



United Nations



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The Heidelberg Appeal

The Heidelberg Appeal was publicly released at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. By the end of the 1992 summit, 425 scientists and other intellectual leaders had signed the appeal. Since then, word of mouth has prompted thousands more scientists to lend their support. Today, more than 4,000 signatories, from over 100 countries have signed it, including more than 70 Nobel Prize winners. In spite of this spontaneous and growing support from the world's scientific community, the Heidelberg Appeal has received very little media attention.



Neither a statement of corporate interests nor a denial of environmental problems, the Heidelberg Appeal is a quiet call for reason and a recognition of scientific progress as the solution to, not the cause of, the health and environmental problems that we face. The appeal expresses a conviction that modern society is the best equipped in human history to solve the world's ills, provided that they do not sacrifice science, intellectual honesty and common sense to political opportunism and irrational fears.



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We want to make our full contribution to the preservation of our common heritage, the Earth.

We are, however, worried at the dawn of the twenty-first century, at the emergence of an irrational ideology which is opposed to scientific and industrial progress and impedes economic and social development.



We contend that a Natural State, sometimes idealized by movements with a tendency to look toward the past, does not exist and has probably never existed since man's first appearance in the biosphere, insofar as humanity had always progressed by increasingly harnessing Nature to its needs and not the reverse. We fully subscribe to the objectives of a scientific ecology for a universe whose resources must be taken stock of, monitored and preserved.

But we herewith demand that this stock-taking, monitoring



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and preservation be founded on scientific criteria and not on irrational preconceptions.

We stress that many essential human activities are carried out either by manipulating hazardous substances or in their proximity, and that progress and development have always involved increasing control over hostile forces, to the benefit of mankind.

We therefore consider that scientific ecology is no more than an extension of this continual progress toward the improved life of future generations.

We intend to assert science's responsibility and duties toward society as a whole.

We do, however, forewarn the authorities in charge of our planet's destiny against decisions which are supported by pseudoscientific arguments of false and nonrelevant date.

We draw everybody's attention to the absolute necessity of helping poor countries attain a level of sustainable development which matches that of the rest of the planet, protecting them from troubles and dangers stemming from developed nations, and avoiding their entanglement in a web of unrealistic obligations which would compromise both their independence and their dignity.

The greatest evils which stalk our Earth are ignorance and oppression, and not Science, Technology, and Industry whose instruments, when adequately managed, are indispensable tools of a future shape by Humanity, by itself and for itself, overcoming major problems like overpopulation, starvation and worldwide diseases.

Signatories of the Heidelberg Appeal to Heads of States and Governments 3,082 signers from 106 countries including 72 Nobel Prize Winners:

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