

The page features several decorative leaves scattered around the text. In the top left corner, there is a large, dark green leaf. In the top right corner, there are several smaller leaves in shades of green and yellow. In the bottom left corner, there is a brown, dried leaf. The background is a light, off-white color with some faint, scattered brown spots.

BOGOTA DECLARATION: AMERICA IN DEFENSE OF WATER, THE EARTH AND LIFE

Context

The paradigm of Western civilization, with its faith placed in science, technology and progress, has created a hegemonic society based upon the exploitation and transformation of fossil fuels. Science and technology have brought great achievements for humanity that have alleviated the harshness of work and in domestic life but, at the same time, within the context of unequal economic, social and cultural relations they have caused a footprint of destruction of ecosystems and cultures that are depriving humanity of its historical horizon and landscapes and introducing risks that threaten the existence of life.

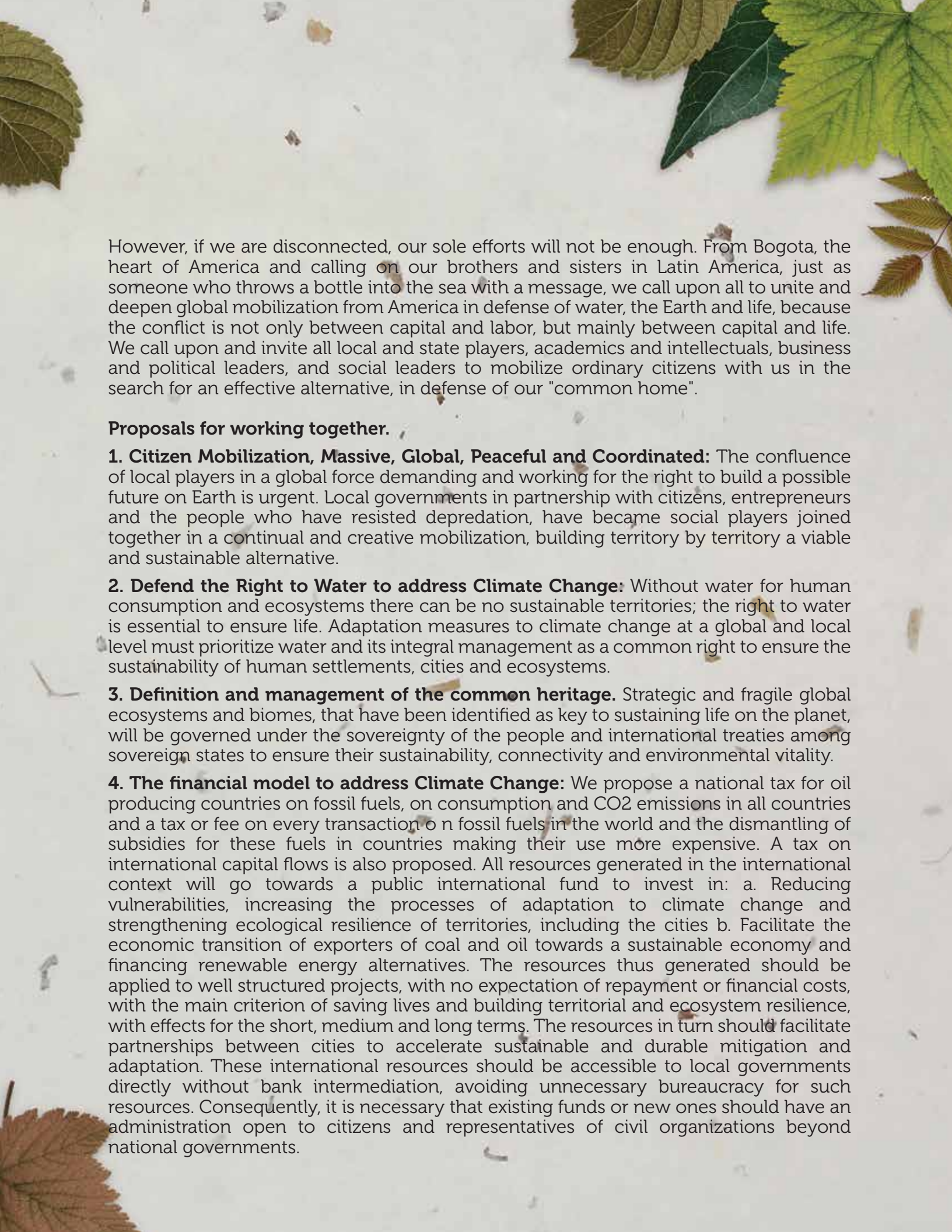
The ecological and economic impoverishment is also cultural and ethical. The benefits of the current system are concentrated in the hands of a minority while the majority has to suffer the destruction of its local cultural, and social and spiritual values. Monetary values, of profit and the market have been raised to supremacy over life itself; on the basis of a paradigm of technical solutions to dominate nature, and of individualism and the false promise of eco-efficiency as a final solution.

Exclusion and poverty become more acute in the peripheries and the degraded inner cities of the world: heavy rains that exceed the capacity of the drainage systems; unusual snowfalls that crush roofs and terraces; landslides along hill slopes that carry with them houses and inhabitants; rivers out of control that rush through with fatal impetus along the streets of the cities; men, women, and children displaced from their neighborhoods and territories by the harsh conditions in which they have been forced to live, territories that become barren because of the lack of water. The climate negotiations in Paris reflect the diminished opportunity of States to take radical action to prevent a rise in the average temperature of the planet catastrophically above 2° C. Therefore partnerships between local governments, cities and citizens represent a unique force that is already acting to generate more timely and forceful solutions.

Hope emerges

Thousands of local governments, communities, social movements, traditional communities and entrepreneurs are taking matters into our own hands, creating a global movement that has so far been kept out of the mainstream. Millions of citizens are building alternative livelihoods, eco-villages, transition towns, and in the process learning new principles of organization, governance, empowerment, technology and economics that produce sustainable results. We are seeking to join up in various and colorful social expressions to prevent further damage, to save more lives, to be happier and travel by bike, to be less violent, less greedy and selfish, more collaborative, to care for our territories, to restructure our cultures and make them more adaptive.

From localities and cities, we are aiming to build new institutions to enable social, economic, climate and environmental justice to flourish; we are working from below, from the neighborhoods, from the suburbs, bringing together the countryside and city in an intertwined network of territories, from everyday life, from the networks of cities that have joined together local governments to find solutions and common learning for the sake of citizens.

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However, if we are disconnected, our sole efforts will not be enough. From Bogota, the heart of America and calling on our brothers and sisters in Latin America, just as someone who throws a bottle into the sea with a message, we call upon all to unite and deepen global mobilization from America in defense of water, the Earth and life, because the conflict is not only between capital and labor, but mainly between capital and life. We call upon and invite all local and state players, academics and intellectuals, business and political leaders, and social leaders to mobilize ordinary citizens with us in the search for an effective alternative, in defense of our "common home".

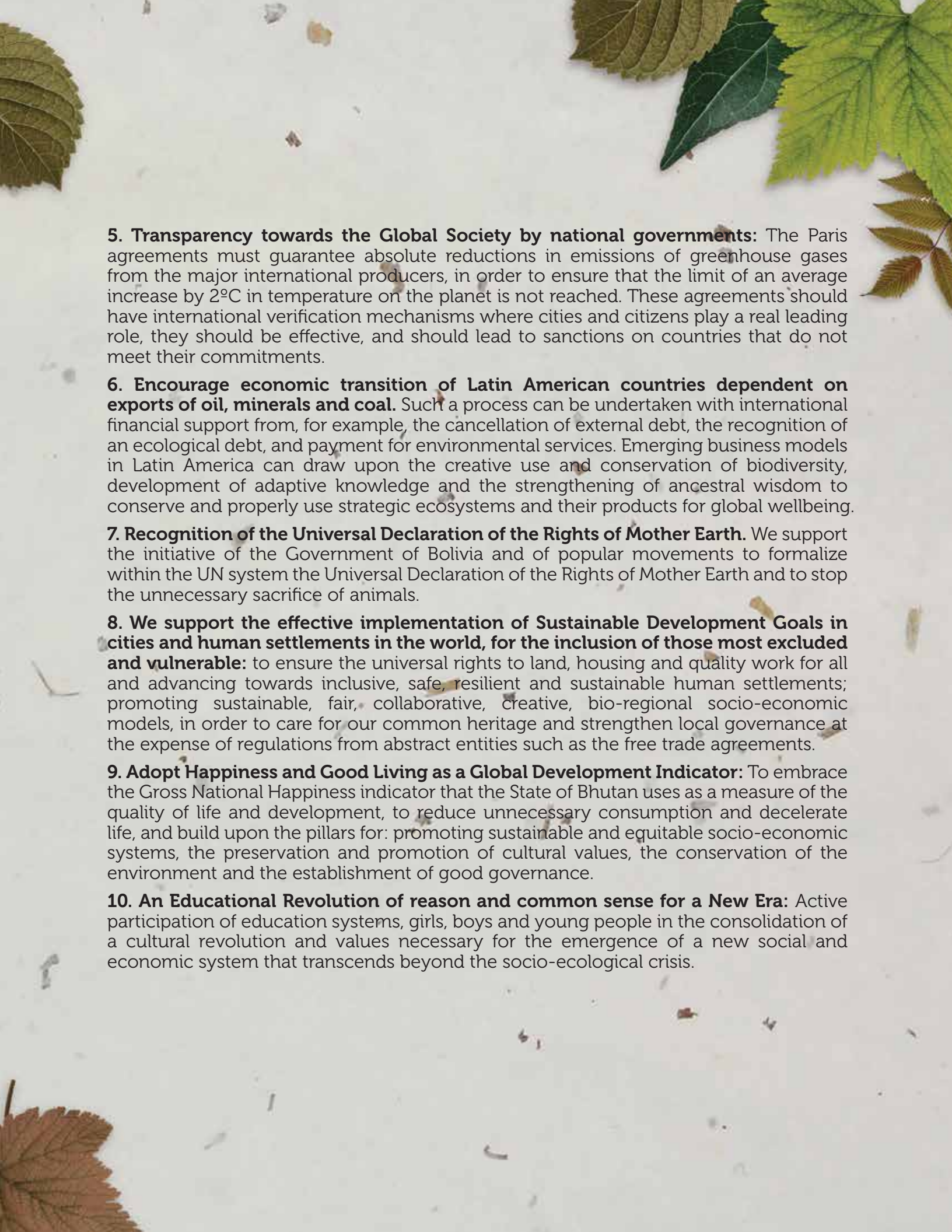
Proposals for working together.

1. Citizen Mobilization, Massive, Global, Peaceful and Coordinated: The confluence of local players in a global force demanding and working for the right to build a possible future on Earth is urgent. Local governments in partnership with citizens, entrepreneurs and the people who have resisted depredation, have become social players joined together in a continual and creative mobilization, building territory by territory a viable and sustainable alternative.

2. Defend the Right to Water to address Climate Change: Without water for human consumption and ecosystems there can be no sustainable territories; the right to water is essential to ensure life. Adaptation measures to climate change at a global and local level must prioritize water and its integral management as a common right to ensure the sustainability of human settlements, cities and ecosystems.

3. Definition and management of the common heritage. Strategic and fragile global ecosystems and biomes, that have been identified as key to sustaining life on the planet, will be governed under the sovereignty of the people and international treaties among sovereign states to ensure their sustainability, connectivity and environmental vitality.

4. The financial model to address Climate Change: We propose a national tax for oil producing countries on fossil fuels, on consumption and CO2 emissions in all countries and a tax or fee on every transaction on fossil fuels in the world and the dismantling of subsidies for these fuels in countries making their use more expensive. A tax on international capital flows is also proposed. All resources generated in the international context will go towards a public international fund to invest in: a. Reducing vulnerabilities, increasing the processes of adaptation to climate change and strengthening ecological resilience of territories, including the cities b. Facilitate the economic transition of exporters of coal and oil towards a sustainable economy and financing renewable energy alternatives. The resources thus generated should be applied to well structured projects, with no expectation of repayment or financial costs, with the main criterion of saving lives and building territorial and ecosystem resilience, with effects for the short, medium and long terms. The resources in turn should facilitate partnerships between cities to accelerate sustainable and durable mitigation and adaptation. These international resources should be accessible to local governments directly without bank intermediation, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy for such resources. Consequently, it is necessary that existing funds or new ones should have an administration open to citizens and representatives of civil organizations beyond national governments.

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5. Transparency towards the Global Society by national governments: The Paris agreements must guarantee absolute reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases from the major international producers, in order to ensure that the limit of an average increase by 2°C in temperature on the planet is not reached. These agreements should have international verification mechanisms where cities and citizens play a real leading role, they should be effective, and should lead to sanctions on countries that do not meet their commitments.

6. Encourage economic transition of Latin American countries dependent on exports of oil, minerals and coal. Such a process can be undertaken with international financial support from, for example, the cancellation of external debt, the recognition of an ecological debt, and payment for environmental services. Emerging business models in Latin America can draw upon the creative use and conservation of biodiversity, development of adaptive knowledge and the strengthening of ancestral wisdom to conserve and properly use strategic ecosystems and their products for global wellbeing.

7. Recognition of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth. We support the initiative of the Government of Bolivia and of popular movements to formalize within the UN system the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and to stop the unnecessary sacrifice of animals.

8. We support the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in cities and human settlements in the world, for the inclusion of those most excluded and vulnerable: to ensure the universal rights to land, housing and quality work for all and advancing towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements; promoting sustainable, fair, collaborative, creative, bio-regional socio-economic models, in order to care for our common heritage and strengthen local governance at the expense of regulations from abstract entities such as the free trade agreements.

9. Adopt Happiness and Good Living as a Global Development Indicator: To embrace the Gross National Happiness indicator that the State of Bhutan uses as a measure of the quality of life and development, to reduce unnecessary consumption and decelerate life, and build upon the pillars for: promoting sustainable and equitable socio-economic systems, the preservation and promotion of cultural values, the conservation of the environment and the establishment of good governance.

10. An Educational Revolution of reason and common sense for a New Era: Active participation of education systems, girls, boys and young people in the consolidation of a cultural revolution and values necessary for the emergence of a new social and economic system that transcends beyond the socio-ecological crisis.