

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

1995 Nobel Peace Prize

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Pugwash President and Secretary General Call for Leaders at RIO PLUS 20 to “Remember Your Humanity”

The nations of the world meet at the RIO PLUS 20 Conference from 20-22 June in another effort to place humanity on an irreversible development path that will not imperil the security of succeeding generations and will save us all from environmental catastrophe and civilizational collapse.

The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, since its inception in 1957 under the leadership of Bertrand Russell, Joseph Rotblat, and other pioneers, have been committed to seeking ethical solutions that serve the common cause of humanity based on empirical evidence and consistent with the responsibility of scientists to society. The agenda of the Rio conference lies at the intersection of science and world affairs – the poverty of one-seventh of humankind; inexorable climate change; environmental deterioration; inequitable access to depleting resources and an ongoing recession with global contagious effects – all of which have the potential of provoking violence and conflict. As the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 9 July 1955 urged, we “have to learn to think in a new way” and to “remember your humanity and forget the rest.”

As the twin themes of the conference – the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development - are addressed, a spirit of co-operation and compromise must prevail to reach acceptable solutions for all equally. The reduction of carbon emissions, more efficient management of resources, use of renewable energy, the safer use of technology especially the peaceful uses of nuclear energy post-Fukushima and research on new technology will all involve major investment. Let us remember that global military expenditure in 2011 was estimated at US \$ 1738 billion, of which a large sum was spent to maintain and modernize some 19,000 nuclear warheads worldwide in the arsenals of the nuclear weapon possessor states.

Is the world to survive or self-destruct?

Jayantha Dhanapala
President

Paolo Cotta-Ramusino
Secretary-General