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Organization for the
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Mumbai

901B, Emgee Greens,
Indiasteelex, complex,
M.T.V. Road, Wadala
(E), Mumbai 400 037,
India

Tel: +91 22 32562807

Email:

roshniudyavar@hotmail.com

Head Office

5167 Jean-Talon,
Suite 370

Montreal, Quebec,
Canada

HIS 1K8

Tel: (514) 593-4303

Fax: (514) 593-4659

Email: ficcaa@osde.ca

Editorial Team:

Riccardo Di Done

Angela Ficca

Roshni Udyavar

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Children Speak

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A Newsletter of the Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights

Message from the President

(Excerpts from the speech for World Peace Summit, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, October 5th to 7th, 2007 by Riccardo Di Done)

It is my great privilege and a real honor to be here with all of you in the historic city of Bratislava.

First, I must thank and congratulate the organizers of this fantastic event particularly Dr Timi Ecimovic, an eminent international independent scientist, researcher, lecturer, first director of SEM Institute for Climate Change, Chairman of the World Thinker's Forum, International Consultant of UN, and professor of environmental sciences at Ansted University. But most importantly, he is a man with a beautiful soul and great determination to bring positive change in the world.

In 1983, I became the founding president of the Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights. The objective of our organization is to make sure that all children of the world have all the tools that they need in order to flourish in life. We are a multidisciplinary group of professionals with international representatives who have the well-being of children at heart. Our main focus is prevention and education - why should we cure when we could prevent the problem altogether?

According to the UNICEF, 9.7 million children under the age of 5 die every year that means that 26,575 children die every day because of preventable diseases, lack of food and water. This must stop.



Riccardo Di Done

It is not right that the poverty rate among children keeps increasing. In Canada, even after we so proudly ratified the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the poverty rate increased. And here we are referring only to financial poverty, what about psychological poverty?

It is simply not right that the breakdown of the family, dysfunctional homes, single parent homes cause so many helpless victims (especially our children, parents, grandparents, and society as a whole).

It just is not right that the problem of street gangs consumes our youth and society in so many industrialized countries.

It was essential for me to send a powerful message of hope for children and that is why I decided to develop a Manifesto that is entitled GAIA 2031.

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Our Common Future

On 12 October 2007, the Nobel Prize Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to former US Vice President, Mr. Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a UN body of about 3000 experts that has been relentlessly publishing reports indicating the link between human activities and global warming.

Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, released in 2006 won two Oscars. The film highlighted the causes and concerns related with climate change and the very real threats imminent on the planet and its inhabitants if they don't heed to warnings by the international scientific community. With vivid stills and animations, the documentary elaborates on the greenhouse gases that cause global warming; the evidence of melting ice, rising sea levels and extremes of climate experienced the world over as a consequence.

The film has received widespread support. However, it has also been criticized as being "more dramatic than scientific". A British judge condemned the film for containing nine errors, and for being alarmist. This does not in any way negate the contribution of Al Gore in effectively publicizing the phenomenon of global warming and raising public awareness about it. As the Australian Federal Minister for Environment put it: "It's a movie, not an article in the *Royal Journal of Climate Change Science*."



Former Vice President of the U.S. Al Gore in the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*

"The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity. It is also our greatest opportunity to lift global consciousness to a higher level."

"We face a true planetary emergency," Mr Gore said. "The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity. It is also our greatest opportunity to lift global consciousness to a higher level."

The IPCC, which shared the award with Al Gore, was established in 1988, and is tasked with providing policymakers with neutral summaries of the latest expertise on climate change. The organization involves hundreds of scientists working

to collate and evaluate the work of thousands more.

In its citation, the committee said that Gore "has for a long time been one of the world's leading environmentalist politicians" and cited his awareness at an early stage "of the climatic challenges the world is facing.

The choice of recipients continues a trend of the Nobel Peace Prize redefining the potential sources of conflict and threats to peace, says the BBC's world affairs correspondent Mike Wooldridge. The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it wanted to bring into sharper focus the "increased danger of violent conflicts and wars, within and between states" posed by climate change.

The Nobel Prizes each bestow a gold medal, a diploma and a \$1.5 million cash prize on the winner. Mr. Gore has already pledged his share of the award to the Alliance for Climate Protection, a nonprofit group he founded last year. ■

The Revenge of Gaia

By James Lovelock

Imagine a young policewoman delighted in the fulfilment of her vocation; then imagine her having to tell a family whose child had strayed that he had been found dead, murdered in a nearby wood. Or think of a young physician newly appointed who has to tell you that the biopsy revealed invasion by an aggressive metastasising tumour. Doctors and the police know that many accept the simple awful truth with dignity but others try in vain to deny it.

Whatever the response, the bringers of such bad news rarely become hardened to their task and some dread it. We have relieved judges of the awesome responsibility of passing the death sentence, but at least they had some comfort from its frequent moral justification. Physicians and the police have no escape from their duty.

This article is the most difficult I have written and for the same reasons. My Gaia theory sees the Earth behaving as if it were alive, and clearly anything alive can enjoy good health, or suffer disease. Gaia has made me a planetary physician and I take my profession seriously, and now I, too, have to bring bad news.

The climate centres around the world, which are the equivalent of the pathology lab of a hospital, have reported the Earth's physical condition, and the climate specialists see it as seriously ill, and soon to pass into a morbid fever that may last as long as 100,000 years. I have to tell you, as members of the Earth's family and an intimate part of it, that you and especially civilisation are in grave danger.

Our planet has kept itself healthy and fit for life, just like an animal does, for most of the more than three billion years of its existence. It was ill luck that we started polluting at a time when the sun is too hot for comfort. We have given Gaia a fever and soon her condition will worsen to a state like a coma. She has been there before and recovered, but it took more than 100,000 years. We are responsible and will suffer the consequences: as the century progresses, the temperature will rise 8 degrees centigrade in temperate regions and 5 degrees in the tropics.

Much of the tropical land mass will become scrub and desert, and will no longer serve for regulation; this adds to the 40 per cent of the Earth's surface we have depleted to feed ourselves.

Curiously, aerosol pollution of the northern hemisphere reduces global warming by reflecting sunlight back to space. This "global dimming" is transient and could disappear in a few days like the smoke that it is, leaving us fully exposed to the heat of the global greenhouse. We are in a fool's climate, accidentally kept cool by smoke, and before this century is over billions of us will die and the few breeding pairs of people that survive will be in the Arctic where the climate remains tolerable.

By failing to see that the Earth regulates its climate and composition, we have blundered into trying to do it ourselves, acting as if we were in charge. By doing this, we condemn ourselves to the worst form of slavery. If we chose to be the stewards of the Earth, then we are responsible for keeping the atmosphere, the ocean and the land surface right for life. A task we would soon find impossible - and something before we treated Gaia so badly, she had freely done for us.

To understand how impossible it is, think about how you would regulate your own temperature or the composition of your blood. Those with failing kidneys know the never-ending daily difficulty of adjusting water, salt and protein intake. The technological fix of dialysis helps, but is no replacement for living healthy kidneys.

So what should we do? First, we have to keep in mind the awesome pace of change and realise how little time is left to

"The Earth is about to catch a morbid fever that may last as long as 100,000 years.

Each nation must find the best use of its resources to sustain civilization as long as they can."

act; and then each community and nation must find the best use of the resources they have to sustain civilisation for as long as they can. Civilisation is energy-intensive and we cannot turn it off without crashing, so we need the security of a powered descent. Unfortunately our nation (UK) is now so urbanised as to be like a large city and we have only a small acreage of agriculture and forestry. We are dependent on the trading world for sustenance; climate change will deny us regular supplies of food and fuel from overseas.

We could grow enough to feed ourselves on the diet of the Second World War, but the notion that there is land to spare to grow biofuels, or be the site of wind farms, is ludicrous. We will do our best to survive, but sadly I cannot see the United States or the emerging economies of China and India cutting back in time, and they are the main source of emissions. The worst will happen and survivors will have to adapt to a hell of a climate.

Perhaps the saddest thing is that Gaia will lose as much or more than we do. Not only will wildlife and whole ecosystems go extinct, but in human civilisation the planet has a precious resource. We are not merely a disease; we are, through our intelligence and communication, the nervous system of the planet. Through us, Gaia has seen herself from space, and begins to know her place in the universe.

We should be the heart and mind of the Earth, not its malady. So let us be brave and cease thinking of human needs and rights alone, and see that we have harmed the living Earth and need to make our peace with Gaia. We must do it while we are still strong enough to negotiate, and not a broken rabble led by brutal war lords. Most of all, we should remember that we are a part of it, and it is indeed our home. ■

The writer is an independent environmental scientist and Fellow of the Royal Society. 'The Revenge of Gaia' was published by Penguin on 2 February 2006

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT RICCARDO DI DONE

AT THE WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE, BRATISLAVA, SLOVAK REPUBLIC

What is GAIA 2031?

GAIA 2031 is an important opinion piece that is to sensitize decision makers and government officials in addition to the different communities of the world to the urgency of developing human and environmental strategies that will preserve the evolution of future generations. It is in the spirit of this important link between children and the environment that we have written this Manifesto.

Why unite children and the environment?

The link between the future of our planet and the future of our children is clearly obvious. However, if we have a healthy planet but we do not provide our youth with the tools that they need so badly to flourish, what kind of world will we have? On the other hand, if our children finally have all they need in life to be happy and healthy without clean water, clean air, or should I say, basically, without a world, what have we accomplished?

GAIA's Name Origin

As you already know, GAIA is the name that is given to Mother Earth in Greek mythology. The year 2031 represents the approximate period in time when the population of India will probably surpass that of China and where the Earth will be subjected to a veritable ecological "hallucination" if this same population follows the identical frenetic habits of consumption of the Americans. The objective of Gaia 2031 is to demonstrate the urgency and the necessity to protect our natural resources and to keep children, for today and for tomorrow, in an environment where they can evolve and be healthy.

GAIA is presented "head to tail"

Gaia 2031 is presented "head to tail" that is without a beginning and without an end. It is done this way to present the two facets of a same reality, that is, it demonstrates the gravity of the situation of the planet and of our human conditions as we are experiencing them right now as well as the solutions which must be put forward, according to us, in order to re-establish the power of humanity at the very heart of the environment.

Separation and Divorce

Children have no problems. We easily forget that in industrialized countries the pill of dysfunctional homes may have major side effects on them as well as the single homes, separations and divorces, lack of love and abandonment that we have thrown them into. Children have no problems if we forget that many of them runaway and find themselves involved with drugs, street gangs, and

prostitution, because they may lack that sense of belonging at home.

Children in developing countries have no problems when they are subjected to acts of violence at a very young age or when a young 10 year old boy works in a factory. No problem either for the young girl who must get water every day from a well and bring it back on her head for 3 kilometers when she should be going to school.

Child Soldiers

No there are no problems either for children who are forced to become child soldiers or for children who are victims of war.

It is maybe for this reason that our modern societies inject so much money in the public health system, and the legal system. It is because our children have no problems! We are rich with problems! Priorities are elsewhere.

Waste and Over-Consumption

And what should we say about our waste, our over-consumption and our indifference which are at their highest level. For example, we are planning to considerably increase the number of cars on the roads and to use more fossil fuels. Black gold!!! Our careless behaviors for the last twenty five years have major irreversible effects. We consume more than the Earth can give us. We are now more than ever at the breaking point. No, our children will not have any problems. They will only suffer the consequences of what we have left them to inherit! But, there are solutions. And that is where you can intervene.

We all have this responsibility

Our planet, GAIA, has its resources and can constantly adapt to its needs. She protects herself. But in order to survive, human beings must make an effort and understand the situation that they have created themselves.

Changes must be made. I am not a fundamentalist or an extremist. But I sincerely believe that we must immediately make choices before chaos chooses us.

I do not want to indoctrinate anyone, but simply encourage a profound reflection which concerns us all. Since in this global village, no one is an island safe from a tsunami or human acts of violence that are generated by fear.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have attached two pages of the recommendations contained in the Manifesto that will hopefully create a sprint in the right direction. If you would like a complete copy of the Manifesto Gaia 2031 you can download it by visiting the following website: www.theodone.com

Needless to tell you how happy I am to see you all here standing for one thing we have in common: **WORLD PEACE**.... so that all children of the world will flourish with health, love, prosperity, respect and harmony. If all of us follow at least a few of these recommendations,

it would be a big step in the right direction. **TOGETHER** we will make the difference for the love of our children.

Remember, the sky is not the limit; it's only the beginning.

DAKUJEM [DAKUIEM](Thank you)

FOR THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

(RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
FOR THE RESPECT OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS)

In order to obtain stable climate conditions and a greater respect for the balance of biodiversity and the survival of our children,

four general objectives guide our actions in our approach for new worldwide cooperation

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE

That is, favor a preventive approach that encourages actions which provide more incentives to recycle and regenerate as well as the adoption of school programs for children during the compulsory years of schooling.

MUTUAL HUMAN OBJECTIVE

That is, pass on values of solidarity and environmental interdependence which affect the entire world's populations, those who are present and those to come.

PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVE

That is, encourage the support of all social partners towards mechanisms of decisions and achievements. The new forms of governance will have to foresee policies and action plans that favor this purpose.

OBJECTIVE OF SUPPORT AND SURVEILLANCE

That is, a surveillance of the parameters that have been established and tools which will allow to evaluate and judge the validity of the actions that have been undertaken and their possible reorientation if necessary.

THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS RECOMMENDS:

As a whole, the respect of a worldwide concept on the environment and in particular *Agenda 21*, action program established for the 21st century from the main principles adopted at the Earth's Summit.;

An immediate and controlled worldwide decrease of at least 2% per year of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions linked with transportation and all economic activities related to energy in the industrial, commercial and residential sectors;

The drawing up of a management strategy for transportation and the adoption of an approach to favor the number of environmentally friendly vehicles or the establishment of incentives that promote and favor the use of public transportation;

Enhance the image and the use of renewable sources of energy (solar, hydroelectric, etc.) and fossil fuels that are less polluting (ethanol/gas) and the incitement to develop environmentally friendly technologies;

The obligation for companies to conform themselves to stronger social and environmental laws when exploiting natural resources;

A better management of water, forests and natural resources while protecting species and ecosystems, in order to protect biodiversity;

Providing support to emergent countries in order that they adopt an appropriate "eco economic" policy and create development programs that are within the limits of the planet;

The immediate creation of a 5% emergency tax on any gas that does not contain ethanol or less polluting fuels and on the purchase or the renting of any new vehicle that has a higher mass, more than six cylinders, and four driving wheels. We also recommend that 25 % of the multinational gas companies' annual profits be dedicated to the world community (The same principle should apply to the multinational pharmaceutical companies which should automatically remit a certain percentage of their annual profits to humanitarian causes which specifically deal with children in the world) ;

The immediate creation of specific and obligatory programs for students of the primary and high school levels so that they offer all the necessary tools for assuming the responsibility of their environment and the development of a social justice.

FOR GAIA'S CHILDREN

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
FOR THE RESPECT OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

WHEREAS the future of children is inextricably linked to the living conditions of their parents;
WHEREAS children living in particularly difficult conditions and those having particular needs must be fully part of programs whose aim is to prevent and eradicate financial, psychological, spiritual and political poverty;
WHEREAS a huge number of major social problems affecting society cannot be solved without first improving the critical situation of children;
WHEREAS the protection against violence, the access to healthy food, to health and to education should constitute essential preconditions for the fundamental rights of children;
WHEREAS children are able to develop a vision of the world and to freely express it according to their age and maturity;
WHEREAS obstacles to improving the living conditions of the world's children are often related to lack of political-will and a bad distribution of the available resources;

THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS RECOMMENDS:

FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

That they ensure the safety and the stability of children in an adequate family context, that is favorable to their development;
That they ensure that children's rights to education be respected;
That the essential physical needs of children are met, in particular providing healthy foods;
That children have psychological safety and learn how to develop their self-esteem.
That children have access to healthy foods, drinking water and the essential nutrients for their development;
That they can evolve in a healthy and safe environment without violence;
That they can adequately learn how to read, write and maintain hope in their future.
That they can learn how to respect the differences between humans and that they manage to solve conflicts with peers in a rational and peaceful manner;
That they understand the significance and the responsibility to communicate within all human and family relationships.

FOR ALL THE PARENTS OF THE WORLD

That there is more responsibility and the acquiring of tools which allow for a good education, the importance of good nutrition and the preservation of a good environment;
That they recognize the importance of the bond which links them to their children through out their lives;
That they understand that children are lent to them and that they are responsible for them on a physical and psychological level;
That they understand with complete freedom and justice that spirituality brings universal values of love which must be both respected and promoted.
and...
That states of the entire world must recognize that the establishment of social programs centered on the protection and development of children constitutes a major responsibility;
That a society should not tolerate conditions which create street children;
All societies must adopt mechanisms allowing them to be full members of a community;

That it is essential to establish a world ministry for children who will have as foundation the CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD and who must ideally have a representative in all nations.
Each member will have complete power to bring to light any important problem which is a hindrance to the rights of children in the world