



## Foreword

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Global climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century. Our understanding of both the causes and consequences of global climate change has been profoundly influenced by the scientific work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2007. It is increasingly apparent that we must act now, as climate change is accelerating. Climate change threatens both our security and our economic development. Failure to take decisive action will have a dramatic impact.

Truly sustainable development requires global emissions to be cut at least by one half by the middle of this century. Only by reaching this goal can we keep global warming below the critical level of 2°C, and avert the worst consequences of climate change.

The road towards achieving this aim needs to be mapped out today. This will involve transforming our energy production, transportation, manufacturing, and patterns of consumption to minimize future use of fossil fuels. We already have many of the necessary technologies and innovative ideas, and further advances are being pursued with strong commitment. However, for sustainable solutions to be broadly adopted, the right economic and political frameworks are needed.

The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 was a first important step. But today, more than ten years later, we have to acknowledge that the advances we have made in climate protection are by no means sufficient. We must not lose another decade. The global community therefore needs to agree quickly upon a new post-Kyoto treaty that is both ambitious and effective.

It is clear where action is necessary. First, we need binding goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Second, we need to increase our efforts to adapt to those consequences of climate change that are unavoidable. Third, we need to improve global cooperation in the areas of development and the application of sustainable technologies, such as renewable energies. And fourth, we need to create and expand financial mechanisms that encourage mitigation and adaptation strategies. Both public and private capital need to be mobilized. The expansion of the global carbon market is therefore of great importance to international climate policy.

The key to a successful and effective climate treaty is an approach that all countries acknowledge as being fair. We therefore need to take into consideration the ‘polluter pays’ principle, while also recognizing differing capacities to pay. In this respect industrialized countries need to lead the way. They are called upon to commit and adhere to ambitious goals for emission reductions. However, the global climate will only be stabilized if emerging economies contribute as well, namely by decoupling emissions from economic growth. In this way we can achieve convergence of global emissions per capita on a level that is commensurate with the goal of global climate protection. Such a process towards long-term convergence allows for sustainable development in all countries, while acknowledging the common but differentiated responsibility of each country.

However, the paradigm shift required globally will only be achieved if the brightest minds on our planet work together and advance it through new ideas. In this spirit the Nobel Laureate Symposium in Potsdam sent out an important message to scientists, politicians, and to all other citizens of the world. I greatly welcome this publication, which will enable a greater audience to follow the important discussions at the symposium.