

**FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
PRESS RELEASE**

EMBARGOED TO 00:01 BST, 1st June 2010

Civil society call for a 'new politics of the future'

In an open letter dated 1st June 2010 to Prime Minister Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Clegg, a group including chief executives of ten civil society organisations calls for the two to ensure that the government goes beyond 'New Politics' to adopt a "New Politics of the Future".

In their letter, the group warn that short-termism in contemporary politics on issues including climate change, changing demographics, youth unemployment, and environmental and social injustice, could endanger not only the UK's ability to achieve meaningful progress in these areas, but even democracy itself.

The open letter calls on the Prime Minister to commit to an annual 'State of the Future' speech and asks Prime Minister Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Clegg fully to investigate the potential to adopt other mechanisms that could better equip and encourage Members of Parliament to consider the long-term interests of future generations in policy decisions.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The following signatories to the letter are available for media interviews and comment:

Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development Director Halina Ward (email: press@fdsd.org; Tel: +44 (0)20 7022 1848; Skype: halinaward) Involve Director Simon Burall (simon@involve.org.uk; Tel: +44 (0)7789 483 221), and Capacity Global Director Maria Adebowale (email: maria@capacity.org.uk; Tel: +44 (0)7963 365685).

The full text of the open letter to Prime Minister Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Clegg and a list of signatories, embargoed until 00:01 GMT on 1st June 2010, follows.

The following organisations' Directors or Chief Executives have signed the open letter:

Capacity Global
Community Sector Coalition
DEA
Environmental Protection UK
Environmental Regulation and Information Centre (Eric) Ltd
Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development
Gaia Foundation
International Institute for Environment and Development
Involve
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
The Samosa

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Right Hon David Cameron MP and Right Hon Nick Clegg MP
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1st June 2010

OPEN LETTER

Dear Prime Minister Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Clegg

Towards a new politics of the future

We write to endorse your concern to tackle 'short-termism' in the nation's democracy and to urge you to go further; to initiate a new "politics of the future" in the UK.

As a group of researchers, advocates and campaigners for sustainable development, we well understand the importance of aligning short-term democratic decision-making with long-term benefits to society as a whole, and with consideration for the interests of future generations both in the UK and abroad.

We fear that short-termism in contemporary politics on issues including climate change, changing demographics, youth unemployment, and environmental and social injustice, could endanger not only our ability to achieve meaningful progress in these areas, but even democracy itself. For when social injustice and inequality become more pronounced and natural resources more scarce, the real risk is that democracy itself may be sacrificed as the need for action becomes more urgent.

You have the power to take simple and cost-effective steps now to guard against that risk.

You would not be alone in taking steps consciously to 'future-proof' UK democratic processes. On the contrary, your Government would join a handful of progressive leaders around the world. In 2007, the Hungarian Parliament appointed the world's first 'Green Ombudsman'; a Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations. And in Finland, a cross-party parliamentary Committee for the Future has been operating since 1993, preparing statements and reports on 'futures' issues affecting Finland's development, and responding to the Government's annual Report on the Future.

Here in the UK, we urge you immediately to commit to an annual, televised, 'State of the Future' speech and public debate, starting in 2010. That speech should describe how your Government has taken steps, and plans, to take account of long-term threats to our environment and our society, and to the interests of future generations.

Finally, we urge you to initiate an effort fully to investigate whether there are other innovations in the parliamentary and policy process that could better equip and encourage Members of Parliament to consider the long-term interests of future generations in policy decisions. We would be delighted to work with you in such an endeavour.

We welcome your commitment to tackle short-termism in the nation's governance, for political short-termism is one of the chief causes of unsustainable development. But we believe that that commitment must be backed by demonstrable institutional and procedural innovation.

In this era of new politics, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, we call on you to adopt a New Politics of the Future.

Yours sincerely

Maria Adebawale
Director, Capacity Global (www.capacity.org.uk)

Anwar Akhtar
Director, The Samosa (www.thesamosa.co.uk)

Simon Burall
Director, Involve (www.involve.org.uk)

Tony Colman, Councillor, UK
Alice Vincent, Assistant to the Management Board UK, Research Assistant Future Justice
World Future Council Foundation (www.worldfuturecouncil.org)

Kevin Curley
Chief Executive, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
(www.navca.org.uk)

Begonia Filgueira
Solicitor and Director, Environmental Regulation and Information Centre (Eric) Ltd (www.eric-group.co.uk)

Lukas Köhler
MA student, University of London

Liz Hosken, Director
Carine Nadal, Legal Researcher
Sulemana Abudulai, Head of Strategic Partnerships
The Gaia Foundation (www.gaiafoundation.org)

Jen Lowthrop, Steering Group Chair
Sydney Fleming-Gale, Steering Group Member
Andrew Johnston, Steering Group Member
Sian Ryan, Steering Group Member
Climate Squad (www.globalactionplan.org.uk/climate-squad)

Philip Mulligan, Director
Environmental Protection UK (www.environmental-protection.org.uk)

C'Ilr. Dr Rupert Read
Green Party Councillor, and Reader in Philosophy at the University of East Anglia, Norwich

Matthew Scott, Director, Community Sector Coalition (www.communitysectorcoalition.org.uk)

Hetan Shah
Chief Executive, DEA (www.dea.org.uk)

Paul Spray

Director of Policy, Traidcraft (www.traidcraft.co.uk)

Dr Kaihsu Tai

Advisory Member, Green Economics Institute

Camilla Toulmin

Director, International Institute for Environment and Development (www.iied.org)

Halina Ward, Director

Ian Christie, Vice-Chair

John Lotherington, Trustee

Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development (www.fdsd.org)