

# A Future Earth for Future Generations?

## Letter to Future Earth from young researcher organizations

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*Att: Future Earth Governing Council, Science and Engagement Committee*

The below signatory organizations, institutions and initiatives of young researchers are pleased to see that the first 10 years of the Future Earth (FE) initiative has been launched. We are also encouraged to see a long-term transdisciplinary research effort to address global environmental change and the sustainability of human society.

In particular we welcome the goal of FE to:

*“...engage a new generation of diverse researchers from all regions.”<sup>1</sup>*

To succeed in this important mission we feel there are a number of clarifications that should be made regarding the goals of involving young scientists and how their involvement will be initiated and sustained. We acknowledge that Future Earth is a visionary outline for how global sustainability science can be conducted at a global level. It is therefore important that this vision is supported by clear steps for the engagement of a new generation of scientists from diverse disciplines and regions of the earth. In the spirit of Future Earth’s transdisciplinary approach we believe the work to develop these next steps should be carried out through collaboration between the FE general science community and junior scientists.

We suggest eight concrete steps that can help promote the overall goal of initiating and sustaining the involvement of young scientists in FE:

1. Allocate core FE funding within the Belmont Forum for the involvement of young researchers
2. Encourage regional and nationally distributed Future Earth committees to work for explicit funding mechanism for young researchers to do innovative, interdisciplinary and cutting-edge work within the framework of FE
3. Make it an explicit goal to have young scientist organizations represented at all Future Earth events
4. Integrate young researchers into the FE science and engagement committee and encourage the integration at the regional and national scale
5. In parallel to 4), initiate a broader dialogue between young researcher organizations and the two global FE committees
6. Recruit a team of skilled young Future Earth science ambassadors to communicate Future Earth to the broader community

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Future Earth: Research for global sustainability.

A framework document by the Future Earth Transition Team

[http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/media-centre/relevant\\_publications/future-earth-framework-document](http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/media-centre/relevant_publications/future-earth-framework-document)

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7. Initiate broad outreach to the youngest spectra of science students via highly publicized debates where scientists address sustainability issues in an open and constructive dialog.
8. Make use of online communication platforms to reach the globally distributed community of researchers and to reach all of the above stated goals

These suggestions should be seen as complementary strategies to those already discussed by FE. Specifically, we believe several of the points can be linked to, and provide synergies with, the ongoing ICSU 'START' initiative and ideas to promote international exchanges for young researchers among FE nodes.

Because Future Earth is a ten year initiative, engagement of young scientists early on carries the greatest potential to produce longer-term academic impact and returns on investment. Future Earth has the opportunity to put global change and sustainability science higher on the agenda of younger generations, and promote the growth of a truly transdisciplinary approach among young scientists to tackle these issues, but it requires that the overall goal to engage young researchers is followed up with action from the onset.

Sincerely yours,

The International Network of Next-Generation Ecologists, [innge.net](http://innge.net)

Global Young Academy (GYA)

Young Academy of Sweden

South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS)

Liberian Young Association for the Advancement of Science (LYAAS)

Sri Lankan Academy of Young Scientists (SLAYS)

National Academy of Young Scientists Pakistan (NAYS)

Zimbabwe Young Academy of Science (ZIMYAS)

Young Scientists Network – Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Working Group "Sustainability" of "Die Junge Akademie" at the Berlin Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina (Stefanie Hiß, Alexander Danzer, Tobias J. Erb, Anke Jentsch, Silja Klepp, Alexander Knohl, Tobias Kuemmerle, Regina Palkovits, Martin Wilmking, Robert Wolf, Jadwiga R. Ziolkowska)