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Adopt Climate Solutions Treaties

When climate change first became a public concern, most people assumed we had time to fix the problem, so the focus was on shaving bits off the problem by reducing our emissions.

This negative mindset is one reason why we have not made better progress: we have been fixated on removing the problem, rather than generating the solution. This does not build a vision of a sustainable, climate-friendly world that can make people excited and eager to act. We also need climate solutions treaties.

A Global Renewable Energy Treaty

The price of all renewable energy is falling as mass production increases. If nations agree to increase their use of renewables by a set amount each year, with specific targets for solar, wind and geothermal, investors would have the security they need to finance new projects. The formation of the International Renewable Energy Agency in 2009 is a huge step forward.

A Global Energy Efficiency Treaty

We need global energy efficiency standards that maximize the efficiency of all appliances, following Japan's Top Runner Program (see #66) — and we need an International Energy Conservation Agency to help make it happen.

A Global Low-Carbon Vehicles Treaty

We need a global agreement in which nations agree to purchase large volumes of zero- and low-carbon- emission vehicles by set dates, as California has done. Volume production is critical to drive down the price — we can't wait until 2015 or 2020

The point is to provide the next generation with the tools to restore Earth and themselves.... The security of humanity will not require armies of soldiers but battalions of conscious environmentalists.

— Hanne Strong

for cheap EVs and PHEVs. If vehicle manufacturers knew there was a treaty among nations to purchase 5 million PHEVs in 2012 and 50 million in 2014, production lines would be converted overnight.

A Global Zero-Carbon Buildings Treaty

Architects are already designing zero-carbon buildings, and some jurisdictions are writing green building codes, such as Britain's requirement that all new buildings must be zero carbon by 2016. We need a treaty in which nations agree to make all new buildings zero carbon by 2020, and help each other with resources.

A Global Zero-Waste Treaty

We need to eliminate all garbage, both for its methane emissions and to stop energy-intensive materials from being landfilled and incinerated, not just in a few scattered cities, like San Francisco. We need a global zero-waste treaty in which nations agree to achieve zero waste by 2030, and help each other get there.

A Global Farmlands Carbon-Recovery Treaty

We need to reverse decades of carbon loss from the world's farmlands through chemical use and poor farming practices. A carbon-recovery treaty would commit nations to increase the percentage of farmlands being monitored and rewarded for carbon recovery, aiming at 100% global compliance by 2030, and give farmers the support they need.

A Global Grasslands Carbon-Recovery Treaty

We need a similar treaty among grasslands nations that commits them to holistic grazing

management and other practices that restore the grasslands' carbon, rewarded by inclusion in a world carbon-trading market, with the goal of 100% global compliance by 2030.

A Global Forests Carbon-Recovery Treaty

We need a treaty by which the world's forest nations agree to restore the world's forests and maximize their ability to store carbon. (See #95.)

A Global Carbon-Tax Treaty

A global carbon tax, levied by as many nations as possible, would internalize the price of pollution into the global economy and level the economic playing field among nations. A percentage of the income could go into a global climate-solutions fund (see #94) and the rest be kept by participating nations.

A Global Carbon-Subsidies-Removal Treaty

Subsidizing the use of fossil fuels is one of our worst global habits: we are paying to accelerate our own destruction. We need a treaty among nations to eliminate all such subsidies by 2015.

A Global Methane Treaty

In the critical years leading up to 2020, and thereafter, the impact of methane must be measured by its global warming potential over its 8-year lifetime, not the artificial 100-year lifetime set by the IPCC. A global treaty would bind nations to eliminate their methane emissions from landfills, animal manure, natural gas leakage and other sources.



BETTER PLACE

A Better Place electric charging post in Sacramento, California. A global treaty to accelerate the production of EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs would drive prices down.

A Global Black-Carbon Treaty

Black carbon, or soot, has only recently begun to ring the alarm bells as a cause of global warming. (See p. 14.) A global treaty is urgently needed to replace smoky cook-stoves and dirty diesel vehicles and accelerate other known solutions.

A Global F-Gas Treaty

The F-Gases are usually forgotten and ignored, but the air-conditioning and coolant gas HFC-134a has a staggeringly high GWP — 5,000 times more powerful than CO₂ over its short, 14-year lifetime. A global treaty would bind all nations to phase out all F-Gases by 2020. (See #97.)