

# **Co-creating a global climate commons regime**

*a contribution to*

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***designing systems for a changing world***

## Concentration of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>

Pre-industrial 280 ppm

Today 396 ppm

(increasing at an accelerating rate, now over 2ppm per year)

Max safe level 350 ppm

## Annual global GHG emissions

1990: 37 Gt.

2012: 51 Gt.

- an **increase** of 14Gt over 22 years.

40% of that increase is attributable to the burning of fossil fuels.

By 2020:

If BAU: 58 Gt. (or if Doha complied with: 57Gt.)

Required to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees C: 44Gt

- a **decrease** of 7 Gt

Note that 2 degrees is highly suspect - its a political compromise, not based on a scientific prediction and the precautionary principle

## The carbon bubble

The reserves the fossil fuel industry say they intend eventually to bring onto the market: 2,795 Gt

Maximum CO<sub>2</sub> that might avoid 2 degreeC rise: 565 Gt

## **An extremely dangerous situation the product of the 'Global Monetocracy'**

- The Global Monetocracy: the systemic purpose of the current dominant economic/governance system is economic growth for the benefit of the rich (for other components, including the influence of large corporations and the wealthy elite, see *Gaian Democracies*)
- The Global Monetocracy is **blind**
  - to its own history of fatal over exploitation of
    - of nature
    - and people
  - to foreseeable consequences of the current direction in terms of natural limits
    - climate change
    - acidification of ocean
    - loss of biodiversity
    - several other 'planetary boundaries'
  - and to massive inequality between and within nation states and massive poverty
- Systemic flaws in UNFCCC
  - World as collection of states
  - agreement only by compromise
  - other species and ecosystems and future generation not parties
  - no procedure for emergency
- Much deeper malaise:
  - progress as religion
  - man superior to nature

Doha: commitment to negotiate to reach new global agreement by 2015 to take effect in 2020.

Conclusion: it is at the very least doubtful whether the GM is systemically capable of an adequate response to climate change. We can't be certain that nation states will keep their promise to reach a binding agreement in 2015 to take effect in 2020, or that what is agreed will be adequate, or that it will be complied with. And anyway the upward trend in emissions must be reversed well before 2020.

So, if humanity is to make an effective response to climate change, **we must design and build and implement a new global system** capable (inter alia) of achieving the reduction in annual GHGs by 2020 necessary to avoid calamitous climate change.

## **The new global system we propose**

Systemic Purpose:

- sustainable use of natural resources
- social justice

In relation to climate change, and in particular the needed reduction in use of fossil fuels (other measures will be necessary for other purposes):

Cap and Share / Cap and Dividend ([www.capandshare.org](http://www.capandshare.org))

- cap the carbon, share the income
- upstream cap
- permit system
- distribution of permits left to market forces
- sums paid for permits received by citizens everywhere

Global Climate Commons Trust:

- established by global civil society
- administers global C&S/D.
- sets cap on global fossil fuels based on latest climate science
- reducing (say) 6% per annum for (say) next 10 years
- invites nation-state governments to police scheme in their jurisdictions

Proceeds of sale of permits (the scarcity rent) are paid to or applied for the benefit of everyone see *Sharing for Survival*. For this purpose worldwide recursive structures are built from bottom up.

# Seen as Global Commons Regime

## The Commons Paradigm

- It refers to a regime regulating people's use of a natural resource ("common pool resources")
- The purposes are fairness between the users and preservation of the resource
- The regime is created by the users, not states or governments
- The process of making the rules is cooperative and participatory
- The regime excludes ownership, property rights, commodification and privatisation.

see *The Wealth of the Commons*

### Global Climate Commons Regime as a Commons regime

The Commons Paradigm	A global Climate Commons regime
scheme to regulate use of common pool resource	scheme to regulate the use of the atmosphere as dump
purposes are fairness between the users and preservation of the resource	purposes are fairness between users and prevent preventable injury to the atmosphere's climate regulation role
regime is created by the users, not states or governments	regime created by the global human community, the users of this natural resource, not states or government
The process of making the rules is cooperative and participatory	The process of making the rules is cooperative and participatory

The Commons paradigm:

- recognises people as essentially social beings, members of communities rather than isolated individuals,
- recognises that people are dependent on the preservation of the natural systems they are using
- sees them participating directly in the creation and operation of the commons regimes that affect them.
- Whereas corporations including vast multinationals are key players in the dominant global economic system, their non-human DNA excludes them from participation in Commons regimes because the Commons is based on who we are as human beings.
- Where the current system is blind to natural limits, a crucial purpose of the Commons is to preserve the rest of the natural world for future generations and other species.
- And it recognises that, for that, clear rules are needed and must be complied with.
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Thinking about a global Cap and Share scheme and Global Climate Commons Trust through the

spectacles of the Commons Paradigm:

- The atmosphere is a common-pool resource - and is used, currently over-used, by humanity as a dump for disposal of gases from burning fossil fuels, leading to disastrous disruption of the climate regulation role - the ultimate tragedy of the commons.
- The global human community, the users of this natural resource, need to cooperatively institute a regime to restrict this use, a regime that's effective to preserve the atmosphere's function of climate regulation.
- Members of the Feasta Climate Group have taken the first step of designing a system to do that, a global Cap and Share scheme - which we believe would be effective in relation to emissions from fossil fuels and also fair as between the users - to be administered by a global climate commons trust.

Independent from current dysfunctional system

We have always made it clear that, unless the fossil fuel industry as a whole agrees with cooperate with a global C&S scheme, the GCCT will need to persuade individual nation-state governments to cooperate with the scheme by requiring all imports or production of fossil fuels to be covered by a permit issues by the Trust.

In terms of do-ability, that's very different from, and much easier than, getting them to reach a fresh agreement between themselves, something they have been trying to do for 21 years and failed.

We are not seeking to insist on the existing system changing itself, but building a new one to operate along side it and negotiate with it in rational, science based, responsible, nonviolent ways.

## How do we get there?

- "a cooperative and participatory process". This is a process that must be initiated and developed by non-state and non-corporate actors who are not fatally compromised by their deep involvement in the fossil fuel economy.
- Treating the crisis, the unparalleled emergency we are faced with, as an opportunity to start working in new ways that reflect that.
- People power - Erik Olim Wright's social power
- People who have shared values and concerns, their belief in equality, their concern for future generations and other species
- Shared systemic purpose of the project
  - sustainable use of the atmosphere
  - social justice
- Making use of people's ability to cooperate, taking decisions by consensus
- Not attempting to persuade corporations or involve nation-states (except Bolivia?)
- Knitting together the connections between multiple organisations, groups and commoners, creating a dense network with multiple peer to peer climate related commons nodes based in real activities, eg.
  - existing **indigenous commons** organisations and support networks
  - organisations taking **legal actions** relating to climate eg coastal communities, port cities, island states, farmers
  - people **collecting information on fossil fuel industry**, eg identifying where and by whom fossil fuels are introduced into the economy eg coal-swarm
  - people **researching the constitution** and modus operandi of a Global Climate Commons Trust.

# Patterns of systems change

Systems are never static

- Time to grow up. Systems experience a competitive, self-interested, irresponsible, growing up stage. Then they mature. Now that humanity has come up against global limits is the time for a cooperative system of economics and governance designed to achieve a stable, steady state economy.- - Elisabet Sahtouris
- Time for re-organisation. *Panarchy eds* Gunderson and Holling describes 'the adaptive cycle' that ecosystems pass through - rapid growth, conservation, release, reorganisation, followed by rapid growth, conservation, release, reorganisation .... This is a time for re-organisation.
- Evolutionary leap. Complex adaptive systems rarely act instantly, they take some time to react. In systems-speak this is called system delay, inertia or lag. The Earth's climate has been slow to respond to the much higher than usual concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere due to man-made emissions. Governments have been slow to respond to the looming climate change crisis. And we the public have been slow to respond to the failure of the current governmental system to cope with a wide range of problems, including climate change. Sooner or later, on all these fronts, change may start to happen very fast. Eckhart Tolle has written "When faced with a radical crisis, when the old way of being in the world, of interacting with each other and with the realm of nature doesn't work any more, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, an individual human - or a species - will either die or become extinct or rise above their limitations with an evolutionary leap. This is the state of humanity now, and this is its challenge"