

**Global Conference on Implementing Intergenerational Equity:  
Bringing Future Perspectives to the Status Quo  
4-5 July**

Varembé Conference Room, rue de Varembé 1-3, 1202  
Geneva, Switzerland

**DRAFT PROGRAMME**

<b>Day 1, Thursday 4 July</b>		
	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
08:30 - 09:30	Registration	
09:30– 10:05	<b>1. Opening and Welcome: In Fairness to Future Generations</b>	<p>Fatou Ndoye, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, UNEP &amp; Catherine Pearce, Future Justice Director, World Future Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key note Speech, via pre-recorded video message: Prof Edith Brown Weiss, Francis Cabell Brown, Professor of International Law, Georgetown University Law Centre</li> <li>• Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)</li> </ul>
10.05 – 11.00	<b>2. The meaning of intergenerational equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof Axel Gosseries, Professor at the University of Louvain (UCL) and Permanent Research Fellow at the Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FRS-FNRS), member of the Hoover Chair in Economic and social Ethics, Louvain University</li> <li>• Carolyn Raffensperger, Executive Director, Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN)</li> </ul>
11.00– 11:30	Break	
11:30– 13:15	<b>3. Creating fair conditions for future generations: the practical examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neshan Gunasekera, former Director, Weeramantry International Center for Peace Education and Research</li> <li>• Peter Davies, Sustainable Futures Commissioner, Wales</li> <li>• Dr Marcel Szabó, Deputy-Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Hungary</li> </ul>
13:15– 14:45	Lunch	
14:45– 15.15	<b>4. View on implementing intergenerational equity the perspective from the German Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerstin Wortmann, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</li> </ul>
15.15 – 16.45	Break	

16:45 – 17.00	<b>5. Establishing Ombudspersons for Future Generations as proven institutions to help implement intergenerational equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Sándor Fülöp, Former Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations and Co-Chair of WFC Future Justice Commission</li> <li>• Roberto Bissio, Co-ordinator, Social Watch</li> </ul>
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<b>Day 2 , Friday 5 July</b>		
	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
09:00 – 09:30	Opening and welcome	Summary of day 1 Introduction to day 2
09:30– 11.00	<b>6. Correcting shortcomings in Global Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yves Lador, Earth Justice Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva</li> <li>• Jan van de Venis, Worldconnectors, Executive Director Upact</li> <li>• Dr Marcel Szabó, Deputy-Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Hungary</li> <li>• Barbara Ruis, Legal Officer, UNEP Regional Office for Europe</li> </ul>
11.00 – 11.30	Break	
11.30– 13.15	<b>7. Moving forward to implement this agenda - dimensions at the international, national and local levels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kate Offerdahl, International Institute for Sustainable Development (speaking on behalf of MG Children &amp; Youth)</li> <li>• Peter Davies, Sustainable Futures Commissioner, Wales</li> </ul>
13.15– 14:45	Lunch	
14:45 – 15.30	<b>8. Conclusions and Closing session</b>	Presentation of final conference statement and wrap up

**Context:**

References to future generations have been made in countless international treaties, conventions and national constitutions. Yet intergenerational equity, or the ability to better take into account the concerns of future generations in our current practices and policies is a poorly understood concept and as a consequence rarely applied or implemented. Climate change has raised some attention to the long term view, and in particular the Stern Review argued from a conventional welfare economics perspective that the costs of inaction on climate change would far outweigh the costs of mitigation. Yet particular unhelpful myths remain, for example that this concept is a luxury we can ill afford given more pressing concerns. The perceived tension between the needs of the present generation over the future denies the premise that improving the prosperity of the lives of all, to bring dignity and sufficiency today is a pertinent precondition to protecting the opportunities of future generations.

For sustained human and environmental wellbeing, Ombudspersons for Future Generations have shown to introduce a long term perspective into political institutions and policy making, linking citizens with governments, working as a catalyst for sustainable development implementation and acting as

principal, active advocate for common interests of present and future generations. The role essentially seeks to balance the short term nature of political and budgetary cycles and the silo thinking of narrow, linear departmental remits by bringing long-term solutions and an interconnected perspective into decision making processes. They can provide high level, independent, policy expertise and advocacy on the themes of intergenerational justice, using integrated analyses to highlight for example how many of the apparent short-term economic costs should be factored as vital investments for future risk prevention. Public participation remains a core principle of sustainable development and yet needs to be strengthened. Young people are underrepresented and future generations almost entirely omitted in domestic and international decision-making processes.

The World Future Council has been working towards establishing Ombudspersons for Future Generations at all governance levels for the past three years.

On the international level the World Future Council (WFC) has promoted this during the Rio+20 process where the proposal for a High-level Representative for Sustainable Development and Future Generations remained in the negotiation text until the final hours.

The outcome document instead invites the UNSG to write a report<sup>1</sup> on intergenerational solidarity and future generations which will be published this summer.

At national, sub national and local levels the WFC has been identifying and highlighting best policies and institutions that bring the interests of future generations to the heart of policy-making and sharing these with others. Each government's legal and cultural reality is different – which is why the exact mandate of Ombudspersons for Future Generations needs to be developed in that context, respecting these differences. Ombudspersons for Future Generations at all governance levels, international, national, sub national and local, provide an official champion and watchdog for sustainable development by:

- **Balancing** short-term interests of political institutions with long-term interests of society.
- **Taking responsibility** for oversight, for making sure sustainability policies work in synergy and are effective in practice.
- **Bringing authority** to agreed sustainability goals, holding governments and private actors accountable for not delivering on them.
- **Connecting citizens** and civil society with the core of policymaking, providing a formal channel for information on sustainability infringements.

### ***The objectives to the conference:***

This event is designed to consider why intergenerational equity has not been better reflected across our institutions and practices, and how to improve this. It will consider what new mechanisms or tools, based upon existing best practice could more effectively take into account future generations. While there has been support for the Ombudsperson (or equivalent) proposal, concerns remain that not enough is known or understood on the nature of this role, its functions, form and how it would operate in practice. The mandate of this role would be critically different at the international and national levels, serving dissimilar positions and purpose. For example in an attempt to bring intergenerational equity into legislation and policy making, several countries have established specific national

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<sup>1</sup>The Future We Want', Para 86 [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E)

institutions with this as their targeted mandate. Their interventions are often based upon the complaints and concerns from stakeholders, including NGOs, local communities and individuals. These are Ombudspersons or Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations working at the national level which work at the heart of the state system, yet independent from administrative power and not motivated therefore by short term electoral cycles. They pursue an official and active advocacy role for long term interests and have proved to function as an effective mechanism providing checks and balances for present and future interests, sometimes with legal authority. The role at the international level, would not hold a similar legal mandate, neither would it be able to receive or address citizens' complaints and therefore would offer a very different function.

Discussions will explore amongst other topics:

- Historical perspective of recognising intergenerational equity in international agreements
- Examples of legal interpretation of intergenerational equity
- The potential role at the international level: form and functions, institutional home
- Reflections on the UNSG report, and efforts to build a common understanding of what it can achieve, including recommendations to its key conclusions.
- How core aspects of an effective mandate can be combined with the constitutional realities of specific countries to help suggest national possibilities of implementation.
- Learning from existing examples at the national level: Experts and existing Ombudspersons on hand, stimulating discussions about national possibilities in interested countries will take place and policy-tool kits to 'take home' will be developed.

***Expected results:***

This conference will help to broaden awareness, understanding and visibility on this agenda, and solutions to address it at a crucial time of growing national and international interest. A grounding of balanced, informed, high level discussion and expert analysis is vital in order to inform and maintain important processes on this agenda. There is a risk that interest will stall or weaken simply due to lack of understanding and momentum. The outcomes of the conference will be fed into the UNSG report on Intergenerational Solidarity and Future Generations, due to be completed by the summer and presented to the General Assembly this August. The conference will produce a final statement or a set of recommendations which can be used for this purpose.

***When:***

The Conference will be held on the 4-5<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 in Geneva. The timing of this event could prove critical in terms of informing some of the processes mentioned above.

***Participants and speakers:***

A wide variety of civil society will be invited, including youth representatives, environmental lawyers, academics, human rights and governance experts, and existing Ombudspersons for Future Generations such as Dr. Marcel Szabó from Hungary and Mr Peter Davies from Wales. Government representatives as well as staff from relevant UN agencies and intergovernmental organisations based in Geneva will also be invited.

Around 50 people are expected to attend.

## **About the World Future Council**

The World Future Council (WFC), founded in 2007, is a charitable foundation, composed of 50 eminent persons from around the world who have already successfully promoted change. We endeavour to bring the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. In close collaboration with civil society groups, members of parliament, governments, businesses and international institutions, we research “future just” policies and legislation. We then advise political decision-makers, offering them tried and tested courses of action and support them in the concrete implementation of new policies. We are an independent, non-profit organisation. Our work to establish Ombudspersons for Future Generations has been possible through the generous support of the Stiftung Drittes Millennium (Foundation for the Third Millennium).

## **About UNEP**

UNEP, established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. Its mission is “to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.” UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment. To accomplish this, UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. UNEP work encompasses assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends; developing international and national environmental instruments; strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment; facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology for sustainable development; and encouraging new partnerships and mind-sets within civil society and the private sector.

## **Contact**

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