

Press release – for immediate release

Lisbon legal experts conference on intergenerational justice

Sustainability can be made a political reality

World Future Council to start campaign on Guardians for Future Generations

Lisbon, 28.5. 2010. The international conference on “Ways to Legally Implement Intergenerational Justice“ brought international legal experts to Lisbon on May 27–28 in order to create anti-dotes to the political and economic short-termism that increasingly threatens our future living conditions. The conference was co-hosted by the World Future Council and the Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations. Its goal was to discuss policy concepts and concrete law changes that would help to finally make sustainability a reality: “The term sustainability can be found in almost every declaration and corporate report now, but policy advances to implement sustainable solutions are regularly watered down”, summarizes Dr. Maja Göpel, Director Future Justice of the World Future Council. “Democracies have a strong tendency to favour present voters and lobbyists over future citizens that have no political or financial power. But the results of this myopic game are that we are rapidly closing the options for our children and grandchildren.”

Among the delegates to the conference were personalities that have officially been given the role to defend such options. Dr. Sandor Fülöp, Ombudsman for Future Generations in Hungary, for example, pointed out that his mandate is to protect fundamental rights of every citizen when he is stopping projects destroying too much nature. “Every Hungarian has the right to life and to intact nature. We cannot irreversibly destroy natural wealth in order to realize high economic profit today. We determine the conditions for life tomorrow.”

While some speakers were more optimistic about the opportunities of technological revolution than others, consensus prevailed that we have to quickly change course to safeguard our environment and end poverty at the same time. Shlomo Shoham, former Commissioner for Future Generations in Israel, did not fall short from calling for changed future intelligence: “Humanity is facing a future in which change takes place at an ever-increasing speed. The unknown awaits us beyond the horizon and our ability to digest and deal with the sheer volume of change is diminishing. We need to find new paths, train ourselves to ‘let go’ of certain ideas, fears, and concerns and change not only our rules, but also the way we think and act. We need to create future intelligence – and use it.”

The World Future Council is currently launching a campaign on the promotion of such Guardians for Future Generations on the European and national governance level. In its most ambitious form these Guardians of the long view would not only speak up for long-term interests in decision-making, but also help develop the knowledge base we need to make sustainability a reality.

World Future Council

The World Future Council brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. Its up to 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision-makers with effective policy solutions. In-depth research underpins advocacy work for international agreements, regional policy frameworks and national lawmaking and thus produces practical and tangible results. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany, and financed by donations.

For more information see www.worldfuturecouncil.org

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