

# **São Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health**

## ***Planetary Health for All: Bridging Communities to Achieve the Great Transition***

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### **Section 1: Introduction**

We, the global planetary health community, raise an alarm that the ongoing degradation of our planet's natural systems is a clear and present danger to the health of all people everywhere. A global transition is required to restructure societies to optimize wellbeing while preserving the living world in which they are embedded.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent in a series of distress signals ringing around the world. Hurricanes have devastated Caribbean nations, island nations in Asia and the Pacific such as the Philippines, and the United States Gulf Coast; historic fires have raged across Australia, the Pantanal in Brazil, and Siberia; and the worst locust outbreak in 70 years has destroyed crops in East Africa. Lives and livelihoods have been lost. Ultimately, these planetary emergencies are a result of humanity's broken relationship with Nature.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and destruction of the quality of air, water, and soil are eroding the fundamental life support systems that we all depend on. Every dimension of human health and well-being is now being affected by global environmental change. Planetary health science is clear: we can no longer safeguard human health into the future unless we change course.

We need a fundamental shift in how we live on Earth, what we are calling the Great Transition. Achieving the Great Transition will require rapid, deep, structural change across most dimensions of human activity. This includes rethinking how we produce and consume food, energy, and manufactured goods; how we construct and live in our cities; and how we consider and measure progress and development, and govern ourselves. It will also require a revival in how we understand our relationship to Nature and to each other. It will take practitioners, scholars, and policy makers across every dimension of human activity working together, and it will require listening to voices in every community from Indigenous communities, faith traditions, artists, entrepreneurs, to scientists. Each person, in every place, from every calling has a role to play in safeguarding the health of the planet and people for future generations.

We, the participants of the 2021 Planetary Health Annual Meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, are communities bridged across geographies, cultures, sectors, disciplines, and generations. We call for urgent and decisive action that will save lives and promote people and the planet, now and in the future.

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## Section 2: Key Messages

**For All**--Set an intention. We invite you to consider yourself a co-partner in planetary healing. We all live together in an interconnected world and the actions of each of us inspire others. Therefore, *together*, we solemnly pledge to dedicate our lives to the service of humanity, and to the protection and restoration of the natural systems on which humans and all other species who share our home depend.

**For Governments**--Center planetary health, now and into the future, in international, national, and local policies, recovery plans and budgets, specifically in post COVID-19 plans and environmental policies. As an urgent first step, use your influence at the World Trade Organization and other bodies to encourage the relaxation of patents in order to facilitate the mass production of COVID-19 vaccines in lower- and middle-income countries.

**For Economists**--Promote planetary health by transitioning away from GDP growth as the primary metric for measuring economic success. Instead, emphasize metrics that support regeneration of Nature, human wellbeing, equity, and happiness--the things we actually value. This would allow the economy to serve the living world in which it is embedded.

**For International Organizations**--Overcome silos for a new kind of multilateralism that centers healthy people and a healthy planet and recognizes their interdependence. Cross-cutting cooperation is imperative to merge multiple agendas and strengthen the health-environment nexus. Work towards enhanced governance through equitable influence of low- middle- and high- income countries and the protection of human rights.

**For Jurists and Lawmakers**--Improve governance mechanisms, including transparency, accountability, and hold those who cause planetary health damage to account. Advocate and urgently implement the legal recognition of the 'Rights of Nature' through legal personhood of Nature designation. Additionally, advocate for ecocide as a crime within international law, while also recognizing Indigenous First or Natural law around the globe, prioritizing the rights of Nature.

**For Universities and other Educational Institutions**--Advocate for and prioritize the allocation of resources to enable and encourage transdisciplinary planetary health scholarship and education within institutions. Align faculty promotion and research incentives courageously to better ensure co-creation and translation of evidence into applicable policy and practice. Ensure that planetary health curricula are embedded in all programs and faculties in order to form planetary health citizens regardless of discipline.

**For Funders**--Allocate long-term and stable funding for generating new planetary health knowledge, scaling up planetary health solutions already in place, and reducing vulnerabilities in communities worldwide. Support research, policy, practice, and social movement building/activism to encourage planetary health revitalization efforts and progressive actions for our most pressing planetary health needs.

**For Businesses**--The sustainability and profit of businesses depends on the wellbeing of society and Nature. Investments and corporate principles must correspond to planetary health strategies that decrease greenhouse gas emissions, increase biodiversity, reduce soil, air and water pollution, and improve health equity. Companies must invest in and operationalize a plan for net-zero, Nature-positive businesses by 2050, and uphold agreements already in place including the Aichi and Paris accords. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Circular Economy are critical approaches to achieve these goals.

**For the Health Sector**--Reorient health systems towards planetary health, committing to carbon net-zero emissions from healthcare by 2040 from procurement to electricity to healthcare efficiency to waste reduction, while improving resilience to the human health consequences of global environmental change. Prevention and health equity must be at the heart of this transition.

**For Health Practitioners**--Immediately incorporate planetary health concepts into the main curriculum of all future health practitioners. Educate yourself and your patients on the concepts of planetary health. Use your trusted voice to raise awareness about the adverse effects of our current relationship with our planet. Advocate for community and patient-centered solutions that advance planetary health.

**For Researchers**--Engage and initiate transdisciplinary efforts to inform and operationalize planetary health-focused research, policy, and practice with an emphasis on solution-focused inquiry and applications that are inclusive of all ways of knowing and backgrounds. Work towards active decolonization of research training and practice including advancing open science.

**For Artists, Poets, Writers, Musicians**--Help humanity fashion new narratives about our relationship to Nature and to each other that reject the myth of human exceptionalism and emphasize our interdependence with Nature and each other.

**For Technology professionals**--Consider the power and the impact of technology in transmitting evidence-based information and facilitating transformative solutions for people and the planet. Support international work designed to prevent web-based misinformation. Develop tools adapted to local needs and planetary demands, while not forgetting lessons from Nature, traditional societies, and past undertakings. Engage across disciplines, sectors, and worldviews to develop and advance planetary health promoting technologies.

**For Spiritual leaders of all faiths**--Lead in the creation of unity and solidarity among all peoples of the world, recalling that we share a common home, our planet. Expand the mindset of humanity to embrace teachings and wisdom to foster a flourishing and pluralistic civilization in harmony with the planet. Help us reinvest our relationship to Nature with the reverence and awe that so many of us feel and emphasize the moral dimension of protecting all life on Earth.

**For Media**--The Great Transition depends on a free press and an open platform for discussions, connections and sharing. Commit to inform, inspire, and educate society on planetary health. Tell the stories of those who are protecting Nature, investigate the connections between a safe environment and human health, and hold to account those who are damaging the planet's natural systems. Use imagery that is honest and also respects the dignity of peoples portrayed. Fight infodemics of misinformation, and lift up the voices of those who do not traditionally hold power.

**For the Agricultural Sector**--Recognize that your actions are at the center of planetary health both in terms of our global food needs and our footprint on natural systems. How you move forward with agricultural practices will determine the future of human health and wellbeing. Utilize all ways of knowing, including the latest science and millennia of indigenous knowledge, to implement agricultural systems that meet demand, but reduce pressure on natural systems.

**In Conclusion:**

Our recommendations are neither an exhaustive list of stakeholders nor actions necessary to achieve the Great Transition. They are a compass guiding us towards the most promising pathway that can support a more just and resilient post-pandemic world.

We, the global planetary health community, recognize that the principles of this Declaration are not new. We acknowledge the historical and contemporary injustices Indigenous Peoples have faced and continue to face worldwide, the impacts of colonization past and present, and the continued destruction of your lands to fulfill external interests. We commit to educate ourselves, uphold free and informed prior consent, as well as the need for data and community sovereignty, while formally adopting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into our organizational structures. We acknowledge your ways of knowing and being in the world, your Elders past present and future, and recognize the importance of amplifying Indigenous Voices and leadership on the path to genuine planetary health.

We recognize the importance and rights of all genders, and commit to fight injustices related to imbalances in power between genders.

We also recognize the importance of all generations in the construction of our future, empowering and engaging youth and our elders.

The Great Transition cannot be achieved without Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and minority communities in positions of leadership. We are committed to bring transformative energy to break down structural barriers, violence, and racism that perpetuate imbalances of power. Together as a global community, we can co-create and achieve the Great Transition.

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### **Section 3: Action Items**

#### ***Actions from the Planetary Health Annual Meeting Consultation:***

Research and education, policy, the private sector, and the public will play key roles in making rapid, deep, structural changes in human activity that are required for the fundamental shifts needed in the Great Transition. The following are specific actions the below stakeholders can take to influence these sectors with the overall goal to achieve the Great Transition.

1. Agriculture Sector
2. Artists, Poets, Writers, Musicians
3. Businesses
4. Economists
5. Funders
6. Governments
7. Health Practitioners
8. Health Sector
9. International Organizations
10. Jurist and Lawmakers
11. Media
12. Researchers
13. Spiritual leaders of all faiths
14. Technology Professionals
15. Universities and other Educational Institutions
16. Youth representatives