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Chairman's Statement from the Joint Dialogue Between GLOBE & the Club of Rome

Legislators from GLOBE International and experts from The Club of Rome met on 26th and 27th January in London to frame the challenges of climate, energy and ecosystems in the context of the economic crisis. We heard from Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, UK Secretary of State for Climate and Energy.

We concluded that:

- 2009 is a critical year: with the global economic downturn and the scheduled conclusion of UN negotiations on climate change, we face important decisions that are fundamental to our future prosperity and security and that require transformational change
- We face five parallel crises – financial, economic, climate, energy and ecosystems – all caused by the fundamental unsustainable use of resources, whether in the economy or in nature; combined with the real threat of peak oil
- The political response to the financial crisis and the outcome of the UN negotiations in Copenhagen will determine whether we continue on the path of unsustainable consumption and environmental degradation or begin the move to a new economic model with more efficient use of energy and resources, transformational investment in clean energy, and incorporating a real economic value for natural capital and ecosystem services.
- The political will for economic reforms, triggered by the financial crisis, represents a unique window for coordinated governmental action across the major economies; we may not get such an opportunity again
- As leaders consider public spending packages to stimulate our economies at the G20 Summit in April, we urge them not to deal with the financial crisis in isolation, but to take into account the underlying challenges of climate change, energy security, ecosystems decline and equitable world development; otherwise, our efforts will ultimately fail
- We believe that climate, energy and ecosystems objectives are not only consistent with, but fundamental to, sustainable economic recovery
- We welcome President Obama's vision of 'green recovery'; if all major economies' stimulus packages are given such a focus, trillions of US dollars will be spent in ways that genuinely move us towards a low carbon, resource-efficient global economy
- We welcome the emergence of the G20 Heads of Government constellation as a model to tackle the financial crisis; this grouping, with industrialised and emerging economies around one table with equal status, is well-suited to deal with the broader global challenges of the 21st century, most of which cannot be solved by a small group of industrialised countries alone
- Success at the UN negotiations on climate change (COP15) in Copenhagen is critical
- We are already seeing the first climate refugees, and climate change is undoubtedly a contributory factor to the conflict in Darfur
- However, agreement in Copenhagen must be based on the best available scientific knowledge. The most recent science indicates that climate change is both more rapid and serious than expressed in the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC; many impacts, such as the melting of Arctic sea ice, the thawing of the tundra and ocean acidification are deeply worrying and triggering feedback mechanisms that accelerate climate change; this evidence tells us that the concentration of GHG in the atmosphere must be kept at a considerably lower level than previously thought; we therefore urge governments to explore ways to facilitate more frequent updates of scientific findings in the field of climate change.
- We support the four minimum criteria for success in Copenhagen outlined by Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and call on Heads of Governments to work towards this framework:
 - Commitments by industrialised countries to binding emissions reductions of 25 to 40 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020, within the context of a long-term goal of stabilising atmospheric concentrations
 - Nationally appropriate plans to limit emissions by developing countries, supported by finance and technology from the industrialised world
 - Clarity on large-scale, stable, predictable sources of financing to allow developing countries to engage in mitigation efforts and to address adaptation
 - An agreed governance structure to manage and deploy this financial and technology support that gives developed and developing countries equal status
- The G8 Summit in Italy in July is a key milestone towards Copenhagen and industrialised countries must demonstrate genuine leadership and commitments on targets, finance and technology.
- As legislators and experts, we will do all we can to support our governments in taking the tough decisions in 2009 to promote sustainable economic recovery, improve climate and energy security and create a real economic value for our natural capital.