

## **Towards Rio + 20 and Beyond – A Turning Point in Earth History – Summary Statement\***

As leaders, teachers, and students of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, we are appalled that the interconnected problems of development, equity and ecology have become more severe over the past twenty years.

Many of the dangerous trends we are witnessing are a result of our current, unsustainable, growth-based economic paradigm. We urgently need to change current mindsets towards a sharp focus on the goals of material sufficiency, the eradication of poverty, equitable distribution, and sustainable wellbeing and human happiness.

We, who represent such a broad diversity of religious and spiritual expressions, commit to the following:

- We repent where our traditions and organizations have failed to work for true equality of all people, and have supported the destruction of the environment.
- We embrace with joy the opportunity to forge a global interreligious, tribal and indigenous, intercultural and intergenerational partnership to bring about the fundamental changes that are necessary in our values, life styles, and economic structures for advancing the Great Transition to a world of justice, sustainability, and peace.
- For humanity to live peacefully we commit to take action for justice to prevail. Our spirituality inspires us to act in solidarity with those in need and the most vulnerable who are disproportionately affected by climate change while having contributed little to its causes.
- We recognize that “business as usual” threatens the survival of humans and many species and commit to work collaboratively towards the creation of a new economy that flourishes within the natural bounds of our planet and serves human happiness and well-being that comes from living life in harmony with the natural world, with our communities, and with our inner selves.
- Our religious and spiritual traditions command us not only to feed the hungry, but to give of our own bread. This is not a deed of charity but of justice. We therefore call upon each citizen of the world community to pledge each year to our capacity an extra Millennium Share of 0.1 % of one's income to raise the necessary funds to alleviate abject misery and realize the Millennium Development Goals. We commit to support the creation of a Council of Conscience of esteemed men and women to administer this fund.

We urge the representatives of all governments to:

- Show courageous leadership in addressing the major global challenges that threaten the very survival of humanity on this planet. This desires their highest priorities.
- Accept the fundamental importance of shared ethical and spiritual values as expressed in the Earth Charter, the Charter for Compassion as well as the Uppsala Interfaith Climate Manifesto in creating a green economy and making the transition to a sustainable way of life.
- Create a green economy that ensures social justice and equity and supports the common good of all and not just a few, protects the ecological balance and creates economic sufficiency by internalizing social and environmental costs into the economic bottom line.
- Adopt alternative economic indicators to GDP that fortunately have been emerging that include social well-being and ecological, ethical, moral and cultural integrity such as Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Paradigm.
- Build structures of sustainable development governance that increase the capacity of governments to guarantee the right to food and proper nutrition, the right to safe and clean drinking water, the right to development and to a healthy environment and protects common goods such as water and land from privatization and commoditization. Governments and multinational corporations must be held accountable for their activities.

This is a solemn moment of global decision making. The Rio + 20 Conference provides a historic opportunity to lead the world into a more sustainable future. We do not have another twenty years to lose. To move forward in our best interests and even more in the interests of those yet to be born, we must fundamentally change the concepts that underlie our negotiation practices and realize that only together can we forge inclusive solutions.

Humble in the consciousness that the consequences of our decisions and actions will be felt by many generations to come, we turn to the Source of All Blessings for strength and courage. May our children, and our children's children take pride in our actions.

*\*summary statement revised and adopted at the Wings for Rio + 20 Leadership Forum in The Hague on May 2. The longer version of the statement can be downloaded at [www.soetendorpinstitute.org](http://www.soetendorpinstitute.org)*

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