



## New Global Commons Stewardship Framework charts path toward a prosperous future that promotes peace and prosperity

*The Center for Global Commons, together with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and SYSTEMIQ, sets out an actionable, science-based framework for Global Commons stewardship*

The scientific evidence is overwhelming: we are on a collision course with the stable and resilient Earth systems on which human wellbeing, prosperity and safety depend—our Global Commons. We need to transform our economic and social systems to safeguard these Global Commons or risk exceeding dangerous tipping points beyond which ecological damage may become self-reinforcing and irreversible. To avoid these tipping points, decision-makers need to take concerted action to drastically accelerate the progress made in some sectors and unlock positive tipping points for transformation.

To inspire and guide decisionmakers from governments, business and finance, civil society and international organizations, the Center for Global Commons at the University of Tokyo, with support from SYSTEMIQ, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), has developed the Global Commons Stewardship Framework. Drawing on the latest science, this framework for action can bring together stakeholders, promote transformations and inform deft diplomacy in support of security and the Global Commons.

**Naoko Ishii, Executive Vice President, Director for Center for Global Commons** at University of Tokyo, explains: “To avert the collapse of the complex and interdependent Earth systems on which human health, prosperity and security rely, the world needs to make unprecedented progress across four system transformations simultaneously. The Global Commons Stewardship Framework cuts through the complexity of this daunting task by outlining concrete actions for decisionmakers that leverage political, social and economic forces to rapidly advance coordinated progress to preserve and restore our Global Commons.”

The Global Commons Stewardship Framework is organized around four system transformations: decarbonization of energy, industry and transport; sustainable cities and communities; sustainable production and consumption; and sustainable food, forests, land, water and oceans. Each in turn can be activated through four common action levers. The report sets out calls for action that will help different stakeholders drive the four transformations to safeguard the Global Commons.

Recent progress on climate change can provide valuable lessons, as the ‘Paris effect’ has accelerated action and mobilised multistakeholder coalitions, says **Guido Schmidt-Traub, Managing Partner of SYSTEMIQ**. “Based on this understanding and drawing on the latest science, the Global Commons Stewardship Framework charts the common solutions and clear actions that are required to preserve the health and resilience of these Earth systems.”

At present, however, the world is failing to act at a scale and speed needed to avoid dangerous tipping points. “The report outlines the system transformations needed to limit warming to 1.5°C. These are not happening fast enough. Of the 40 indicators assessed by the System Change Lab, none

is on track to reach the 2030 targets. Time is not on our side,” cautions **Ani Dasgupta, President and CEO of the World Resources Institute.**

It might seem far-fetched to advocate for a stronger focus on the Global Commons at a time when the world’s attention is set on the war in Ukraine and the terrible human suffering that is unfolding as a result. Countries are racing to increase their military spending. Fissures in the international community and divisions between major powers are growing wider. The war is generating shortages and crises for the many countries that depend on imports of energy, food and fertilizer.

“The unchecked degradation of our Global Commons will act as a threat multiplier: Exploiting soils and seas, ever expanding pastures and fields, and heating our planet leads to displacement, exacerbates food and water insecurity, and eventually fuels conflict. We need to realize that healthy and resilient biophysical systems on Earth—our Global Commons—are at the heart of our health, security and prosperity. And we must work together to manage them responsibly,” highlights **Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.**

“We cannot afford to allow international cooperation to become another casualty of the war in Ukraine”, says **Guido Schmidt-Traub**, Managing Partner of SYSTEMIQ. “It is impossible to tackle these challenges without greater international cooperation—a point that has been reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries need security from outside aggression and from the degradation of the Global Commons. This will require new governance mechanisms for Global Commons stewardship that can facilitate effective collaboration toward this shared purpose.”

Ensuring the health and resilience of the Global Commons is in the interests of all nations, but some countries bear a disproportionate responsibility. This is made clear by the Global Commons Stewardship Index published by the SDSN and Yale University, which shows that rich countries are driving adverse impacts on the Global Commons in less developed countries. “The prosperity of rich countries partly depends on unsustainable production and consumption patterns that generate negative spillovers on poorer countries. Developed countries have the responsibility and the resources to lead the system transformations needed to safeguard the Global Commons. They must work together with all countries to develop equal and mutually beneficial partnerships built on diplomacy, investment and trade that value, preserve and restore the Global Commons,” says **Guillaume Lafortune, Vice President, SDSN.**

**The full report is available to download at <<https://cgc.ifi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Safeguarding-the-Global-Commons.pdf>>**

### **Center for Global Commons**

The [Center for Global Commons](#) was established in August 2020 to realize then-President Makoto Gonokami's vision that "universities should play a leading role in driving social change through collaborative creation with leaders in a wide range of fields that transcend the boundaries of academia in order to seek fundamental solutions to the challenges facing humanity." Naoko Ishii—who served as CEO and Chair of the Global Environment Facility for eight years immediately prior to the Center's establishment—was appointed as the first Director with the mission to "build a new framework for stewarding the Global Commons for a sustainable future."

### ***Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research***

Advancing the scientific frontier on interdisciplinary climate impact research for global sustainability and contributing knowledge and solutions for a safe and just climate future – this is the twofold mission of the [Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research](#) (PIK), a member of the Leibniz Association and a leader in its field. We integrate the latest understanding of the Earth system with the assessment of climate risks, and with the exploration of policies and pathways towards a manageable climate future. A guiding framework for PIK's research is therefore the integration of Planetary Boundaries and the Global Commons. The institute in a unique way combines research across disciplines and scales with solution orientation, emphasizing that societal relevance is based on scientific excellence.

### **Sustainable Development Solutions Network**

The UN [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) (SDSN) mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector to support practical problem solving for sustainable development at local, national, and global scales. The SDSN was launched in 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. The SDSN is building national and regional networks of knowledge institutions, creating research and policy analysis tools, and educating on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the SDG Academy, its flagship online education initiative.

### **SYSTEMIQ**

[SYSTEMIQ](#) was founded in 2016 to drive the achievement of the Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs by transforming markets and business models in four key economic systems: regenerative land use, circular materials, clean energy and sustainable finance. A certified B-Corp, SYSTEMIQ combines high-level research with high-impact, on-the-ground work, and partners with business, finance, policymakers and civil society to deliver change.

SYSTEMIQ has offices in Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

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