



Fighting Climate Change: Human solidarity in a divided world

A young people's summary of the United Nations Human Development Report 2007/2008



Two DEGREES

OF SEPARATION
BETWEEN HOPE AND DESPAIR

By young people of the world



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We thought long and hard about the title for this booklet. It had to be striking in order to be heard above the familiar drones of climate change dialogue.

We eventually decided on the title, 'Two degrees of separation: between hope and despair' because we want to give the reader a tangible threshold and a clear choice between two distinct options.

The debate over the threshold for dangerous climate change is ongoing. However, the Human Development Report 2007/2008 states that we will encounter dangerous climate change if the earth's temperature rises more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. If we carry on as we are, the world is actually more likely to exceed a 5°C threshold. This would dramatically increase the likelihood of catastrophic outcomes.

Scientific debates will continue, but the decision we must make between two outcomes, hope and despair, simply will not be postponed.



Katherine Mead, UK

WE KNOW
the danger exists.

WE KNOW
the damage caused by
greenhouse gas emissions
is irreversible.

WE KNOW
it is growing with every
day of inaction.

Kemal Derviş
UNDP Administrator
and

Achim Steiner
Executive Director, UNEP

“We have to stop treating the earth’s atmosphere as though it is a free resource and we have to stop treating CO₂ emissions as though they don’t have a cost attached. They do have a very high cost attached for humanity as a whole. The Human Development Report is not a council of despair but a call to action to the world’s richest countries. In my view playing Russian roulette with the lives of the world’s poorest people and the future of the planet is not a smart game to play.”

Kevin Watkins, Lead Author,
Human Development Report 2007/2008

United Nations foreword

I welcome this summary, created by youth, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) 2007/2008. Though the science of climate change is infinitely complex, the facts are simple: our world is heading towards catastrophic climate change. I saw this last year when I visited the Antarctic, where the age-old ice is melting much faster than we originally thought. While I was there, I learned how the Larsen ice-shelf – 87 km long – broke off and vanished in less than three weeks. If the entire West Antarctic Ice Sheet breaks up in this way, sea levels would rise by 6 metres. Unless we make some radical changes in the way we live our lives, by the time you – the youth of 2008 – reach my age, the world will have become a fairly inhospitable place to live.

Youth must help us make those radical changes in two ways. First, you can take a full and active part in the decision-making of your local, regional and national Governments – by lobbying and voting for candidates who promise to pass far-reaching legislation to combat climate change. Second, by making low-carbon lifestyles and career choices a priority in your lives.

Addiction is a terrible thing. It consumes and controls us, makes us deny important truths and blinds us to the consequences of our actions. Our world is in the grip of a dangerous addiction to fossil fuels. This addiction should not surprise us: coal and oil paved the way for the developed world's industrial progress and are the foundation for the comfort and prosperity some of us enjoy today. But this fossil fuel addiction cannot continue to deliver the same comfort and prosperity to your generation, or the billions who do not currently enjoy it. Mother Nature's one-time gift of fossil fuels will run out – most of it in your lifetimes.

So, finding alternative energy sources will become an imperative for your generation. Handled correctly, such a transition to green economics could be extremely lucrative for you. Green growth will create new jobs, as global investment in zero-greenhouse gas energy surges to US\$1.9 trillion by 2020, based on UN estimates. These investments are the seed money for a wholesale reconfiguration of global industry.

I hope you will read these pages with hope in your hearts, and see them as your signposts to a safer, more sustainable future. It will be those who take action to promote low-carbon development, particularly in the world's least developed countries, who will be the beneficiaries of the massive changes you will see in the world economy in your lifetimes. Start today!



Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations



Matthias Schmidt, Germany

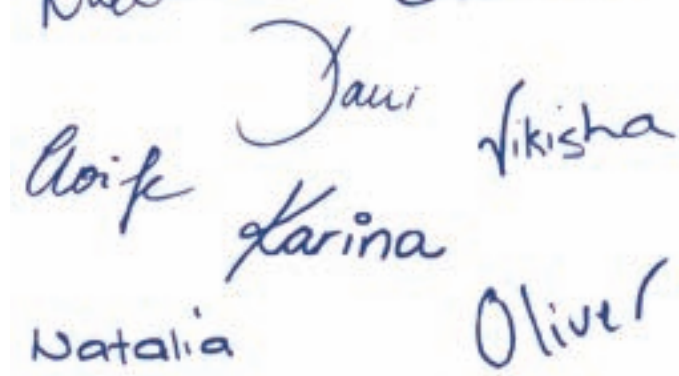
Deep in the bowels of Peace Child International's White House headquarters, in a small town in rural England we gathered. Plucked from the four corners of the globe to create a youth summary of the UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) on Climate Change 2007/2008, 'Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world'. How to condense these 400 pages? How to give voice to the hundreds of young people who contributed with visions, stories, artwork, poetry and commentary? How to rise above the white noise and offer a meaningful contribution to the debate?

to England, we have also accumulated hundreds of submissions from young people strewn across the globe. They eagerly commented, criticised and created throughout the process to produce the booklet you now hold!

In the middle of this century, the readers of this book will no longer be young – you and I will be old and grey and full of sleep. Where would you want to live then? Would you, seated by the fire, nod in agreement when your grandchildren ask whether you did anything to reduce your carbon footprint?

We hope the call to take action against climate change will be heard in every continent, every country, city and town and in every family. We can change our today, little by little, person by person and with that obtain a more sustainable tomorrow for coming generations.

As early as 1987, dire warning signals about the progressive warming of the earth were sent out. More than two decades later, little action has been taken. Now, as the world starts to rise from slumber, we realise that our Mother Earth is in big trouble.



Our booklet has truly been created for youth and by youth. Along with the contributions of the editors who travelled



Youth Foreword

Matthias Schmidt, Germany

Climate change: living in an experiment never before conducted

Why is the temperature rising?

Greenhouse gases are emitted when fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas are burned. Increased industrial activity since the mid eighteenth century has meant a rapid build-up of carbon dioxide (CO₂), mixed with methane and nitrous oxide. These gases combine to form a layer in the atmosphere that stops heat escaping. Instead, warmth is reflected back to earth causing the temperature to rise. Scientists recently agreed that there is a 90 percent likelihood that most of the current warming is indeed due to greenhouse gases generated by human activity.

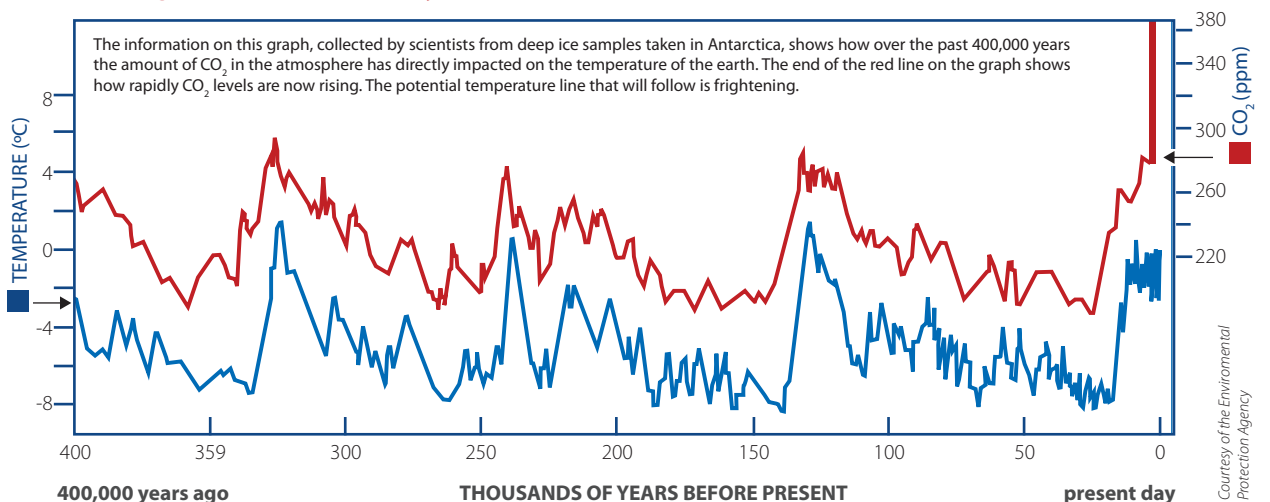
Why 2°C?

The debate continues over exactly how high the temperature can rise before the situation becomes catastrophic. According to the HDR, if we wish to avoid disastrous climate change then we must not allow temperatures to rise more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. This means that we must stabilise the levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere at 450 ppm (parts per million).



Andrea Davidson, Canada

Changes in carbon dioxide and temperature during the last 400,000 years



It's getting hot in here!



Temperatures over the past half century have probably been the highest of any 50 year period for the past 1,300 years



The world is now at or near the warmest level on record in the current interglacial period, which began about 12,000 years ago



Eleven of the twelve warmest years since 1850 occurred between 1995 and 2006

What is climate change?

Climate change is an alteration of the earth's general weather conditions. The most prominent change is the rising temperature of the earth's surface.

'Climate change' has become such a familiar term that we are just not hearing the alarm bells that we should. To many, it's just an empty phrase referring to a vague crisis far removed from us in space and time. However, climate change is a grave reality and the biggest challenge to face our generation.

Causes



increase in CO₂ levels



deforestation

Impacts



rise in sea levels



increase in surface temperatures



drought



flooding and adverse effects on atmosphere and precipitation

Consequences



health and education suffer



extinction of species and other ecological damages



agricultural losses



depletion of water supplies



economy suffers

What is human development?

Climate change threats
To human development:

Creating choices to be the best we can be

Human development is about **creating a world** where **all human beings** have the **opportunity** to **fulfil their potential** and lead a **healthy and happy life**.

There are certain basic things that we each need in order to develop, such as **adequate nutrition, education** and access to a **decent standard of living**. Unfortunately, many of the world's poor are already denied these.

"The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives."

Mahbub Ul Haq, Founder of the Human Development Report

In the past, development was measured purely in economic terms, but the concept of human development encompasses so much more than financial status. Nutrition, education and a decent standard of living are all essential to the concept.

The HDR details the disastrous results that climate change would have for human development. It also sets out what we, as a human family, must do in the face of this challenge.

Not only does climate change have the potential to prevent us from progressing as a human family, it also threatens to undo much of the development that we have already achieved.

Dangerous climate change threatens to worsen the situation for the poor and deny freedoms that the wealthy currently enjoy. For example, if the glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau melt, then four of South East Asia's major rivers could dry up, endangering the lives of one third of the world's population.

That is why climate change is the **greatest threat to human development of our time**.



Maria Mercedes Toledo, Ecuador

Farming and food



Drought and changes in rainfall patterns would result in drastic food shortages and losses in agricultural production.

Water shortages



Melting glaciers would see flooding followed by rivers drying up, resulting in massive shortages. Developed countries would not be immune. If the snow in California's High Sierras melts, cities like L.A. will be vulnerable to water shortages.

Human health risks



Human health would be affected both directly and indirectly. Countries with high levels of poverty will not have the public health systems to respond adequately. An additional 220-440 million people could be exposed to malaria.

Effects on nature



A temperature rise of above 3°C would see a shocking 20-30 percent of the earth's species at 'high risk' of extinction. Sea life would be transformed by the 'bleaching' of coral reef systems, leading to losses in marine biodiversity.

Flooding and Extreme weather



Continued temperature rises would result in drought, flooding and violent tropical cyclones. People would be displaced in Bangladesh, Egypt and Viet Nam, and some small-island states would be completely submerged.

If we do not change our ways, by 2080:

an additional 600 million people worldwide (9 percent of the world's current population) may face malnutrition and an additional 1.8 billion people (more than the population of China and the USA together) may face water shortages.

The poor – suffering the most but contributing the least

The poor tread the earth with a light carbon footprint, but they are forced to carry the heaviest burden of the effects of climate change. Is it fair that those people and countries that have contributed the least are suffering the most?

The carbon footprint of the earth's poorest 1 billion is around 3 percent of the world's total carbon footprint.

HDR, page 43



We already live in a world of glaring inequalities between rich and poor. The effects of climate change will serve to fuel existing disadvantage. For example, following a climate shock, the poor are often forced to withdraw children from school. In Nicaragua following Hurricane Mitch, the proportion of children simultaneously enrolled in school and working increased from 7.5 to 15.6 percent in affected households. These children will be less capable of freeing themselves from the poverty trap.

If every person in the developing world had the same carbon footprint as the average for wealthy countries then we would need a staggering six planets to feed our habits.

"Our farmers can no longer understand weather patterns so they find it difficult to know when to plant crops. Rising waters are destroying the lives of those who depended on fishing for their livelihood."

ADETUNJI OLABODE AKINWUMI,
NIGERIA

"We experience severe rainfall shortages, which increase the likelihood of starvation and famine. There is also a lack of knowledge about preventative methods, such as food storage and avoiding the spread of disease."

BARAKA P. MTINDA, DAR ES
SALAAM, TANZANIA

"Why are Bangladeshis given these sufferings? Don't we have the right to food, treatment, education and financial security? Aren't we human?"

KARIMON, BANGLADESH

"All the locals can do here is watch their homes being washed up by storm surges, rising seas and torrential rainfalls. They have no means to limit these effects which are a result of others' actions. Ordinary Solomon Islanders don't know that climate disasters are a result of climate change. They believe that climate disasters are just the way nature behaves."

CASPER SUPAPORO VILLAGE, HONIARA,
SOLOMON ISLANDS

"Children here know nothing of climate change. They feel the hot weather every day and they experience the high floods but they don't understand the connection between climate change and these events."

INDAH WATY,
INDONESIA

The after-shocks of climate events can have destructive impacts on the lives of the poor for years to come:

In Ethiopia, children aged five or less are 36 percent more likely to be malnourished and 41 percent more likely to be stunted if they were born during a drought year.

In Kenya, being born in a drought year increases the likelihood of children being malnourished up to 50 percent.

In Niger, children aged two or under who were born during a drought year are 72 percent more likely to be stunted.

HDR, page 89

Bearing the brunt in Bangladesh

On 14th April 2008, I visited Chor Khalpar, a riverside village of Faridpur in my home country of Bangladesh, where people are highly affected by climatic events.

There I met a fisherman named Karim. He told me that he lost everything due to the erosion of the river and he no longer had a home. He said, "We don't know whether we will be able to eat today or not." An elderly woman I met added, "We just don't know what will happen to us. You might not find us here next year." She knew nothing of climate change. "We only know that this is natural and we can't tackle it."

Bangladeshis suffered desperately when Cyclone Sidr devastated the country in November 2007. In the aftermath, many were forced to sleep under the open sky without food while farmers lost all of their harvests. We didn't create this problem but we are on the front line of the battle against it – it angers me to think that a heavy off-road vehicle emits



Nafiz Zaman Shuva, Bangladesh

the same amount of CO₂ travelling 3000 kilometres that a family in Bangladesh emits over a whole year.

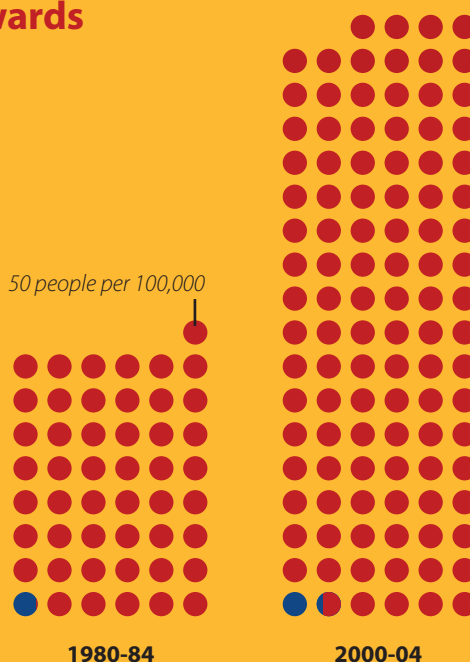
So how can we tackle the problem? By informing and educating as well as introducing effective laws to protect the environment in developing countries. Action today is simply essential for the survival of my country.

by Nafiz Zaman Shuva, Bangladesh

Disaster risks are skewed towards developing countries

Risk of being affected by natural disaster (per 100,000 people)

- Developing countries
- High-income OECD



Source: HDRO calculations based on OFDA and CRED 2007.

"The bottom line is this: as a global community we have to live within a sustainable carbon budget. At present, we are over-spending on that budget and borrowing ecological capital from future generations."

HDR, page 9

One day a man asked a great painter what the hardest thing to paint was.

"People, faces, people's pets, anything very common, and familiar," he answered.

"What's the easiest thing to paint then?"

was the next question.

"Ghosts," the painter said.

"Why?" the man asked.

"Because they have no shape," the painter explained, "They're invisible, and no one has ever seen one. They're very easy to paint."

Charles M. Sendegeya, Uganda

The world is not ours to take

Sometimes we see the future as shapeless and the people living there as invisible and nameless beings – ghosts! And this leads us to live as though we are the last to inhabit the earth. But future generations *will* come after us and they must follow the path that we have carved.

If we do not alter that path then we will be responsible for the damaged world that our children inherit.

Climate change challenges us to think differently at many levels. In a divided world, it challenges us to think about the meaning of ecological interdependence and the management of the one thing that we share in common: planet earth.

We are a human community linked through space and time, so the plight of future generations must be represented. Their voices are echoing through time, pleading with us to remember issues of social justice and human solidarity. But are we hearing their call?



“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

American Indian proverb



Lara Elena Ramos Simielli, Brazil

Mother Earth's cry

*Political agendas are heating up,
Our governments are facing big choices
Involving equity across generations.
Mother Earth is feeling the flames
As her temperature rises uncontrollably.*

*Lately her cry has become a wail
As humanity poisons her with their toxins,
The previously violent knocks of climate change,
Have led to it barging in uninvited,
Unravelling a chain of disastrous events,
Including drought, flood and famine.*

*Our future children exist as only in our imagination,
Taking no shape or form with invisible faces.
Will the freedoms we carelessly enjoy today, be compromised for
the future because of our inaction to mitigate and adapt?*

*Staring at her image in the mirror,
Unable to understand the reflection of her conscience,
She contemplates the future of her unborn child.
Fearing that society may continue to turn a blind eye;
She cries, "Have I made the right decision?"*

*Where is the justice in robbing tomorrow to pay for today;
when in reality it is as though we are taking candy from a baby!*

by Vikisha Thillainadesan,
Australia

*“We are made wise not by the
recollection of our past but by
the responsibility for our future.”*

George Bernard Shaw

Fighting for your rights

Human rights the heart of the issue...

Climate change and human rights are inextricably linked. My people, the Inuit, may face extinction as a result of climate change. Without doubt, our human rights are in jeopardy.

In 2005, we launched the Climate Change Human Rights Petition. It called for governments to develop economies using technologies that limit greenhouse gas emissions. It also claimed that emissions from the USA were violating the human rights of the Inuit.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Award-winning Arctic climate activist

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and personal security. Inaction in the face of the threat of climate change would represent a very immediate violation of that human right.

HDR, page 60

Human rights are those basic freedoms that you are entitled to by virtue of the fact that you are a human being.

Our fundamental rights are enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. Back in 1948 when the declaration was created, it was hardly imagined that one of the biggest threats to our human rights would be climate change.

Already the consequences of climate change such as floods, droughts and rising sea levels are reducing our ability to enjoy our rights.

- when you lose your house to the rising sea, your right to shelter is infringed.
- when drought kills your crops, your right to food is taken away.
- when you are threatened by storms and floods, your right to life and security of person are also put in jeopardy .

We are rightfully outraged when leaders deny citizens their rights. Through climate change, we are creating a world where rights are severely under threat, but are we sufficiently outraged?

"Climate change has already begun to affect the fulfilment of human rights ... our shared human rights framework entitles and empowers developing countries and impoverished communities to claim protection of these rights."

Mary Robinson, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights



Samara Tanaka, Brazil

Imagine – a world that cannot save us!

Imagine, just sea and barely enough land to live in;
Imagine, no forests and endless stretch of desert;
Imagine, no fresh water and abundant polluted water;
Imagine, no snow clad mountains, no winter sports;
Imagine, not being able to see the sky, moon and stars;
Imagine, having to walk with gas protection masks;
Imagine, a world without wild life, where we only see pictures and movies;
Imagine the world from the eyes of a CHILD –
As the world left behind becomes a curse for the living

by Pawan Alex, India

Peru is home to 70 percent of the glaciers in the tropical Andes. However, they are vanishing before our eyes and with them, the human rights that we enjoy. The Quelccaya ice cap, the largest in the world, has lost 30 percent of its glacier area since the early 1970s. Local farmers, dependent on glacial water to irrigate their crops, will soon face drastic reductions in production. Water shortage is a huge threat to our human right to an adequate standard of living.

Karina Pilar Sandoval, Peru

Weather conditions in Ghana are now unbearable. High temperatures at night make sleeping uncomfortable and torrential rains are common. The rains can kill people and destroy farm produce and property. This hampers efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger and promote the environmental sustainability. Climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is very much a human rights issue.

Michael Boampong,
Ghana

When I was younger, children could run around in the sun on warm days. Now it has become unbearably hot. It is around 34°C each day and by 5 pm, the evening is darkened by storms. The extreme weather that we experience within 24 hours is an effect of global warming. It impacts upon our human rights by jeopardising our health and security.

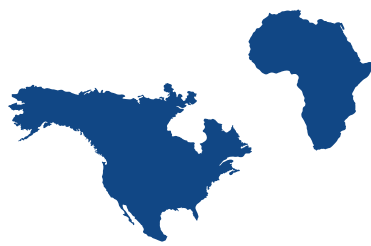
Carolina Santiago, Malaysia

Vinayak Sasitharan, Australia

Actions today for results tomorrow

We can avoid 21st century reversals and catastrophic risks for future generations if we choose to take action today. There are time lags between today's actions and tomorrow's outcomes – the greenhouse gases that we send into the atmosphere in 2008 will stay there until 2108 and beyond.

Even if we take immediate action to reduce emissions, we can't make a difference to world temperature trends until after 2030. Urgency is key – with every day of inaction the problem grows.



DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
(with a wide variation in levels, must cut their emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2050)



DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
(must cut their emissions by 30 percent from 1990 levels by 2020 and by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050)



WORLD
(emissions for the world must be reduced by 50 percent by 2050 to have sustainable emissions by the end of the 21st century)

"Climate change is the defining challenge facing political leaders across the world today. Future generations will judge us on how we respond to that challenge."

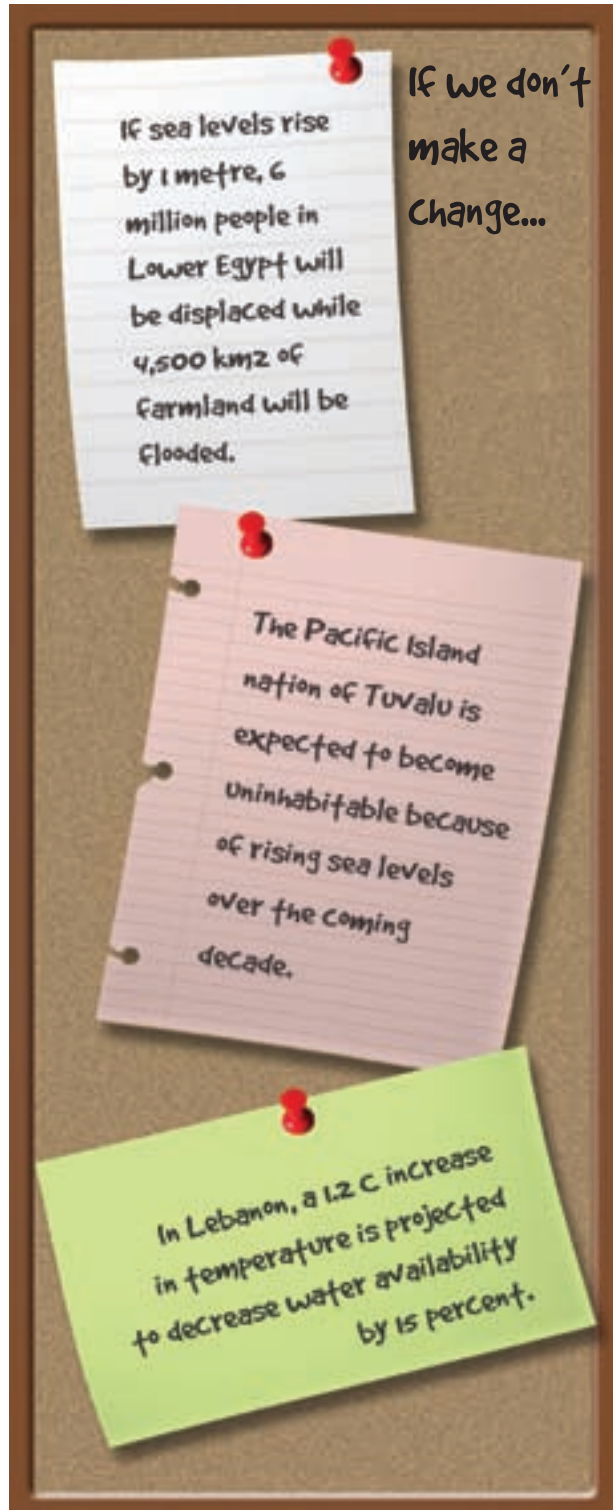
Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil



Samara Tanaka, Brazil • Concept: Zelalen Mekomen, Ethiopia; Karina Pilar Sandoval, Perú



Nafiz Zaman Shuva, Bangladesh



IF sea levels rise by 1 metre, 6 million people in Lower Egypt will be displaced while 4,500 km² of farmland will be flooded.

IF we don't make a change...

The Pacific Island nation of Tuvalu is expected to become uninhabitable because of rising sea levels over the coming decade.

In Lebanon, a 1.2 C increase in temperature is projected to decrease water availability by 15 percent.

The world as we stand...

An average dishwasher in Europe emits more CO₂ in a year than three Ethiopians.

An average air conditioning unit in Florida emits more CO₂ in a year than a person in Afghanistan during their whole lifetime.

In sub-Saharan Africa, over 30 percent of the population depends on traditional biomass for cooking.

This is where we make our choice. Hope or Despair?



Maria Mercedes Toledo, Ecuador

Mitigation: stopping the problem from growing

THE WORLD MUST DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN TWO WAYS:

● We must change our course by reducing carbon dioxide gas emissions to avoid dangerous climate change. This is called **climate change mitigation**.

● We must protect ourselves and our property from the dangers of climate change, some of which are now unavoidable. This is called **climate change adaptation**.

Through mitigation, we must change the way we use energy to avoid further damage and through adaptation we must protect ourselves from the damage we have already caused.

What is mitigation?

It is now too late to avoid some irreversible changes but effective mitigation strategies will allow us to avert crises in the future. Essentially what this means is that the world needs to reduce its carbon emissions and adopt a radical shift in energy policy.

There are three foundations for success

PRICING CARBON

We must put a price on carbon emissions through taxation and 'cap and trade'. Carbon gases must be priced to reflect their true social cost.


MAKING A CHANGE

We must tame our desire for fossil fuels and switch to alternative low-carbon energy sources.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Countries must learn to work together. Greenhouse gases ignore all borders. Rich countries can and must take the lead in tackling climate change. It is simple: they must urgently make the deepest and earliest cuts in their carbon emissions.





Wind turbine Zafarana wind park, Egypt

Climate change mitigation requires technological innovation and the rapid and widespread transfer and use of environmentally sustainable technologies.

Producing electricity using wind generators is sustainable because wind is essentially an inexhaustible (renewable) source of energy. Other renewable sources of energy include hydropower and solar energy.

Mitigation: stopping the problem from growing

Mitigation measures

What is a carbon tax?

A charge imposed by a government on each unit of CO₂-equivalent emissions. Placing a tax on carbon means that it makes economic sense to cut emissions.

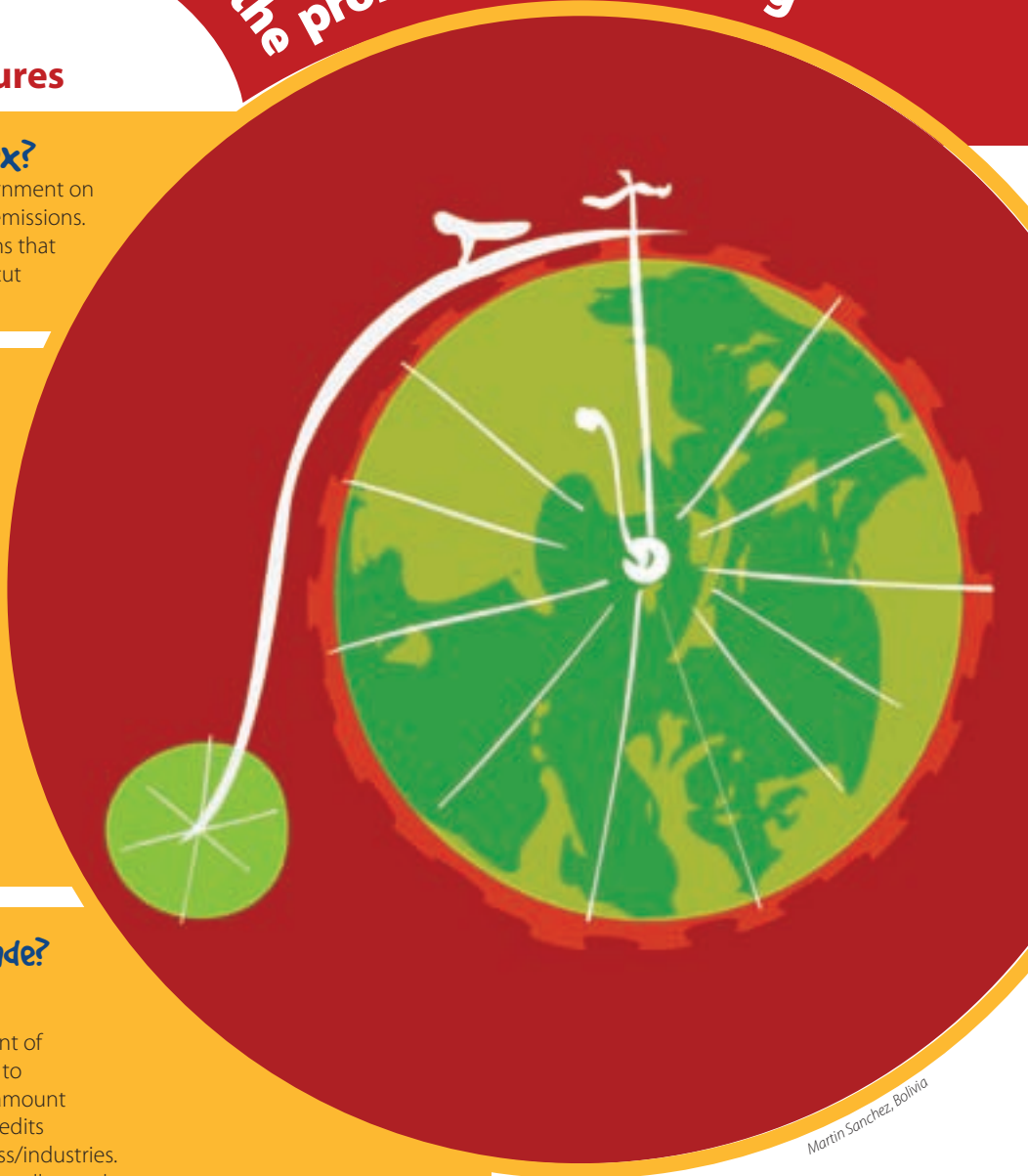
What is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)?

(CDM)?

An arrangement under the Kyoto Protocol allowing industrialised countries with a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries, as an alternative to more expensive reductions in their own countries.

What is cap and trade?

A system in which a country or group of countries sets a maximum for the total amount of carbon that they are allowed to emit for a given period. This amount is the 'cap'. It is divided into credits that are sold/given to business/industries. If a business uses more than its allocated credit then it can buy from others who have not reached their limit. This is the 'trade'.



Martin Sanchez, Bolivia

Change our ways, change the world

Our world has grown too accustomed to over-consuming fossil fuels. It will take a concerted effort to change our habits. We are locked into energy systems that are reliant on fossil fuels and this simply must change. As well as discouraging carbon emissions, we must also encourage low-carbon technologies, renewable energy such as wind, solar and hydro-power and things like ground source heat pumps and electric cars. The debate over nuclear energy will continue but it is also an option that must enter the discussion.

California takes the lead

The USA has yet to commit to firm emissions targets; but the state of California is taking the lead while the Federal government hesitates. Commitments by California include capping greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2020, reducing vehicle emissions of new cars by 30 percent by the year 2016 and paying out over US\$2.9 billion in the next 10 years to those who install solar panels. Hopefully, California's policies will attract other US states to adopt similar policies and standards in order to mitigate our growing energy crisis.

by Dana Troy, USA



Anna Juchnowicz, Poland

Setting targets

There is an urgent need for governments to set binding emissions targets. These will differ from country to country.

France aims to reduce emissions by 75 percent by 2050 while Japan aims to reduce emissions by 50 percent by 2050. The United States lacks a national long term emission target.

International and regional agreements will only be useful when there are national targets – and when countries actually keep their promises. Does your country have a national carbon emission-reduction target? Are they on track? Is that target binding? Why don't you speak to your local or national representative about this matter?

Deforestation

Our forests are invaluable sinks for CO₂ emissions. Unfortunately, they are being cut down at a rapid rate. Deforestation accounts for about 20 percent of global carbon emissions. Preventing the destruction of forests is an effective way of reducing the build-up of greenhouse gases.



Vida Morkunas, USA



Samantha Lyn Black, USA

Peru is home to 68 million hectares of tropical forest. By 2006, Peru was losing up to 1,760 acres of forest every day. As a result of deforestation, local communities like the Shipibos have lost animal species and medicinal plants. The Shipibos have always lived in harmony with the environment and played a key role as natural conservationists. Today, we are changing their world and forcing them to move to populated areas. It is in our hands to stop this cycle; we can't afford to lose the soul of the Amazon.

Adaptation: living with existing climate change

What is adaptation?

Adaptation is about enabling people to **manage the risks that arise from climate change**. It is about investing in basic infrastructure and programmes to protect us against the effects of climate change.

Mangrove planting is a method of adaptation adopted in Indonesia to protect against climate change.



courtesy of KeSEMaT

Who is affected?

Every country will be affected eventually and will have to adapt to climate change.

Adaptation means different things to different countries. In rich countries, governments adapt by providing elaborate climate defence systems. In poorer countries, adaptation is more challenging due to a lack of resources. For some, it can mean simply learning to swim in order to survive a flood or storm. Sadly, those most in need of strong defences are those least able to afford them.

“Leaving the world’s poor to sink or swim in the face of the threat posed by climate change is morally wrong We are drifting into a world of adaptation apartheid.”

Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town

How do we adapt?

Successful adaptation planning includes the four ‘i’s

- **Information**
For effective planning
- **Infrastructure**
For climate-proofing
- **Insurance**
For social risk management and poverty reduction
- **Institutions**
For disaster risk management

New York, USA and the Ganges Delta, India and Bangladesh both face an increased risk from flooding as the sea level rises but they are not equally vulnerable. New Yorkers can afford defences and can react swiftly to adapt to the new threat, but the people of the Ganges Delta, who did little to cause the problem, are left without adequate protection. The HDR estimates that a total investment of US\$86 billion a year from developed countries will be needed by 2015 in order that all countries can adequately adapt.

Adaptation plans are inadequate in many developing countries:

“The current framework provides the equivalent of an aid sponge for mopping up during a flood.” HDR, page 167



“Hoping –and working– for the best while preparing for the worst, serves as a useful first principle for adaptation planning.”

HDR, page 198

Adaptation: living with existing climate change



UNITED KINGDOM

The Environment Agency has called for **US\$8 billion** to be spent on strengthening the Thames Barrier. Current spending on flood management and coastal erosion is around **US\$1.2 billion** annually.

HAITI

The national adaptation plan estimates that a budget of **US\$11 million** is needed for investment in projects to counter water shortages and the threat of flooding and soil erosion.

UNITED STATES

California has developed an extensive system of reservoirs and water-transfer channels to maintain flows to dry areas.

ECUADOR

Farmers are building traditional U-shaped retention ponds, or albarradas, to capture water during wetter years and recharge aquifers during drought years.

ETHIOPIA

The Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) offers transfers of up to **US\$4** a month in cash or food, providing some 5 million people with income and employment. This reduces the impact of climate shocks.

How countries are adapting around the world

THE NETHERLANDS

A budget of **US\$3 billion** has been allocated for flood protection. In the village of Maasbommel, there are 37 homes that can float on water. They are fixed to large steel stilts in the river bed and act like ships in the event of a flood.

JAPAN

Plans developed by the Japanese Government to provide more effective defences in the face of sea level rises will cost an estimated **US\$93 billion** to put into action.

VIET NAM'S MEKONG DELTA

Earth dykes are being created and mangroves are being planted as protection against flooding and storm surges. Communities are being provided with swimming lessons and life-jackets.

SRI LANKA

Farmers are experimenting with rice varieties that can withstand salt-water intrusion and cope with reduced water.

INDIA

Women in the Ganges Delta are constructing elevated bamboo platforms known as machan on which to take refuge above monsoon floodwaters.

NEPAL

Communities in flood-prone areas are building early warning systems such as raised watchtowers and shoring up embankments to prevent glacial lakes from bursting their banks.

BUT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH!

United we stand

The United Nations was founded in 1945 in reaction to the 'scourge of war' that ravaged the earth twice in the first half of the 20th century. The UN is the body responsible for drafting, and getting all governments to agree to, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is therefore a vital force in this new crusade to protect those rights against the effects of climate change.

Our stake in the UN

The very name 'United Nations' spells out exactly what the UN is supposed to do: unite the nations of the world. But the truth is the UN is only as strong as the willingness of its member states to be united. Each nation is guided by its government and each government is guided by us, its citizens!

The pressure that we, the youth of the world, put on our local and national representatives eventually seeps through to the international stage and guides the actions of the UN. In relation to climate change, it's vital that we strengthen the power of the UN to provide a single, united response to this global threat that will impact us all! United we stand. Divided we fall.



Martin Sanchez, Bolivia

I believe that climate change is exactly the kind of global challenge that the United Nations is best suited to address. Tackling climate change requires action on two fronts. First, the world urgently needs to step up action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation is the second global necessity. There also needs to be a major push to generate new technologies for combating climate change, to make existing renewable technologies economically viable, and to promote a rapid diffusion of technology.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations

How our influence can travel



Nations' responsibilities

The UN is only as strong as its weakest link. If some countries carry on burning ever-increasing amounts of fossil fuels, those who cut back – and spend money on reducing their emissions – will be at a huge economic disadvantage. There

has to be a level playing field – and only the UN can create it. So, we are all responsible for ensuring that our national representatives sign up to binding agreements at the UN – and then keep their promises.

Climate change is considered the gravest threat currently facing humanity. As young citizens of the world, we have a responsibility to ask the question: "has the UN done enough?"

What is the UN doing?

Kyoto Protocol: this agreement, brokered by the UN and signed in December 1997, is the first step in the multi-lateral response to climate change. It sets binding targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 to a level 5 percent below what they were in 1990. Current scientific opinion agrees that this 5 percent target is far too low: several countries, including the USA, never ratified the agreement, and it is certain that many countries will fail to reach even the modest 5 percent cut.



Suzie Boulden, UK

Bali Breakthrough: in December 2007, representatives of 180 countries met at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia. After much kicking and shoving, even the USA agreed to the Bali Road Map – the first time all the major nations of the world agreed that climate change is a serious problem and a priority for the global community. Critics rightly say, "Big deal! No emission targets yet have been agreed" But it is a start – and the map shows the route we need to take to get where we need to be.

Next stop – Copenhagen December 2009: Copenhagen is likely to be the crucial battle-ground in the fight for deep cuts in carbon emissions 'post-Kyoto' – in other words, after the Kyoto agreement runs out in 2012. Ministers and officials from 189 countries are expected to attend and, the scientists suggest, must agree to 25 percent cuts in carbon emissions by 2020 – and 50 percent cuts by 2050. It's our duty to tell them that we will only re-elect them if they make that commitment.

"I had the opportunity to work with 200 committed international youth delegates while attending the UN Convention on Climate Change in Bali. I saw first-hand how youth can be key stakeholders with the power to influence the process of addressing climate change by keeping our governments accountable and educating our peers and the general public."

Adam MacIsaac, Canada



Young visions for the future: 2°C leaves us with 2 options:

OPTION 1 INACTION = War

STEPS THAT
WILL LEAD US
TOWARDS A
DANGEROUS
CLIMATE OF
CONFLICT

Unregulated,
unpriced, carbon
emissions

Increased global
temperatures

Melting ice
at the poles and in
the mountains; rising
sea levels; flooding of
coastal areas; drying up
of river systems; all
manner of extreme
climatic events

Increasing
shortages of food,
fuel and land re-
sources

Forced
migration due to
starvation and thirst;
invasion of territories
that possess water and
arable land; all-out glo-
bal war for resources
and survival

Nature's fury

*Why the fighting? Why the war?
Can't we exist peacefully anymore?
Climate change brings waves of destruction,
Hurricane Katrina's unmatched power
Churns violence and hate in the people's hearts.*

*"Power to the people" the protesters chant,
But their voices ring through an empty tunnel.
The time has come for the insidious to fall,
For the people of the earth to awake once more.*

*The quest for the yellow cake: A false adventure
With heroes who tire from a conflict they don't understand
On the home-front God's fury ravages a people
That must suffer for their overlord's sins.*

*Yet herein lies hope,
People battle weary from climate change and conflict
All sing in unison for a brighter tomorrow.*

by Vaakesan Guruparan, Australia

If we do not avoid catastrophic climate change then:

The ice-caps of the Tibetan Plateau will disappear causing the river basins of South East Asia to dry up, forcing a billion people to migrate northwards to Siberia to find water.

Melting in the mountain ranges of North America could force millions northwards into Canada seeking water. Melting of the Antarctic and Greenland ice shelves will cause sea-level rise of 7 metres, causing the forced migration of 330 million people.

Will countries peacefully open their borders and allow the migrants to freely occupy their real estate? History tells us: probably not.



Lara Elena Ramos Simielli, Brazil

Climate-induced migration is already a reality for small island states

Migration as a result of climate change is not just a vision for the future, but it is already a current reality for some. Already climate change refugees are being forced to leave regions that have become inhospitable.

Small island states are particularly vulnerable: 1,500 residents of Carteret Island, an atoll of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, have begun permanently

evacuating their homes. Sea levels around the atoll have risen 10 cm in the past 20 years.

Meanwhile the Pacific Island nation of Tuvalu is expected to become uninhabitable due to rising sea levels over the coming decade. Other islands are expected to be flooded. People in Kiribati and Vanuatu have already relocated their homes due to rising seas.



By Pip Starr. Courtesy of FoE Australia www.foe.org.au

“Consider Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot – their names are synonymous with evil and the deaths of millions. Yet, compared to the mass murder being cooked-up by today’s so-called liberal governments of Europe and North America by their inaction on climate change, Hitler, Stalin and the rest were mere beginners: inaction on climate change could cause the death of billions.”

David Woollcombe, President, Peace Child International

“Developing a society’s ability to handle conflict will enhance its capacity to adapt to climate change. Though the tasks seem different, the capacities needed to carry them out are effectively the same...”

Jan Smith, Janani Vivekananda,
International Alert

Young visions for the future: 2°C leaves us with 2 options:

Option 2

ACTION = A Post-Carbon Era!

"Combating climate change demands that we place ecological imperatives at the heart of economics. The current state of international cooperation is not fit for the purpose. As a priority, the world needs a binding international agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions across a long time horizon..."

HDR, page 16



This blissful future is within our reach! So why isn't it happening?

1) Cost – however we just cannot accept this argument. The Solar Plan published in Scientific American in January '08 costed the transformation of the USA into a solar-hydrogen economy with a nationwide HVDC grid at US\$420 billion dollars over 40 years. That's a fifth of the money spent on the Iraq War in just 5 years.

2) More research is needed – energy, funds and political will must be directed this way.

3) We are not shouting loudly enough to make our governments do it!

Good morning, Beautiful world!

Today, I woke up feeling good, I was very happy! I looked outside my window and realised something good. The trees were full of flowers and fruits. The air was pure, without contamination. Water was crystalline. In my backyard there was no pollution and the trash was separated to be recycled. Sewage was not going to the rivers; it was treated and transformed into gas, and was not polluting any more. Birds were having fun in the forests. Animals were happy because the pasture was green. I noticed that the world was very, very different. I looked inside my house and saw my family around the table, drinking very hot tea and talking about cheerful things. My brothers were happily playing, knowing that the world was good. On the television they announced the end of global warming. Violence, which used to be the biggest problem in the world, did not exist anymore. Food was not infected and our health was better. There were jobs for everyone. There weren't rich and poor people. Corruption did not exist nor did racial prejudice. People lived in peace, and all wars ended. In this moment I realised that I was dreaming and I woke up scared, with my mom calling me. Reality today is not the way I dreamed it. But, today, we must do more to make tomorrow's reality the way we dream it today!

Jonathan, São José do Rio Preto (SP), Brazil

We can create the world that Jonathan dreams of by investing today for a post-carbon future.

A post-carbon world would include:

- massive off-shore wind-farms.
- solar installations covering thousands of square miles.
- compressed air storage systems in disused mines and underground caverns.
- high voltage DC (HVDC) grids to carry electricity.
- ground source heat pumps and solar panels on everyone's houses.
- hydrogen fuelled planes.
- electric trucks and cars.

Global problems to individual solutions

What can you do?

It is easy to feel like David fighting Goliath or the tortoise racing the hare when we think about what we, as individuals, can do to tackle the problem of climate change. But we must take heart and remember who was victorious in those famous stories...

'Be the change you want to see in the world'

Mahatma Gandhi

Dense scientific facts and talk of apocalyptic consequences can alienate us from the issue. But we must remember the ancient Chinese symbol for 'crisis' depicts two characters – danger and opportunity. As well as sensing the danger, we must acknowledge the opportunity to take action!

Firstly, let's talk about the more simple things that you can begin doing NOW, as soon as you put this booklet down...

The easy bits

Going to the shops or market... ✓

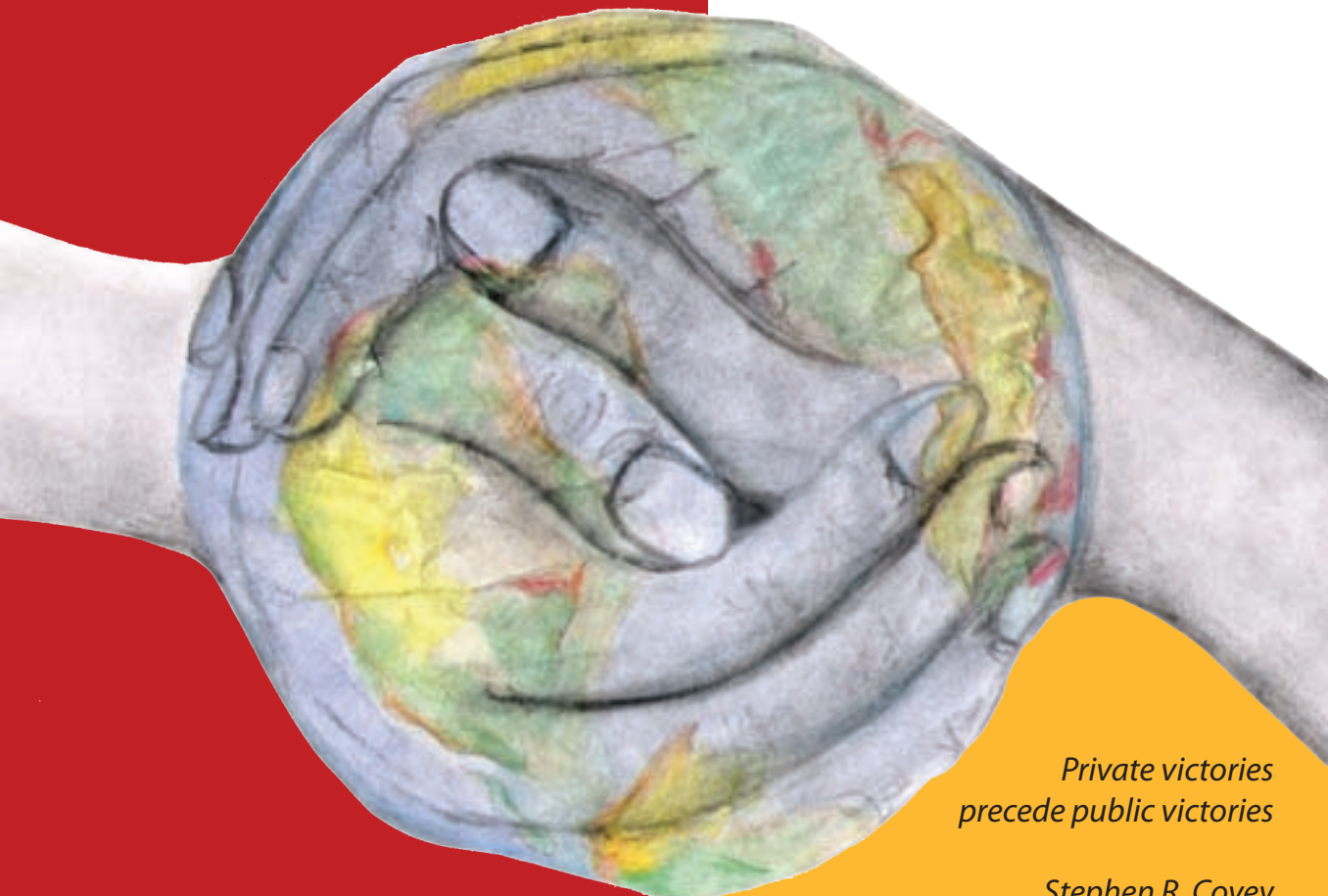
- Bring your own canvas bags. Avoid plastic bags.
- Only buy food that will be eaten! Annually, the UK dumps 6.7 million tonnes of food. Most of the waste is sent to landfill where it rots, emitting the potent climate change gas methane.
- Buy from your local charity shop and donate your own clothes, CDs and books etc.
- Use websites such as The Freecycle Network™ (www.freecycle.org) to give and get useful things for free in your own towns or www.Junkk.com which is full of ideas for reusing items.

At school or college... ✓

- Cycle or use public transport to get there. Travelling by bicycle is about the greenest way to get around – bicycles are the world's most efficient vehicles!
- Print out school and college notes on both sides of the paper and encourage others by placing reminder signs at photocopiers.
- Carry a long-life mug with you to avoid using polystyrene, plastic or paper for tea/coffee breaks.

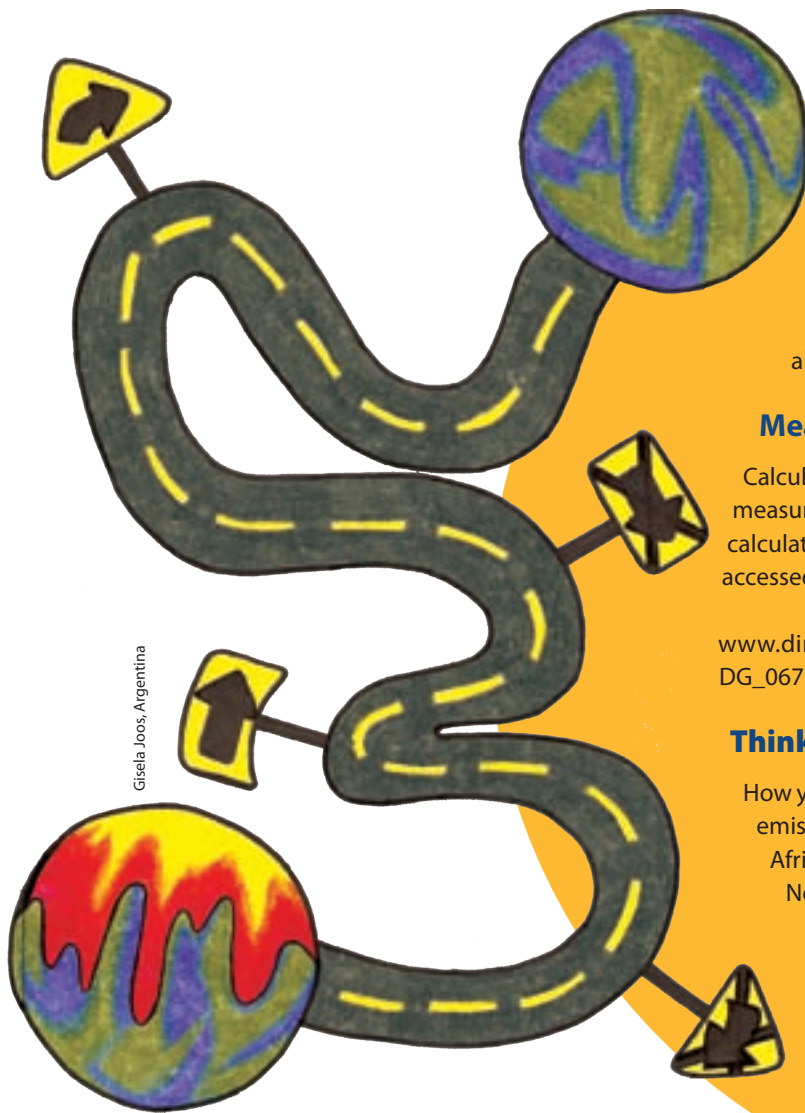
At home... ✓

- Remove your family name from junk mailing lists.
- Recycle, Recycle, Recycle: glass bottles, cans, cardboard, paper, CDs, batteries, envelopes, magazines, newspapers, telephone books, catalogues, cardboard and plastics.
- Turn off your TV, computer, and phone charger completely rather than putting them on stand-by.
- Repair and mend your things rather than throwing them away.
- Fit energy saving light bulbs.
- Create a compost heap.



Private victories precede public victories

Stephen R. Covey



Getting harder...

Small changes are important. However, the scale of this problem means that it also demands some radical, and perhaps uncomfortable, lifestyle adjustments. After all, nothing in life worth having ever came easy.

Measure your footprint ✓

Calculating your individual carbon footprint is the best way to measure your impact on climate change. There are a variety of calculators available on the net. The UK government one can be accessed at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/actonco2/DG_067197

Think about a personal carbon quota ✓

How you would survive if you were tied to a set amount of carbon emissions each year? Many living in Bangladesh or sub-Saharan Africa would never reach their limit while many in Europe and North America would constantly exceed it – the average North American emits more than 100 times more carbon than the average African.

THIS IS HOW A CARBON QUOTA WOULD WORK

Make your home eco-friendly ✓

Talk to your parents about how energy efficient your home is. Are your windows and walls well insulated? Could you source some of your energy naturally by installing solar panels or a ground source heat pump (GSHP)? GSHPs draw warmth from the ground to heat your home and water. One small home system will save 7 tonnes of carbon being pumped into the earth's atmosphere.

Lobby for feed-in time! ✓

Lobby your government to introduce feed-in tariffs. They are a simple, cheap and effective way to encourage renewable energy use and development. The scheme is simple: governments encourage people to produce renewable energy for their own homes, for example through solar or wind power, and then sell any excess renewable energy back into the national electricity grid. Germany has become a world leader in this field and in 2005, 10.2 percent of the country's power came from renewable sources, 70 percent of which was from feed-in tariffs. This means a saving of 52 million tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2010.

X = AMOUNT OF CARBON WE CAN AFFORD TO EMIT EACH YEAR



Y BILLIONS = THE WORLD POPULATION



THEREFORE

X/Y = YOUR PERSONAL CARBON QUOTA

Is it a good idea? Would it work? Join the debate at:
www.brainnoodles.com/weblog/archive/2006/06/04/Personal_Carbon_Quota_Allowance_Ration.aspx

Youth action: Taking to the streets!

Today's generation of young people under 25 is the largest ever – 3 billion, nearly half the global population. Clearly, we have the numbers to effect change through lobbying,

campaigning, protesting, demonstrating and debating. Many young people around the world, brimming with ideas and enthusiasm, are already using these tools of activism to make their voices heard. Get involved and join in the chorus!

Sustaining the pressure in the US

www.sustainus.org
USA

SustainUS is a group of young people advancing sustainable development and youth empowerment in the United States. Prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, the group grabbed media attention by launching the "Bet" campaign with US President Bush. They bet Bush that they could conserve 20,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide in pledges by youth. If they succeeded, they would call on Bush to attend the WSSD with a group of 5 young people. If they failed, they would volunteer to chauffeur Bush or a member of his administration in a bicycle rickshaw for a week.

SustainUS won the bet against Bush – youth carbon dioxide emission savings hit 20,000 tonnes. However, Bush failed to commit to attending the WSSD.

Working at the coalface in Bangladesh

Nafiz Zaman Shuva,
Bangladesh

I am the President of the Bangladesh Association of Young Researchers (BAYR), the only national youth research and development organisation in Bangladesh.

Young people are essential in the process of informing and educating people about climate change. Many Bangladeshis have no idea that their suffering may be related to climate change caused by human activity. They also have no information on how to protect themselves against climate change effects. With this in mind, we have organised a number of climate change projects including the Environment Friendly Programme 2008 in cooperation with Green Earth Bangladesh and 'Act Now', a programme to train young people around the country about how to save our climate.

Debating the future in Delhi

On May 28th, 2008, 150 youth, young professionals and observers from NGOs gathered for the first ever Delhi Youth Summit on Climate (DYSoC). The summit was arranged to discuss and debate the future of Delhi in light of the impending threat of climate change. Issues as diverse as water supply, waste management, energy and transportation were discussed and solutions from young people were drafted into a Delhi Youth Charter on Climate (download from: <http://whatswiththeclimate.org>).



Driya Kanon, India

SPELLING OUT THE MESSAGE IN ENGLAND

by Virginie Mercier, France

When I learnt that the British government was planning to build a new, third runway at Heathrow Airport in London I was outraged. Building a new runway is a huge step backwards. Nationality is irrelevant - the carbon emitted flying in and out of Heathrow will not hang over Britain alone. CO₂ knows no boundaries. What use is it for individuals to



live sustainably if our governments continue to drag us down a road towards dangerous climate change? That is why I was keen to be a part of the protest march where participants joined to form the world's biggest 'no'. No to the runway, no to climate change and no to a government hijacking our future.

Photo: Matthias Schmidt, Germany

Youth action: Extraordinary tales



Carolina Santiago, Malaysia

From the mouths of babes...

At the age of only 12, Severn Suzuki from Canada spoke movingly to delegates from across the world at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. She brought the youth perspective on climate change to the world's attention in her speech when she said,

"Coming here today, I have no hidden agenda. I am fighting for my future. Losing my future is not like losing an election or a few points on the stock market. I am here to speak for all generations to come."

In 2002, Severn helped launch an internet-based think tank called The Skyfish Project, a member of then Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan's, Special Advisory Panel. Now in her twenties, she continues to speak around the world about environmental issues, urging listeners to define their values, act with the future in mind, and take individual responsibility. Severn's famous call to world leaders can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZsDliXzyAY.

Home-cooked youth action!

Raphael Wanjaria Njaruahi, along with fellow members of dynamic youth organisation, Youth Intercommunity Network (YIN), is taking action to change the way rural Kenyans use energy in an effort to stop deforestation in his country.

YIN is constructing and distributing energy-saving stoves for cooking in order to discourage the use of firewood, which is depleting wood supplies and driving deforestation. According to Raphael, 75 percent of rural Kenyans currently use firewood for cooking which is contributing to environmental degradation. This results in food

insecurity that is a big problem for Kenyans.

The majority of the stoves are built by young people themselves using traditional techniques and local materials (mainly sticky soil and stones). Energy-saving stove recipients get trained in using, caring for, and maintaining the stoves so that they can train others in the future. The key is to pass the message on!

Through the project, YIN empowers rural residents and young people by taking practical and effective steps to tackle the current and future effects of climate change.

What did Gandhi mean when he declared, "we must become the change we wish to see"? For me, it meant having the will to change my own behaviour, to lower my impact and to lead by example. So I decided to circumnavigate the world by bicycle. All in all, I covered no less than 19,000 kilometres, across 15 countries, 3 continents and eventually connected Vancouver to Beijing by only going east. No two days were alike. I slept, cooked and generally lived outside. There were bear encounters in Canada, a roadless Gobi desert in Mongolia, treacherous "road" conditions in Siberia and so much more. The journey taught me enormously about human character, humility and about nature herself. I realised that only rarely nowadays do we truly find ourselves fully exposed to the natural world. When we do, we are inevitably humbled. I don't expect the thousands of people I met during my adventure to ever reproduce my journey. However, I do hope that perhaps my example will serve as an inspiration that will enable some of them to make a difference. And if it doesn't, well at least, I think I made a difference. Thanks, Mr. Gandhi.

By Damien A. Côté, Canada



Sorouche Mirmiran, Canada



Chloé Gaudet, Canada

JOIN IN MORE – get involved with an organisation in your own country such as:

Energy Action Coalition (North America)

www.energyactioncoalition.org

African Youth Initiative on Climate Change

www.ayicc.org

Eco-League International Team (Japan)

<http://gathering.eco-2000.net/global>

China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN)

<http://groups.takingitglobal.org/CYCAN>

Indian Youth Climate Network <http://iycn.in>

Join networks on climate change. **'Stop Global Warming'** on Facebook and Myspace now has almost 2 million members! Also, join in the debate on China's role in the climate challenge at

www.chinadialogue.net

www.chinadialogue.net

www.chinadialogue.net



Robert vanWaarden, Canada



Karina Pilar Sandoval, Peru

Further action by youth

Now you know the facts, you've heard the stories and you realise the consequences of inaction. Ask yourself 'what more can I do?' and take inspiration from this page!

Know more it's time to learn more! Read up on youth websites and in magazines such as the UN Environmental Programme magazine, **TUNZA**, global online communities like <http://itsgettinghotinhere.org> and coalitions like www.stopclimatechaos.org and www.youthagainstclimatechange.org.



Chloé Gaudet, Canada

DO MORE!
DO MORE!
DO MORE!

Create more art can be a powerful way of getting a message across. Write, paint, photograph, act, sing, and dance your vision.

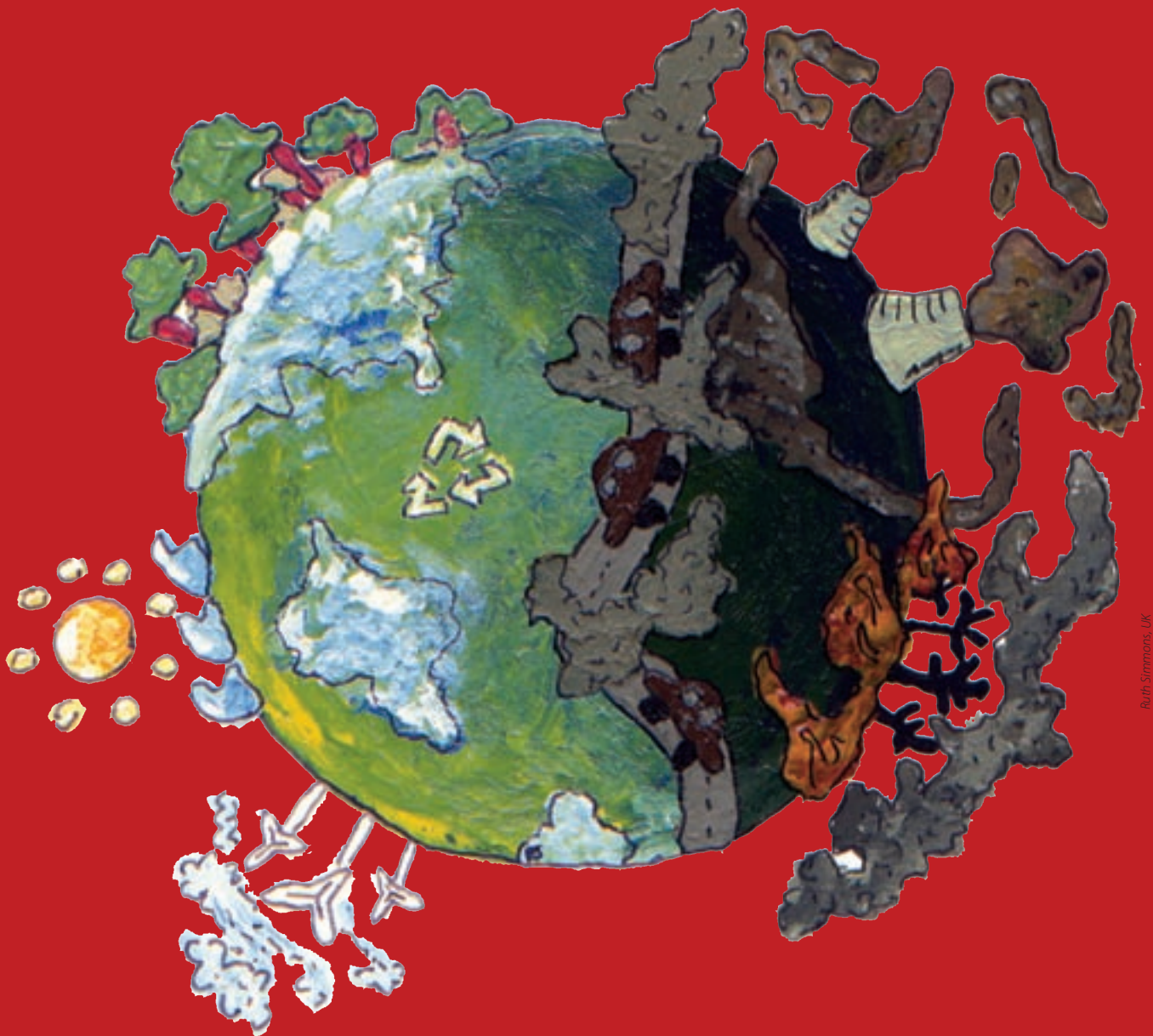
Take inspiration from the musical, **'Green Peace Child'**, written to empower and educate the young people who rehearse, perform and rewrite it. The script can be obtained by contacting info@peacechild.org.

Question more not only your government but also the corporations that serve you. Your custom is very important, so important that some businesses may grow a green conscience if you ask enough! For example, combat illegal logging and deforestation by only buying items with an FSC (www.fsc.org), Woodmark or Smart Wood label. Think about how all of the products you buy made their way to your local shop. Be curious, be a conscious consumer!

Celebrate more why are you passionate about preserving the planet? Because it is precious and it is beautiful. Celebrate the sacredness of our environment and let it inspire you to protect it!

We must learn to live
Together as brothers
or perish together as fools

Martin Luther King Jr.



Ruth Simmons, UK