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World Future Council Appeals to G8: Listen to the Voice of Future Generations

Founding Congress Sees Bianca Jagger Elected First Chairperson

Hamburg, 13th May 2007. “Today we truly stand at the crossroads of human history. Our actions – and our failure to act – will decide the future of life on earth for thousands of years, if not forever.” The opening words of the “Hamburg Call to Action”, which was unanimously adopted by the 50 members of the World Future Council at the organisation’s Founding Congress on Sunday.

The declaration appeals to G8 leaders ahead of their June summit to “face up to their unique responsibilities ... and not allow outdated rules and economic dogmas to endanger our common future. The unprecedented challenge of climate change will only be overcome by global sharing of vital resources and technologies.”

Jakob von Uexkull, initiator of the World Future Council and founder of the Right Livelihood Awards, said the Hamburg Call to Action “sets out the vision and aims of the newly-formed Council.” Able to draw on the expertise of fifty prominent thinkers and pioneers from five continents, the World Future Council will be “an ethical voice for the needs and rights of future life” said von Uexkull. With members coming from the worlds of governments, parliaments, business, civil society, science and the arts, the World Future Council will work with policy-makers and citizens world-wide to identify and implement the best policies, to ensure a sustainable, just and peaceful future.

Climate Change is not the only challenge the World Future Council will address, but it does form the focus of the organisation’s first major campaign. In “Surviving the Century”, a book published by World Future Council co-founder, the film-maker and environmentalist, Herbert Giradet, eight international experts reveal the quickest, practical ways to avoid the worst impacts of climate change using technologies that already exist. One of the most prominent is the Feed-In Tariff system”, set out in another World Future Council publication by Miguel Mendonca, in which legislation makes renewable energy cost-effective for the consumer.

At the Founding Congress, Council members also voted in the first Executive Committee, consisting of five personalities, who reflect the diversity of the organisation. Human rights advocate and Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador, Bianca Jagger, was elected as chairperson, and will work closely with her deputy, Beate Weber, former Mayor of the German city of Heidelberg and Chair of the European Parliament Committee on environment, health and consumer protection. The two will be supported by Tariq Banuri, Director of the Asia Centre of the Stockholm Environment Institute, Stephen Marglin, Professor of Economics at Harvard University, and Vandana Shiva, the renowned Indian physicist and environmental campaigner who will also be speaking at the alternative G8 People’s Summit.

After 3 days of consultations at the Founding Congress in Hamburg, Council members signed a commitment to do “everything in their power to speak up for comprehensive peace and true justice between the world’s peoples and countries.”