

News release

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Break gridlock on global challenges or risk an unstable future

Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations, chaired by Pascal Lamy, calls for urgent action on climate change, poverty, governance and disease

A diverse group of highly respected global leaders is calling for a radical shake-up in politics and business to deliver progress on climate change, reduce economic inequality, improve corporate practices and address the chronic burden of disease. In a report published today, the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations – chaired by Pascal Lamy, until recently Director-General of the World Trade Organization – argues for ‘serious and urgent’ reform to overcome the increasing short-termism of modern politics in order to address key challenges facing humanity.

Now for the Long Term, published today by the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford, is the product of a year long process of research and debate undertaken by a group of eminent leaders on the successes and failures in addressing global challenges over recent decades. Chaired by Pascal Lamy, the Commission comprises Michelle Bachelet, Lionel Barber, Professor Roland Berger, Professor Ian Goldin, Arianna Huffington, Dr Mo Ibrahim, Luiz Felipe Lampreia, Minister Liu He, Professor Kishore Mahbubani, Minister Trevor Manuel, Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Minister Nandan Nilekani, Lord Patten, Baron Piot, Lord Rees, Professor Amartya Sen, Lord Stern and Jean-Claude Trichet.

Launching the report Pascal Lamy said: “We must take a fresh approach if we want to build a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future. Creative coalitions, reinvigorated institutions and renewed methods to value the future in business and government practices are urgently needed to accelerate change.”

Professor Ian Goldin, Director of the Oxford Martin School and Vice-Chair of the Commission said: “Oxford Martin School researchers have been frustrated by the gap between knowledge and action in meeting critical global challenges. The Commission has identified ways to break the gridlock in global affairs and offers concrete recommendations to advance the interests of current and future generations. “

Among the recommended measures are:

- Create a **C20-C30-C40 Coalition to counteract climate change**; a new coalition made up of G20 countries, 30 companies, and 40 cities. The coalition could accelerate action on climate change, with measurable targets for initiatives that include energy-efficient buildings, faster market penetration of efficient vehicles and tracking emissions.
- Establish a **Voluntary Taxation and Regulatory Exchange** to address tax abuse and avoidance and harmonise company taxation arrangements, promote information sharing, enhance transparency and governance.
- **Establish sunset clauses** for publicly funded international institutions to ensure regular reviews of accomplishments and mandates to ensure they are fit for 21st century purpose.

- Introduce **CyberEx**, a new early warning platform, aimed at promoting a better understanding of common cyber threats, identifying preventative measures, and minimising future attacks for the shared benefit of government, corporate and individual interests.
- **Remove perverse subsidies** on hydrocarbons and agriculture, and redirect support to the poor.
- **Fight non-communicable diseases** with a new 'Fit Cities' network, a collaboration of food, beverage and alcohol providers, with public health and city authorities, to reduce the burden on health systems.
- **End discrimination against future generations** by revising discounting methods and adjusting them to take account of the uncertainties, risks and ethical implications for the long term.
- **Set up Worldstat**, a specialist agency charged with undertaking quality control on global statistics, assessing domestic practices, regulating misuse and improving data collection.
- **Invest in Younger Generations:** Social protection measures such as conditional cash transfer programmes should be used to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, whilst youth guarantees would help reduce 'scars' of long-term unemployment and disconnection.

Speaking ahead of the report's launch, Pascal Lamy said: "The ability to address today's global challenges is undermined by the absence of a collective vision for society. We urge leaders to establish shared global values to protect the prospects for future generations."

He continued: "20th century structures and institutions are poorly equipped for 21st century challenges. Many are organised along out of date geopolitical lines, where those with a diminishing stake retain disproportionate power. Many significant emerging powers are effectively shut out of key decisions. This must change to better reflect current and future needs."

Professor Ian Goldin said: "Failure to address long-term issues exposes current generations to unacceptable instability and risk; it threatens our ability to build a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for all. The Oxford Martin Commission analyses the issues, examines the lessons from past successes and failures, proposes a set of principles to overcome deep political and cultural divides, and provides practical recommendations for action on critical challenges."

Now for the Long Term is available for download at: www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/commission

Ends

The full report and executive summary are available under embargo from Carole Scott at:
carole.scott@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk

For interviews and further information, contact Carole by email or on 01865 287438 or 07825 931579

Notes to Editors

1. The members of the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations are:

Chair: Pascal Lamy, former Director-General, World Trade Organization

Vice Chair: Professor Ian Goldin, Director, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford

Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile; former Executive Director, UN Women

Lionel Barber, Editor, The Financial Times

Professor Dr h.c. Roland Berger, Chairman, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants

Arianna Huffington, President and Editor-in-Chief, Huffington Post Media Group

Dr Mo Ibrahim, Chair of the Board, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Luiz Felipe Lampreia, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Brazil

Liu He, Minister, Office of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs,

People's Republic of China

Professor Kishore Mahbubani, Dean and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy, National

University of Singapore

Trevor Manuel, Minister and Chair of the National Planning Commission, South Africa

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director-General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Nandan Nilekani, Chairman, Unique Identification Authority of India; former CEO, Infosys

Chris Patten (Lord Patten of Barnes), Chancellor, University of Oxford; Chairman, BBC Trust

Professor Peter Piot (Baron Piot), Director, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine;

former Executive Director, UNAIDS

Professor Martin Rees (Lord Rees of Ludlow), former President, The Royal Society; Fellow of

Trinity College, University of Cambridge

Professor Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate and Thomas W. Lamont University Professor, and

Professor of Economics and Philosophy, Harvard University

Professor Nicholas Stern (Lord Stern of Brentford), President, The British Academy; IG Patel

Professor of Economics, London School of Economics

Jean-Claude Trichet, former President, European Central Bank

2. About the Commission

The Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations, launched in September 2012, aims to address the growing short-term preoccupations of modern politics and identify ways to overcome today's impasse in key economic, climate, trade, security, and other negotiations.

Chaired by Pascal Lamy, former Director-General of the World Trade Organization, the Commission brings together highly experienced leaders from government, business and society to examine the current gridlock in international and national attempts to deal with key global problems.

Embedding the long term into today's increasingly pressured decision structures will allow societies and businesses to harvest the extraordinary potential and mitigate the systemic risks and vulnerabilities associated with future developments. As pressures mount, there is an urgent need to focus on the legacy left for future generations.

This important initiative draws on a highly distinguished group of Commissioners and the latest analysis of global best practice, as well as the wide-ranging expertise of more than 300 scholars associated with the Oxford Martin School.



3. About the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford

The Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford is a unique, interdisciplinary research community of over 300 scholars working to address the most pressing global challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. From developing new forms of energy, food security, employment and equity to the implications of our ageing population and the governance of geo-engineering, the Oxford Martin School supports over 30 individual research teams from across the University of Oxford to consider some of the biggest questions that concern our future. To be funded by the School, scholars must demonstrate that their research will have an impact beyond academia and will make a tangible difference to today's significant global challenges. Research is organised via four core themes: health and medicine; energy and environment; technology and society; and ethics and governance.