



PLANETARY EMERGENCY PLAN

Securing a New Deal for People, Nature and Climate



By The Club of Rome, in partnership with
The Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
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TRANSFORM AND OPTIMIZE ENERGY SYSTEMS

A DECADE OF ACTION: THE CASE FOR A PLANETARY EMERGENCY PLAN



For 10,000 years, human civilisation has grown and thrived because of Earth's remarkable climate stability and rich biological diversity. In the last 50 years, human activity has severely undermined this resilience. Our patterns of economic growth, development, production and consumption are pushing the Earth's life-support systems beyond their natural boundaries. The stability of these systems – our global commons on which we so fundamentally depend – is now at risk. The science is clear that we are now accelerating towards tipping points and that the consequences of inaction will be catastrophic for humanity. The time to act is running out¹.

This is a **Planetary Emergency**. The definition of an emergency is a dangerous event requiring immediate action to reduce risk of potentially catastrophic results. The impacts of climate change and ecological destruction are more severe and are manifesting themselves earlier than many scientific predictions in previous decades had foreseen. The most authoritative global scientific assessments conclude that without major interventions, the risks will soon reach a critical stage. We need to stabilise the climate at 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures, halt the loss of biodiversity, slow polar ice sheet melt and glacier retreat, protect critical biomes and store more carbon in soils, forests and oceans. This is how we will guarantee the long-term health and well-being of both people and planet. To do that, however, our response to this complex emergency must reflect the intricate links between life on our planet and the systems that regulate it. It must address the convergence of crises and tipping points which have created this **Planetary Emergency**. We have no more time for incremental, siloed policy action.

2020 is a “Super Year” for international policy action. It is the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. It is the first opportunity for nations to increase climate ambition and meet 2050 net-zero goals. A new treaty on the oceans will be agreed. Biodiversity targets will be announced. And 2020 will mark the beginning of the decade to scale action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This decade must be a turning point, the moment when the world bends the curve, averts the impending disaster and opts instead to embark on the fastest economic transformation in our history. **Declaring a Planetary Emergency** provides a new compass for nations and injects the essential urgency into decision-making. It will ensure that all action from 2020 will be taken in light of its impact on the stability of Earth's life-support systems, and be underpinned by the social and economic transformations needed to secure the long-term health and well-being of people and planet. While our efforts should be global, our responses must be local. They should be tailored to local needs, resources and cultures to ensure they have maximum impact and work to everyone's advantage.

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/461472a>

² IPCC Special Report on 1.5 Degrees of Global Warming (2018), IPBES Global Assessment (2019) and IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land (2019)

A DECADE OF ACTION: EMERGING FROM EMERGENCY

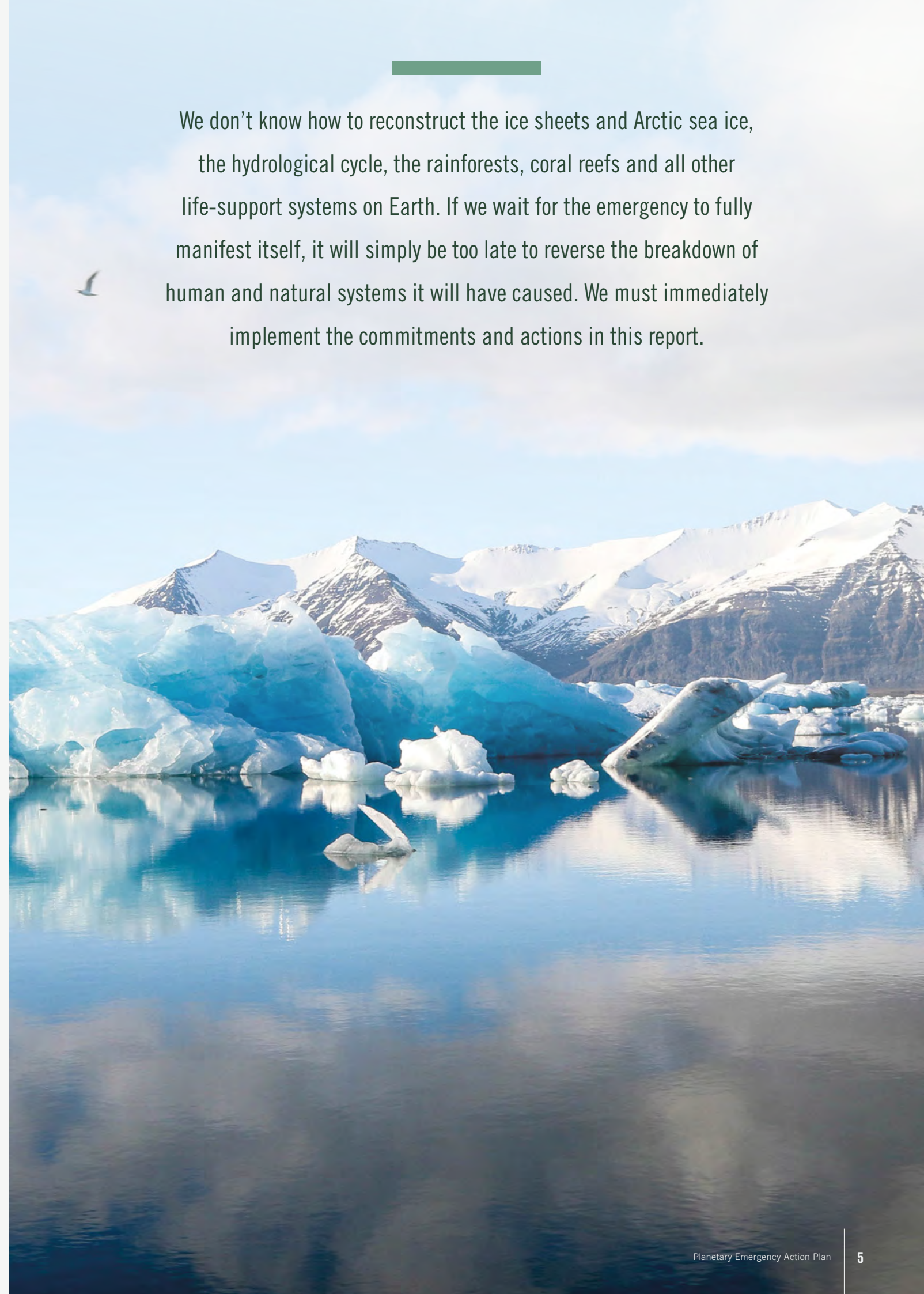


The existential risk is real. Yet, the opportunities to not just avert disaster but to rebuild, improve and regenerate are readily available. History has shown that humanity is remarkably resilient. We are well adapted to respond to disaster through cooperation and innovation. But the potential consequences we face this time are different - we have a narrow window to act now to reduce risk or avoid catastrophe. We don't know how to reconstruct the cryosphere, the hydrological cycle, the rainforests, coral reefs and all other life-support systems on Earth. Once the emergency fully manifests itself, it will simply be too late to reverse the breakdown. As well as halting climate change and protecting nature, these efforts will improve health, livelihoods and equity and create more liveable and sustainable cities and rural communities.

Our proposed commitments and underpinning action are of the scale needed to respond to the emergency facing people and planet. Our aim is to protect the Global Commons through 10 clear commitments, and ensure they are met by immediately implementing a set of transformational policy and market levers. This is our insurance policy to emerge from emergency and guarantee a just transition for all.

We invite nations to discuss the case for a **Planetary Emergency Plan**. We propose such a plan be founded on the urgent need to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, to reach carbon-neutrality by 2050, while halting biodiversity loss and protecting essential Global Commons. Such an initiative is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty and improve quality of life. We can **emerge from emergency** to a world which benefits all species, within planetary boundaries and leaving no one behind. This is the world we envisage, and the world to which we must all aspire.

We don't know how to reconstruct the ice sheets and Arctic sea ice, the hydrological cycle, the rainforests, coral reefs and all other life-support systems on Earth. If we wait for the emergency to fully manifest itself, it will simply be too late to reverse the breakdown of human and natural systems it will have caused. We must immediately implement the commitments and actions in this report.



10 COMMITMENTS FOR OUR GLOBAL COMMONS



1. **By 2030, declare critical ecosystems as Global Commons** and protected areas, through a regime of stewardship and co-responsibility by the entire global human community.
2. **By 2020, set a universal global moratorium on deforestation**, using a net-zero deforestation and degradation metric and, **by 2025, triple annual investments** in forest conservation and forest landscape restoration.
3. **By 2020, sign an immediate moratorium on developing Arctic oil and gas reserves**, support withdrawal from fossil energy exploration and use and **establish a Cryosphere Preservation Plan** to protect this critical ecosystem more broadly.
4. **In 2020, significantly enhance public and private finance flows for restoration of critical ecosystems**, including by mobilising \$200billion for the GCF and GEF over the next decade.
5. **In 2020, halt the decline of critical and vulnerable ocean ecosystems and habitats and secure a robust New Ocean Treaty** (under UNCLOS) for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which constitute half of our planet.
6. **In 2020, launch a permanent public-private Planetary Emergency fund for the Global Commons** building upon the G7 Amazon Emergency Fund and committing the necessary capital to insure humanity against present and inevitable future crises.
7. **By 2020, ensure all sovereign wealth funds commit to defunding deforestation** and, **by 2025, halt all investments** driving continued deforestation and unsustainable land-use change of intact and irreplaceable ecosystems.
8. **By 2025, require all large publicly-listed and family-owned companies to commit to science-based targets, shift to green investments** (climate mitigation and adaptation as well as ecosystems protections and regeneration), **disclose** using available taxonomies **and report** according to material risks from the Planetary Emergency.
9. **By 2025, halt all conversion of wetlands, grasslands and savannahs** for the production of agricultural commodities and **triple annual investments** in their effective **protection, restoration and resilience**.
10. **By 2020, introduce financial mechanisms and policy instruments** to support local farmers, foresters and indigenous people to **secure their livelihoods** and to shift to **regenerative agriculture, sustainable forestry** and other sustainable land-use practices.

10 URGENT ACTIONS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION



TRANSFORMING ENERGY SYSTEMS

1. **Halt all fossil fuel expansion, investments and subsidies by 2020** and shift investments and revenues to low-carbon energy deployment, research, development and innovation.
2. **Continue the doubling of wind and solar capacity every four years, and triple annual investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies** for high-emitting sectors **before 2025**.
3. **Set a global floor price on carbon (>30 USD/ton CO₂ and rising) immediately** for developed countries and **no later than 2025 for the most advanced transition economies**, that internalises high-carbon energy externalities in all products and services.

SHIFTING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

4. **Agree in 2020 to halve consumption and production footprints** in developed and emerging economies **and close loops in inefficient value chains, by 2030**.
5. **Internalise externalities in unsustainable and high-carbon production and consumption** through targeted consumption taxes and regulation, as well as consumption-based accounting, **by 2025**.
6. **Develop national and cross-national roadmaps for all countries towards regenerative land-use and circular economies**, including a reduction in global carbon emissions from basic materials to net-zero, **by 2030**.

CREATING A JUST AND EQUITABLE SOCIETY FOUNDED IN HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

7. **Introduce** economic progress indicators that include **socio-ecological and human health and well-being by 2030**, recognising that the latter depends on the flourishing and stewardship of natural ecosystems.³
8. **Provide legal tools by 2025 that allow indigenous, forest and tribal communities** to secure their rights to traditional land, recognising their vital role as stewards of these lands in mitigating climate change and ecosystem degradation. Such mechanisms must include **funding and legal aid** to guarantee that these communities have access to justice.^{4 5}
9. **Shift taxation from labour** to the use of all natural resources, final disposal, emissions to land, air and water **by 2020**.
10. **Establish clear funding and retraining programmes** for displaced workers, rural and industrial communities **by 2025**.

The manner and priority in which these actions are implemented will vary from country to country and between developed economies and economies in transition, but the overall objective of rapid carbon emissions reduction and nature regeneration should be a common goal over the next decade.

³ [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60901-1.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(15)60901-1.pdf)

⁴ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/08/08/un-science-report-shows-time-reboot-relationship-nature/>

⁵ <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/09/safeguarding-carbon-stored-indigenous-and-community-lands-essential-meeting-climate>



SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS,
FORESTERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
TO SECURE THEIR LIVELIHOODS AND TO
SHIFT TO REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE,
SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND OTHER
SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE PRACTICES



APPLY CIRCULAR
PRODUCTION SYSTEMS
AND BUSINESS
MODELS BY REDUCING
CONSUMPTION,
CLOSING LOOPS AND
MAXIMISING REUSE
AND RECYCLING

THE RATIONALE FOR EMERGENCY ACTION



The science is clear: the climate and biodiversity are fully integrated and interdependent. Every year since the Industrial Revolution, land-based and ocean ecosystems have absorbed close to half of all emissions from fossil-fuel burning. Without nature's ability to absorb and store our GHG emissions, we would have already exceeded 2°C of warming, with potentially disastrous consequences. Breaching this threshold of warming could push the planet towards irreversible and catastrophic biosphere feedbacks⁶.

When climate change alters a chink in the planetary system, it can set off a chain of negative feedback loops. Increasing droughts, for instance, are reducing the ability of tropical forests to store carbon, making them more prone to fires, releasing yet more GHG emissions. The significant loss of the Cryosphere has reduced the albedo capacity of key Earth systems to reflect heat away from the planet. The higher the temperature, the more permafrost thaws, with greater emissions of both CO₂ and methane, leading to even greater warming and triggering further negative feedback loops.

At least one million species risk disappearance, many within decades⁷. Food chains could disintegrate and vital ecosystems collapse. Species diversity and ecosystems integrity play a fundamental role in regulating the climate, water cycles, carbon sequestration and food production.

⁶ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

⁷ <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>



The increase in costly, extreme weather events around the world is symptomatic of the increasing instability of our climate system. Accelerating sea-level rise from polar ice sheets threatens millions in more intense storms. Loss of mountain glaciers and snowpack threaten reliable water supplies for billions, from the Indian sub-continent to the American West. Fundamental changes to the environment threaten to undermine the progress we have made in health and life expectancy. More heat stress, for example, reduces labour productivity and causes more deaths, particularly in mid- and low-latitude regions. Fires from intentional burning in agriculture spread to neighbouring farms and forests, damaging soil carbon capacity and productivity. Declining crop yields in tropical and sub-tropical regions will increase undernutrition for many millions, stunting children's growth. Land-use changes, pollution and temperature rise are causing more infectious and mosquito-borne diseases.

Current economic assessments of planetary changes are deeply concerning and global economic and societal risks of accelerated planetary pressure are unimaginable. Yet we know that the costs of action are far less than the cost of inaction. The tools we need to respond boldly to the **Planetary Emergency** are readily available, and they will reap significant societal and economic benefits. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C (SR 1.5) tells us that remaining at or below 1.5°C remains physically, technically and economically within our reach if we act at sufficient speed. Over the next 10 years, we can steer our development path onto one which benefits all humanity and allows economies in transition to leapfrog and immediately seize the opportunities from a low-carbon, well-being economy.



Our proposed commitments and underpinning action are of the scale needed to respond to the emergency facing people and planet. Our aim is to protect the Global Commons through 10 clear commitments, and ensure they are met by immediately implementing a set of transformational policy and market levers. This is our insurance policy to **emerge from emergency** and guarantee a just transition for all

GUARANTEE THE HUMAN DIMENSION:
PROVIDE FOR A JUST TRANSITION
AND WELL-BEING ECONOMY

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STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF
CRITICAL LAND-BASED ECOSYSTEMS
AND CARBON SINKS AND ACCELERATE
THEIR EFFECTIVE PROTECTION,
RESTORATION AND RESILIENCE



THE 10,000-YEAR PERIOD OF
REMARKABLE STABILITY AND HIGH
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY WHICH
ENABLED THE EMERGENCE OF HUMAN
CIVILISATION, IS NOW AT RISK



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