

Vision Statement

## **Think globally and act globally for local sustainability**

*Johan Rockström*

It is with incredulous looks in their faces, that young students at Stockholm University, this spring term of 2050, listen to their professor of political sciences, describing the old, primitive, nation state concept that prevailed just a generation earlier. This old structure, crumbled to a dramatic end, after decades of growing mis-trust between “nations”, when it was found to be completely out of synch, with the rapidly growing realization of the impacts on all world citizens of the Anthropocene.

The observed hockey-stick patterns from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - of virtually all Earth System parameters of importance for human development (GHG, Biodiversity, Freshwater, Deforestation, Overfishing, Land degradation, etc...), continued to grow exponentially in the 2020s- and 2030s, culminating with a series of unexpected positive feedbacks and the crossing of regional catastrophic thresholds in the 2040s. Methane outbursts from peat lands, accelerated acidification of the oceans, permanent loss of Arctic ice-sheet, the savannisation of the Amazon rainforest, massive loss of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, and an apparently irreversible loss of mountain glaciers.

Aggregated together these “shocks” enabled a deeply divided world community to fall over a massive social threshold. The result was the establishment of an “Earthland” governance paradigm, void of nation state boundaries, where world communities joined forces to govern and management the Earth System within safe planetary boundaries.

It was clear though that, as opposed to other historic disasters in the human history, the undesirable non-linear dynamics triggered by the Anthropocene, were in all essence, irreversible. This was a shocking realization for large part of humanity. The melting ice could not be re-frozen. Instead, massive investments were mobilized in a global emergency plan to adapt and transform in the face of unavoidable and undesirable state changes. Building social-ecological resilience, covering everything from local water supply systems, to global governance of the atmosphere, cryosphere, stratosphere, and the hydrosphere, is now the guiding framework, and a core element of sustainable development. Adaptation investments, exceeding 1000 billion USD/yr, were mobilized already in the 2020s to build resilience in a turbulent world.

Phasing out the fossil addiction of the “carbon societies” has almost been finalized, eventhough everyone remains perplexed – even today - by the inertia and massive difficulties of finally getting rid of the coal and oil dependence. Today over 90 % of the world’s energy is produced from renewable energy. Africa is the global source of biomass and solar energy, supplying sustainable energy sources for itself and all communities in Europe.

Global governance for humanity is carried out in a successor of the old (and in most parts weak) UN structure, now, executed by a council of community leaders, and guided by planetary “laws” of sustainability, within which human wealth, economic growth, technological development and human security is executed. This is a Planet, still licking its wounds from the Anthropocene, but clearly on a pathway towards resilience and sustainability.