

Mother Earth is Home to All Mankind

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We are all members of the global village. Mother Earth is home to all mankind. We share the same sun and moon no matter where you are. What happened in one corner of the earth can affect people thousand miles away, as in the case of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. The epic center of the tsunami was off the west coast of Sumatra, but the huge waves caused by the tsunami travelled across the Indian Ocean and devastated the coastal villages in southern Sri Lanka.

COVID-19 is another example. The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us more than any other crisis that mankind is a community with shared future. As we speak, more than 142 million people worldwide have been infected with COVID-19, and more than 3 million people have die. And the numbers keep increasing everyday !

Viruses recognize no borders, it is the common enemy of mankind. Just like climate change, public health is a global issue. The world must

stand together, be caring and sharing in our fight against the virus because no one is safe until everyone is safe.

COVID-19 is still ravaging the world and vaccine is our only hope to eventually win the battle against the virus. China, in the spirit of a Community with Shared Future, has supplied vaccine to more than 50 countries worldwide . However, America has declared that it will share vaccine with other countries only after all its people have been vaccinated , while some European countries have imposed ban on the export of vaccines. The Director - General of WHO has bluntly criticized such “me -first” approach as self-defeating as it would push up the price of vaccine and encourage hoarding.

In a speech delivered at the UN Office in Geneva in 2017, President Xi Jinping emphasized that Mother Earth is the only home of all mankind. He said “Clear waters and green mountains are as good as mountains of gold and silver. We must maintain harmony between man and nature and pursue sustainable development”. He pointed out that to protect the earth, we should pursue green, low-carbon development and advance the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development in a balanced manner. To walk the talk, China pledged that it would

achieve a peak in carbon emission before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

Some scientists have described climate change as an existential threat to mankind. It is therefore encouraging to note that the world's top two carbon polluters, China and the US, have agreed to cooperate to tackle the climate change .

In a joint statement on April 17th issued by China and the US following a visit to Shanghai by US climate envoy John Kerry, it was announced that both countries are “committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency that it demands”. President Joe Biden has also invited 40 world leaders to a virtual summit on the climate crisis tomorrow.

Human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the wellbeing of our future generation. Economic development must not bring about in environmental degradation. Whatever we do today must not deprive our future generation of their needs and opportunities.

The United Nations has set 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 under The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Among these sustainable goals are : no poverty and hunger, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, climate action. These Sustainable Development Goals should be followed by all countries.

Japan plans to release contaminated water from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean. Three independent UN experts have expressed their deep concern over Japan's decision to discharge potentially still radioactive Fukushima nuclear plant water into the ocean, warning that it could impact millions across the Pacific region, posing potential threats to human health and environment.

The act by the Japanese government is a threat to the environment and runs against the spirit of a Community with Shared Future . We therefore should register our strongest opposition and protest to such an irresponsible act.

I would like to suggest that the International Academic Network of a Community with Shared Future make April 21 the “Community with Shared Future Day” to promote globally the concept of “ a Community of Shared Future for Mankind”.

Note: Speech at the 2021 Earth Day Webinar hosted by the International Academic Network for a Community with Shared Future on April 21, 2021