

**Founding Ceremony,  
Hamburg, 10 May 2007**

Herbert Girardet\*

Ladies and gentlemen,

after many month of preparations the day has come on which the World Future Council becomes a reality. This is a truly momentous occasion and I am delighted to be a part of it. The preparations for this event by Alexandra Wandel and the WFC staff, were, above all else, concerned with preparing the programme in meticulous detail. At the same time we have also worked to assure that those who will ask 'what will the World Future Council' do can be given plausible answers. As director of programmes this has been my task and I am pleased to indicate the direction in which we are going.

First of all I am pleased to say that I was able to persuade eight eminent authors to contribute chapters to a book that we have called "Surviving the Century – Facing Climate Change and other Global Challenges" or in German "Zukunft ist möglich – Wege aus dem Klimachaos". Each chapter tries to answer four different questions: *Where are we? Where are we going? Where do we want to be? How do could we get there?* This methodology is typical of how we will deal with many other issues in the coming years.

The focus of the book also reflects a decision by the Founding Council meeting in Geneva a year ago. That meeting decided that in the face of the huge threat of climate change, our first campaign should focus on accelerating the introduction of renewable energy. In the last few months our growing team in London and Hamburg has done just that: My colleague Miguel Mendonca has written a second book, "Feed-In Tariffs – Accelerating the Deployment of Renewable Energy" which we have also published recently. This important book illustrates the great success of Feed-In legislation, which makes a cost effective investment in renewable energy systems possible. It has spread from Germany to 42 countries and regions around the world. We have also produced a campaign brochure, as well as a documentary film called "Payback Time" which has just been broadcast four times on BBC World to some 150 million households worldwide.

Feed-In Tariffs are now becoming the subject of the first major international campaign of the World Future Council. We will work with thousands of civil society organisations and parliamentarians around the world to persuade them of the compelling logic of this legislation and how it can help to minimise our dependence on fossil fuel and nuclear energy. The campaign will start in the next few weeks.

Looking ahead, our next three campaigns, till the end of 2008, will continue to focus on climate related issues - *Climate Change and Agriculture, Climate Change and Forests* and *Sustainable Cities*. We are now fundraising for these campaigns. We are also preparing an international campaign called "Saving the Riches of the Oceans". To our surprise there is no major international organisation dealing with this crucial

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issue. We will set up a commission on the oceans here in Hamburg and its work will be the basis of our international campaign. Hamburg will also be the headquarters of our commission on Climate Change and, probably, on Sustainable Cities as well.

The expertise of the WFC increasingly also includes legal expertise. Legal processes will be the basis on which many of the proposals we will be making have to be implemented. We have compiled a list of "Policies to change the world" which you can find on our website. These are policies that have often spread from one country to another because they have been found to be particularly effective. So far we have compiled 13 of these, which you can find on our new website, and feed-in legislation for renewable energy is one of them.

The WFC Founding Congress in the next few days will give an opportunity for the council members and staff to discuss new directions we may follow in the coming years. It is crucial that the council develops its own position on how the WFC can do its work as an international voice for future generations to maximum effect. Now it is our task to assure that we fulfil this role as best we can. The extraordinary range of expertise present in the council and its staff will help assure that we can meet the high expectations that are awaiting us - particularly by the children present here and in the courtyard outside. Now is the time to prove that we truly reflect their concerns!

Thank you for listening!

\* Herbert Girardet, Director of Programmes, World Future Council. Prof. Herbert Girardet is an author, consultant and filmmaker. He is chairman of the Schumacher Society UK, a patron of the Soil Association, and a recipient of a UN Global 500 Award 'for outstanding environmental achievements'.