people from across the world who are active in human security held in the Swiss alpine village of Caux. A Steering Council, chaired by Clare Short (formerly UK Secretary of State for International Development), was formed in September 2010 to translate this text into streams of action.



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