ST. JAMES'S PALACE
NOBEL LAUREATE
SYMPOSIUM

The St James's Palace Memorandum

"Action for a Low Carbon and Equitable Future"
London, UK, 26 – 28 May 2009

The St James's Palace Memorandum calls for a global deal on climate change that matches the scale and urgency of the human, ecological and economic crises facing the world today. It urges governments at all levels, as well as the scientific community, to join with business and civil society to seize hold of this historic opportunity to transform our carbon-intensive economies into sustainable and equitable systems. We must recognize the fierce urgency of now.

The Fierce Urgency of Now

Climate risk avoidance, energy security, sustainable land use, population growth and equitable economic development constitute a key set of interacting challenges for humankind in the 21st century. The evidence is increasingly compelling for the range and scale of climate impacts that must be avoided, such as droughts, sea level rise and flooding leading to mass migration and conflict. The robust scientific process, by which this evidence has been gathered, should be used as a clear mandate to accelerate the actions that need to be taken. Political leaders cannot possibly ask for a more robust, evidence-based call for action.

In a time of financial and economic crisis, the participants of the St. James's Palace Symposium emphasise that without directing current economic recovery resources wisely, and embarking on a path towards a low carbon economy, the world will have lost the opportunity to meet the global sustainability challenge. Decarbonising our economy offers a multitude of benefits, from addressing energy security to stimulating unprecedented technological innovation. A zero carbon economy is an ultimate necessity and must be seriously explored now.

Milestones of the Great Transformation

Building on the Potsdam Memorandum and the recent advances in the scientific understanding of climate change, the participants of the St James's Symposium identified as key requirements **an effective and just global agreement on climate change**, **low-carbon energy infrastructure** and **tropical forest protection, conservation and restoration**.

1) ***Delivering an effective and just global agreement on climate change***

Firm political leadership is now crucial. Leadership is primarily required from developed countries, acknowledging their historical responsibility as well as their financial and technological capacity. However, all countries will need to implement low carbon development strategies. *In this spirit of trust, every country must act on the firm assumption that all others will also act.*

A long-term commitment under the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is now urgently required. The global agreement in Copenhagen must include the following elements:

- Acknowledging the compelling evidence of science we should confine the temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius to avoid unmanageable climate risks. This can only be achieved with a peak of global emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2015 and at least a 50% emission reduction by 2050 on a 1990 baseline. This in turn means that developed countries have to aim for a 25-40% reduction by 2020. A robust measure of assessing the necessary emission reductions is a total carbon budget, which should be accepted as the base for measuring the effectiveness of short-term (2020) and long-term (2050) targets;
- The creation of carbon prices adopted across large parts of the global economy combined with measures to lower the price of low carbon energy, especially in developing countries. Funds raised should be used to provide the necessary financial support for adaptation;
- The agreement must acknowledge the priority of developing countries to overcome poverty while ensuring sustainable development.

2) ***Delivering a low carbon energy infrastructure***

Decarbonising our society requires an increase in energy conservation and efficiency, and a revolution in our energy infrastructure now. *The required technological innovations will not be achieved without an unprecedented partnership between government and business.*

Actions in the following areas are needed:

- Clear policy frameworks aimed at fostering innovation and the demonstration, scale up and roll out of low carbon technologies including globally coordinated investment frameworks, linked to economic recovery, with the emphasis on 'green growth';
- Developed countries should commit to a significant increase in investments for research, development and deployment;
- Technology sharing and financial support, through mechanisms such as globally supported feed-in-tariffs for renewable energy, are required to help developing countries leapfrog to a low carbon economy;
- The establishment of "smart grids" – connecting renewable energy sources over large areas and implementing novel energy storage technologies.

3) Delivering tropical forest protection, conservation and restoration

Tropical forests provide the ecosystem services essential for human well-being and poverty alleviation. In addition deforestation and forest degradation are substantially contributing to climate change and global biodiversity loss at the genetic, species and landscape level. Both locally and globally, protecting boreal and tropical forest cover is an essential tool for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. *Without a solution to rainforest protection, there is no solution to tackling climate change.*

An emergency package is needed now to provide substantial funding to tropical forest nations to help them halt deforestation and embark on alternative economic development paths, including:

- Accelerating a long-term UNFCCC agreement on halting deforestation and on forest restoration, including innovative financing mechanisms from public and private sources;
- Building capacity as well as mechanisms for verification and national governance structures that can support and reward the maintenance of rainforest regions. Developing countries need to take their own responsibility in tropical forest protection, conservation and restoration.

The Contribution of Science

The solutions to the extraordinary environmental, economic and human crises of this century will not be found in the political arena alone. Stimulated by the manifesto of Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein, the first Pugwash gathering of 1957 united scientists of all political persuasions to discuss the threat posed to civilization by the advent of thermonuclear weapons. Global climate change represents a threat of similar proportions, and should be addressed in a similar manner. There should be an acceleration and integration of global sustainability studies, to encourage the active involvement of all scientists in these matters, championing the process of robust scientific study. All scientists should be urged to contribute to raising levels of public knowledge on these threats to civilization and engage in a massive education effort to popularize the principles in this Memorandum.

We know what needs to be done. We cannot wait until it is too late.
We cannot wait until what we value most is lost.

The Nobel Laureate Symposium Series on Global Sustainability

The Nobel Laureate Symposium Series on Global Sustainability was initiated in 2007 at Potsdam and continued by the St James's Palace Symposium in spring 2009. This Symposium series unites Nobel Laureates of various disciplines, top-level representatives from politics and NGOs, and renowned experts on sustainability. In Potsdam, the participants called for a Great Transformation that would bring about the technical, economic, political and cultural changes required to meet the double challenge of environmental destabilization and persistent underdevelopment.