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For the purpose of the conference held by Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century pronounces and suggests:

### **Is it going to take a global environmental crisis?**

All around the world, environmental issues take the lead in headlines, protests, conferences and concerns. According to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change it is very likely that the human activity has influenced and changed natural processes of our planet. Interest groups as well as governments are demanding global action on this global problem as environmental issues cannot be left alone as a problem of closed communities. During the past decade, the world has become interconnected in an unprecedented way. Our actions influence us globally. Climate change, preserving the biodiversity or scarce water resources are issues global in scope and should be discussed on a global and the highest political level. Furthermore, environmental problems are interconnected thus acting on one issue may incite positive change for another. Hence complex, long-term and courageous approach is needed. Solving and acting upon the environmental issues brings positive effects on reduction of poverty or job creation in the developed as well as developing world.

### **Emissions reduction**

The entire world is waiting for the outcomes of the Cancun conference in December 2010. Countries are relied upon to agree on binding treaty which would provide the continuing of the commitments agreed in the Kyoto protocol. Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognizes the initiatives of United Nations in the field of climate change and fully supports demands for quantified emissions limitations for the upcoming years.

Developed countries are responsible for 75% of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere today, excluding those from tropical deforestation. The Copenhagen Accord brought a promise to the world that nations would limit temperature rises to less than 2°C. For the goal to be fulfilled, the developed nations need to commit themselves to cut their collective greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below the 1990 level by 2020 in a binding global agreement. They should do so also with a view to collectively reducing their emissions by 60% to 80% by 2050 compared to 1990. As Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century regards immediate actions as highly important for the favourable development of mankind on the Earth, it proposes to the participant of the environmental section negotiations to elaborate the possible cooperation strategy that would bind the participants to reduce their green house gases emissions at least by 40 percent by 2020 to the 1990 levels stated in Kyoto protocol by countries stated in Annex B of this protocol. These nations have the most financial resources and the greatest technological capacity to cut their emissions, what should make them leaders in the effort to diminish the damaging effects of climate change.

To add to the effectiveness to the process of tackling the climate change, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognises the need for the developing countries to commit themselves for equally



confident quantified emissions limitations as developed countries even though they face different national circumstances. The interest for developing countries lays in diminishing the impacts of floods, storms, droughts and the other effects of climate change, since they are more often stricken by these phenomena. According to the IEA “Highlights” version of *CO2 Emissions from Fuel Combustion* report the OECD countries have increased the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel combustion per capita by 0.2% in a percentage change from 1990 to 2008. The non-OECD countries have seen the increase of 29.7% in the same indicator over the 1990-2008 time period. Therefore, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century suggests a commitment of non-OECD countries to aim for the maximum of 5% increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel combustion per capita in the time period 2010-2020. By 2020, GDP is expected to double in China and India, and rise by 50% in Brazil. It has been estimated that taking action to cut emissions would cut down just 1% off this GDP growth. In reality, the cost is likely to be even smaller and probably even negative since these estimates do not take into account the benefits of avoiding the damage that would be caused by climate change.

### Technology transfer mechanism

Experience revealed that putting a price on the greenhouse gases and emissions trading might bring benefits. The emissions trading scheme showed an effective way of motivating countries, industry and business sectors to invest in new technologies. On the other hand, the global situation of rising temperatures demands further commitments in the area of implementation of new technologies to reduce the levels of greenhouse gases. For this purpose, the Clean Development Mechanism defined in the Kyoto Protocol, Art. 12 shall be improved to encourage even greater transfer of new “green” technologies from the developed countries to the developing nations. The new system must override the existing economic and market barriers such as lack of financial resources, high investment costs, incompatible prices, subsidies and tariffs, lack of incentives, etc., mentioned in the Final report on Patents and clean energy by the UNFCCC Non-Annex I Parties.<sup>1</sup> Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges the participants to make apposite proposals to overcome the problems that limit tackling global warming.

### Reforestation

Deforestation and forest degradation play undoubtedly relevant role in the process of climate change. Developed countries have taken steps to stop the degradation of its forests. The developing nations are still in the process of developing sustainable forest management plans. Deforestation in developing countries generates 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, more than all forms of transport combined. Forests are homes to diverse fauna and flora, therefore their conserving is crucial for conserving biodiversity and sustainable development.

Several programs are in place for helping developing countries to focus on and effectively treat this issue. However, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century does not find the involvement of

<sup>1</sup> UNEP, EPO, ICTSD: Patents and clean energy: bridging the gap between evidence and policy – Final report, 2010, pg. 20



developed countries sufficient. Sustainable forest management will successfully contribute to lowering CO<sub>2</sub> levels only if the aspiration is supported throughout the international spectrum. Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century would like to provide ground for the developed countries, on national or supranational level, to increase their financial participation in projects stopping deforestation practices in developing countries. Finances should be directed to the programmes such as UN-REDD programme, Forest Investment programme, World forestry congress, etc. Reversing deforestation and forest degradation must be a long-term interest of all the countries, being developed or developing.

### **Biodiversity**

Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognizes that each year biodiversity is becoming a more pressing matter. Experts state that changes and loss of biodiversity is occurring faster mainly due to the combination of factors affecting it. The largest impact is formed by large-scale fishing, freshwater use and agriculture. Direct effects include an increased risk of sudden environmental changes such as fisheries collapses, floods, droughts, wildfires and desertification. Conservation of ecosystems and diverse species contribute in many ways to the well-being of humans. Particularly the use of ecosystem services brings incalculable value to millions of people. Better theories and models are needed to understand the links between ecosystem change and impacts on human well-being and to assess the economic consequences of ecosystem change. Even though the long term goal is welcome, intermediate milestones with time specific and measurable sector or commodity based targets would enhance the implementation. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment unprecedented additional efforts need to be exercised to achieve significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity sustaining and restoration.

As 2010 is an International year of diversity, it would be favourable for the negotiations to adopt an agreement which would facilitate for stronger cooperation in the field of calculating the value of sustaining the biodiversity that would be then used on a worldwide basis. Following these measures, countries should develop commitments to include the conservation programmes to stop the degradation of biodiversity into national biodiversity strategies by 2015 and to evaluate the implementation of these strategies by 2020. To accomplish sustainable biodiversity, the strategies should be integrated into agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors. Last, but not least, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century calls for stronger control of the implementation of already existing and future national strategies by non-governmental organizations active in the field of sustaining and restoration biodiversity.

### **Water resources**

Many people believe water will soon become source of exceptional political and economic power. Water resources are crucial for the sole existence of life on our planet. Series of trends comprising climate change, pollution, deforestation, urban growth and others put our water resources under serious threats. Most of the water resources are affected indirectly thus it is difficult to recognize the impairment of these important resources. As the restoration and cleaning of polluted waters require long periods of time, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century supports



participants in the discussion about protection of water resources in global scope. High investments should be made and elaborate solutions accepted. Even though, decreasing capacity of water resources seem as differing regional issues of developing countries, neglecting of these regional problems may eventuate into global crisis due to the nature of natural water cycles. Forum for the 21st century appeals the participants of the conference to introduce relevant proposals in the matter of decreasing capacity and pollution of water sources.

### **Energy efficiency**

Volatile markets and prices of energy force countries to decide and act on their own energy security policies. Even though the energy intensity of most economic sectors is decreasing, this is true only for developed countries which have passed the industrial and post industrial times and are profiting from information society driven by newest technologies. However, some countries are not able to afford the newest technologies, others are not pushed and persuaded to lower the amount of energy used per unit. Countries are appealed to sign and implement higher usage of clean and renewable energy sources.

Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century accounts all the environmental problems offered for discussion and negotiations in the environmental section as global is scope. Therefore it is essential for them to be acted upon. All the issues discussed should become part of the national development processes that are included in the national development strategies.