

Friends of the Earth International

Transform

How we're making deep and lasting change

Friends of the Earth International's pathways to system change 06/2023

Why we talk about system change

System change is a powerful idea and a political struggle for a better world. Powerful because it's about addressing the root causes of today's ecological, economic and social crises. It is about making deep, far-reaching and lasting change that goes beyond winning individual campaigns.

Our demand for system change is

- **Honest** about the true scale, urgency and complexity of the challenges we face.
- **Realistic** we know social and political injustices and the ecological crisis are intertwined, and that change in one area will help achieve progress in others.
- **Collective** it embraces the potential for diverse communities and social movements and organisations to solve environmental, social, gender and economic challenges together.
- **Inspirational** it is a rallying cry that resonates with peoples all over the world who face similar threats and share the same rights and aspirations.

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Gas flaring
in the Niger Delta.
© Elaine Gilligan / Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Which systems do we need to change?

Friends of the Earth International is focused on transforming the economic, food and energy systems, as well as social gender relations and our management of, and connection to, biodiversity.

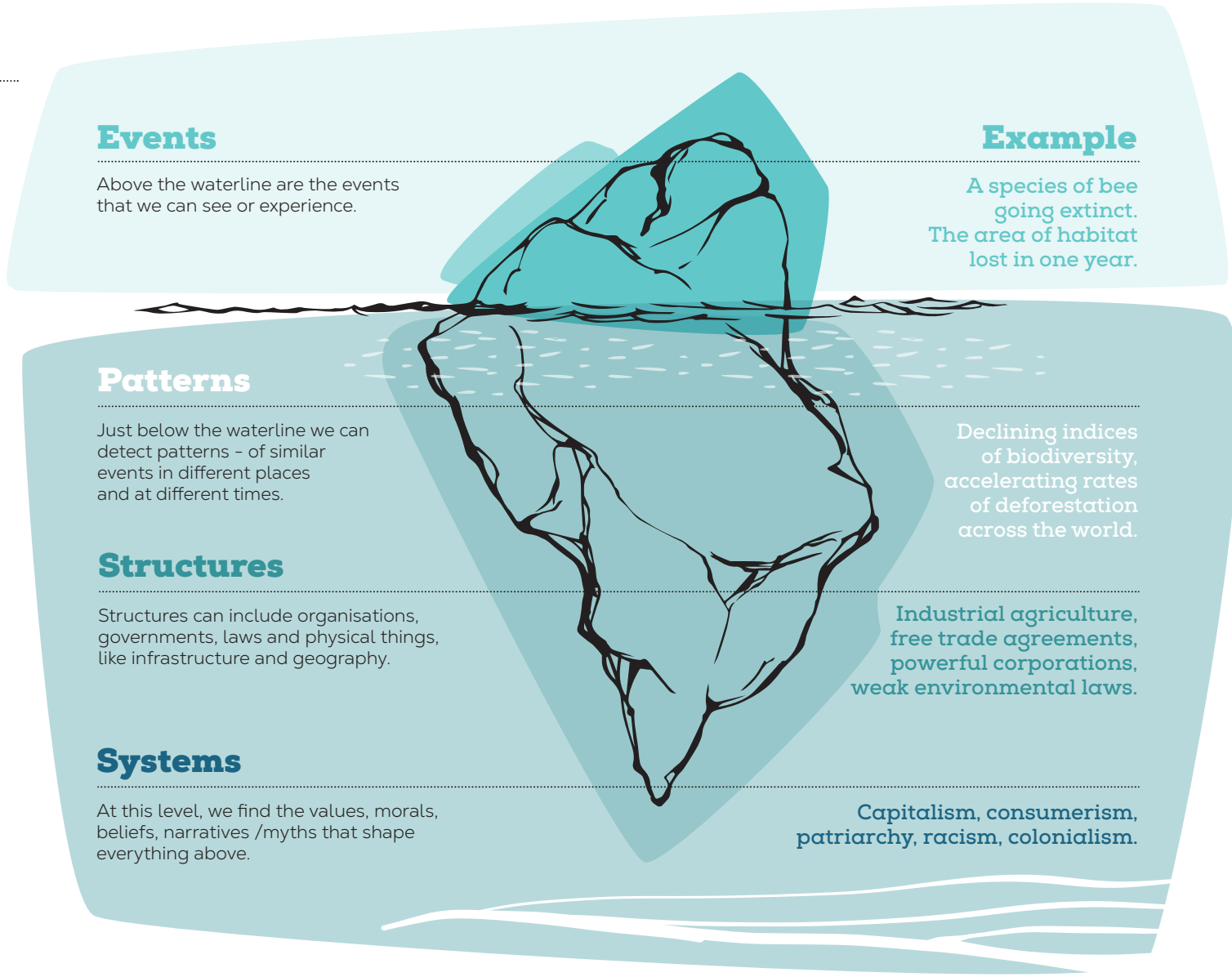
The capitalist economic model, industrial agriculture, fossil fuel energy system and patriarchal relations are the current dominant global and national systems. The machinery of these systems are the policies, ideologies, special interests and institutions that put profit before people and nature.

These systems are built on injustice and oppression - racism, heteronormativity, colonialism and imperialism; and on the exploitation of nature, working classes and the bodies and work of women. They shape politics, laws, trade rules, education, mass media narratives and cultures.

Like any complex system, the parts of the machine work together, and the crises it produces are interconnected. The climate crisis is also a racist crisis. The biodiversity crisis is also an overconsumption crisis. Hunger is a crisis of corporate power. These dominant systems encourage division and loss of trust in democratic structures and institutions, allowing all forms of injustice to thrive and facilitating the advance of fascism.

What does this system look like?

The iceberg is a often used to describe systems - because most of the system is below the water line.[1]



1 One such source Ed Cunliff, Connecting systems thinking and action, system thinkers.

What do we mean by system change?

We want to create deep and lasting change so that the gains we make today will not be rolled back tomorrow.

To do this we need to challenge existing power relationships in society, politics and economics. We must replace competition with solidarity. To change the system is to dismantle all forms of oppression and exploitation, rewrite the rules and change the structures.



When we change the system, we are:

- **confronting the fundamental causes of humanity's crises**, dismantling the apparatus of oppression and taking the profit out of exploitation
- **challenging the dominant socio-economic model** – capitalism
- **transforming the way** we organise our societies, economies and relationships with nature
- **exposing and breaking the links** between racism, patriarchy, extractivism and inequality
- **overturning centuries of injustice**, unpicking privilege and breaking free from ideologies that have held too many people back for too long
- **facing reality** by acknowledging that social injustice and the ecological crisis are intertwined, and that progress in one area will help achieve progress in others
- **creating the conditions that will allow communities to thrive**
- **building societies and movements based on peoples' sovereignty**, justice and respect for nature
- **working for a better world** built on solidarity rather than competition and
- **rewriting the rules** so that the gains we make today will not be rolled back tomorrow.

What do we want to see? Our vision

Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfilment in which equity and human and peoples' rights are realised. This will be a society built on peoples' sovereignty and participation. It will be founded on social, economic, gender and environmental justice and be free from all forms of domination and exploitation, such as neoliberalism, corporate globalisation, neo-colonialism and militarism.

We believe that our children's future will be better because of what we do.

Our economies and politics will be organised to ensure everyone can put healthy food on the table, have clean energy and water and receive care when they need it. Our societies will put the sustainability of life at their centre, and enjoy a thriving environment and commons within planetary limits.

What will a changed system look like?

We will see:

- gender justice, autonomy, freedom and equality for all
- everyone sharing equitably in the distribution of power, knowledge and resources
- a public and 100% renewable energy system that guarantees access to energy sufficiency for all and the rights of workers and all peoples
- food sovereignty - universal access to healthy and culturally appropriate food agroecologically produced; and peoples enjoying their collective right to define their own policies, strategies and systems for food production, distribution and consumption
- a new economy that ensures the right to live a dignified life for all peoples through sustainable public services, the scaling up of cooperatives, fair trade and binding rules on corporations
- thriving, healthy peoples and nature where community and democratic governance and control of the commons empowers communities to look after and benefit from nature.

Rewrite the system

The dominant systems now

Many groups of peoples oppressed: women, Indigenous Peoples, working class, Black communities and peoples of colour, LGBTQI and gender diverse, many from global south.

Unequal, divisive, extractive, polluting, and destructive.

Corporate power, corrupt politics, elite control.

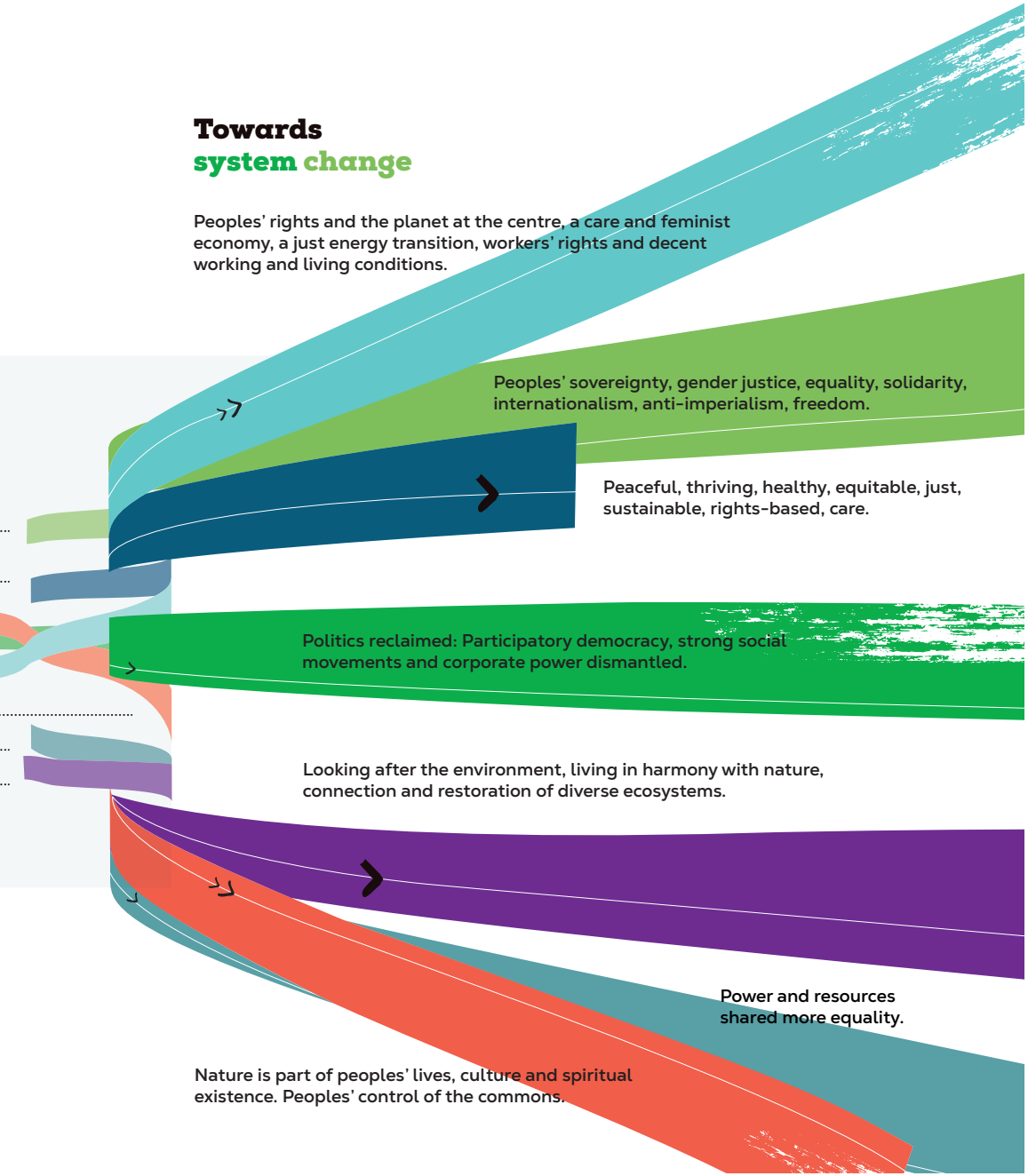
Blinkered pursuit of profit.

Commodification, privatisation and financialisation of nature.

Few people hold most of the power and resources.

Exploited ecosystems.

Towards system change



How we change the system

More of us than ever before understand the need to tackle the social, economic, environmental and political crises facing us. We also know that the solutions exist and that actions we take today will transform our future.

The task might seem overwhelming. But communities and social movements and organisations across the world are already working together, building the solutions we need and demanding a seismic shift in how we look after our planet and the people on it.

Deep and lasting change starts at the grassroots. It begins among politicised communities and peoples who are mobilising against oppression and for justice – whether from a class, feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist or anti-capitalist perspective. Organisations and alliances of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, working classes, unions, family farmers, peasants, fisherfolk, Black and people of colour, feminists, LGBTQI people, academics and scientists – these are our allies and our movement.

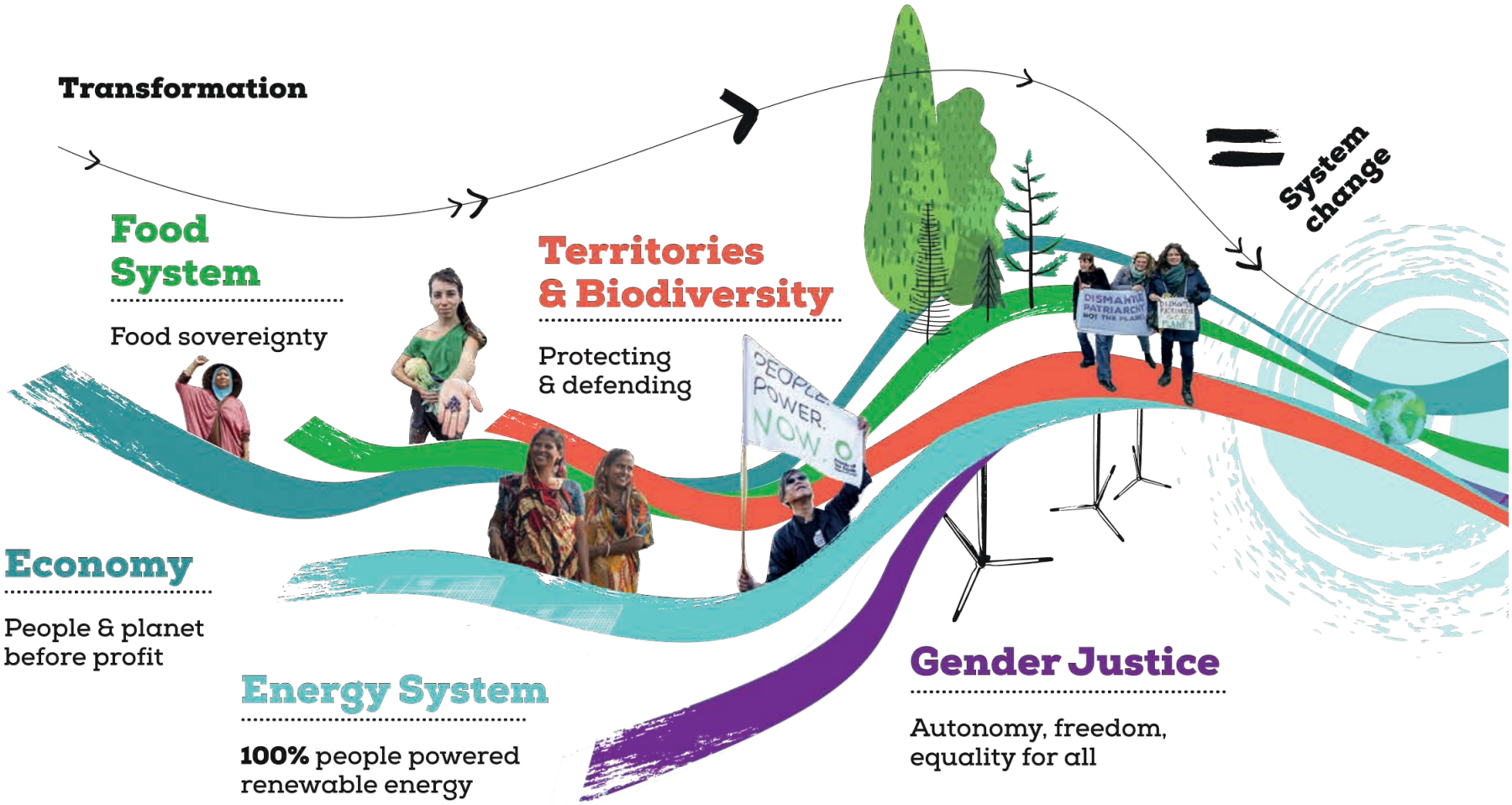
As Friends of the Earth International we are part of the world's biggest grassroots environmental federation building environmental, social economic and gender justice. We are in 73 countries – from Norway to Australia, from South Korea to Colombia. And we number some 5,000 local activist groups and more than 2 million members and supporters worldwide – all doing extraordinary things for a healthier and fairer world, championing a better future in their communities, amplifying the call for urgent change at every level. As more of us take serious action the pressure ramps up, making it impossible for governments to ignore the demands for deep and lasting change.

Of course we haven't won yet – the perils facing people and nature are perhaps greater than they have ever been. But if we look back at what we've achieved together in the past 50 years it's clear that deep and lasting change is possible – from women's rights and the care economy, to an energy system for all, new economic models, food sovereignty and community forest management.

The pathways to system change are deeply interconnected. In the face of global crises those connections appear to be more visible, more necessary and more urgent. The actions we take now have the power to shape the world for millennia to come.

This is a moment to reaffirm our radical hope.

What are the pathways to system change?



There are many routes to system change but they converge around participatory politics, food sovereignty, climate justice, gender justice, economic justice, the protection of biodiversity, and the dismantling of corporate power and all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Pathways to system change also share some common traits:

- they are political
- they build peoples' political power, sovereignty and organisation
- they are co-created with allies and social movements, incorporating feminist, peasant, trade union, racial justice, anti-colonialist and anti-capitalist perspectives
- they reclaim politics from cynicism, corruption and elite/corporate control to build strong and vibrant democracies based on peoples' participation
- they assert the state's role in working for the common good and for peoples' rights
- they champion progressive policy
- they rebuild trust in public and community institutions
- they build strength in the territories
- they lead towards living in harmony with nature
- they are internationalist
- they reclaim knowledge and technology for the commons and peoples' rights
- they challenge the norms and narratives of the dominant ideology
- they challenge corporate power
- and they are driven by solidarity rather than competition.

Fundamentally, pathways to system change are based on rights, justice, equity and respect for life.

How do we know we can do this? Our impact

We are clear about the perilous state of the climate, nature and peoples' futures. But we should also take inspiration from what coordinated action has achieved over many years.

Transitioning our energy system for climate and energy justice

Our decades of campaigning have helped drive international consensus on the need for joint action, the need for emissions targets, the principles of historical and differentiated responsibility for climate change, and the need for the North to transfer finance and technology to the global South.

For years we have fiercely resisted the drive to market-based solutions and the commodification of nature. Our networks have campaigned against fossil fuel companies and against finance for new oil, coal and gas. We have been leaders in building the transition from fossil fuels in national legislation with on-the-ground change - for example the UK Climate Act and 100% Renewable Energy Gaza campaign. Such campaigns have inspired decades of work to decarbonise economies and the space for new forms of energy production. Scaling up this transformation requires system change at an international level.

Friends of the Earth International therefore mobilises with allies annually at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to demand climate justice, equity and action. Civil society and grassroots resistance and mobilisation at all levels - local, national and global - are vital.

It is partly as a result of the climate justice movement's work that a new energy system is emerging today. There is rapid and substantial growth in renewable energy, and many cities and countries have plans to develop 100% renewable energy systems. In the global electricity sector in 2021 wind, solar and other renewables received more investment than fossil fuels. Although much of the global energy system is still under corporate control there is a burgeoning public, and community energy and efficiency movement where people are taking control of their own energy supply and access. And there is substantive government intervention that provides an opportunity to scale up and spread this transformation.

Yet much more is needed to transform our energy system. We demand:

1. Power to the people - community and social ownership and control of safe, clean, renewable energy as a common good.
2. Reclaiming of politics and removal of obstacles that prevent people-centred renewable energy from flourishing.
3. Energy sufficiency and 100% renewable energy for all.
4. Financing for the energy revolution.
5. Guarantees of rights and livelihoods as we transition to clean energy.
6. A focus on renewable technology that is climate resilient, locally appropriate and low impact.





Far right: Children using solar lamps and benefiting from the rooftop solar project at the Banishanta union parishad building, Sundarbans, Bangladesh.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International

Right: Friends of the Earth International at the UNFCCC COP27 in Egypt.
© Madeleine Race / Friends of the Earth International

Building food sovereignty and agroecology

Food sovereignty initiatives are essential to systemic solutions because they: are based in local markets; promote better income for peasants, workers, family farmers, fisherfolk and small scale-producers; promote fairer prices for the working classes; build environmental, social, economic, gender, racial and intergenerational justice; help tackle the various socio-environmental crises; help strengthen peoples' control over commons and economic processes, from production to consumption; and create spaces to resist the negative impacts of transnational value chains.

Agroecology is a key pathway towards food sovereignty. It provides a living, coherent, transdisciplinary and holistic framework for studying practices and their effects, and how food systems can adapt to, and restore, the biocultural systems on which they depend. Fundamental to agroecology are peoples' diverse and collective knowledge, practices and tools.

Historically, our member groups have focused on supporting small-scale peasant and family farmers. These are the people resisting corporate agricultural commodities that destroy our environment, bringing hunger and conflict. We have campaigned hand in hand with communities as they work to regain control over their territories and seeds, defend their land rights, secure their right to water, and recreate local markets for their produce.

We co-organised the 2007 Nyéléni Forum in Mali, which marked the genesis of the food sovereignty movement. Today we are part of a growing movement demanding food sovereignty and agroecology led by more than 200 million peasants in La Vía Campesina - one of Friends of the Earth's strategic allies. There are countless models of agroecological transformation at the farm and community level, some at province and country level; some are even supported by government policies. In a significant step, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has recognised key elements of agroecology as crucial to building a healthy food system.

By mobilising in global policymaking spaces such as the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) Friends of the Earth International is able to advance grassroots struggles and resist corporate power and injustice along the pathway to system change.

"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through socially just, ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their collective right to define their own policies, strategies and systems for food production, distribution and consumption."

Nyéléni Declaration, 2007

We demand the transformation our food systems towards food sovereignty and agroecology by:

1. Ensuring social protection and the right to healthy, culturally appropriate food for all.
2. Guaranteeing fair incomes for producers, workers' rights and decent working and living conditions.
3. Granting rights, access and control over land, territories, seeds, water and biodiversity to local communities, peasants, family farmers, cooperatives and small-scale food production and distribution.
4. Supporting peasant, family farmers, fisherfolk and other small-scale producers to transition to agroecological food systems.
5. Stopping agribusiness expansion and neoliberal trade and investment policies.





Far right: Mother and daughter help out with food deliveries during the Covid-19 crisis in Brazil, as part of solidarity networks set up by the People's Feminist Alliance.
© Luiza Castro / Alianza Feminismo Popular Brazil

Right: Ibu Rumsiah from Kalimantan, Indonesia resisting the Indramayu coal fired power plant.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International

Protecting people and biodiversity through community forest management

Over decades we have worked with our national groups to defend forests and biodiversity from being destroyed and commodified while communities are pitted against each other. We have also helped shape key intergovernmental processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Our impact includes the strengthening of alliances, ending numerous harmful projects in individual countries and via lobbying at the CBD. We have challenged multinational corporations involved in deforestation, and financial backers such as the World Bank. And we have orchestrated campaigns against destructive and illegal logging, monoculture plantations and agrofuels.

Today Indigenous Peoples and local communities protect and manage 21% of the world's land mass, roughly the size of Africa. This exceeds the size of state-governed terrestrial Protected Areas, which cover around 14% of the world's territory. We advocate for community-based forest management, which studies have shown can protect biodiversity better than many conventional conservation schemes. They provide clean water and air, healthy food and livelihoods, while supporting ecological integrity, connection and restoration of diverse ecosystems.

It is therefore Indigenous Peoples and local communities who are on the frontlines of resistance to the main industrial drivers of global biodiversity loss and climate collapse, and are often threatened with violence as result. The lack of recognition, respect and implementation of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights is currently a major barrier to their efforts to care for territories and ecosystems.

Our member groups continue the work to embed deep and lasting change in humanity's relationship with biodiversity - and forests in particular - as they team up with communities who are defending their rights to manage and control forests and secure sustainable livelihoods.



Protestors with seeds at the United Nations climate negotiations in Durban.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International

Working to protect the world's forests and biodiversity means:

1. Increasing Indigenous peoples' and local communities' control of territories, working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to increase capacity, and build and reinforce social movement alliances.
2. Strengthening national legislation and public policies to promote and facilitate community forest management.
3. Respecting and implementing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to land, self-determination, traditional knowledge and consultation on any proposed project or policy that will affect their territory.
4. Passing national legislation and policies to limit corporate control of forests and biodiversity.
5. Halting carbon markets, false solutions, certification schemes, corporate control and corporate activities that impact on Indigenous Peoples, local communities, forests and biodiversity.
6. Agreeing to an ambitious rights-based UN global convention on biodiversity with the aims of ensuring we live within planetary boundaries, addressing the root causes and direct drivers of biodiversity loss, and promoting agroecology and other community-based solutions.



John Muyisha and his community in Kalangala, Uganda, have lost their land. One day, BIDCO, a Kenyan company, arrived and told him that the land was now theirs.
© Jason Taylor / Friends of the Earth International

Transforming our economy to put people & planet first

With local communities we have turned the spotlight on specific transnationals such as Rio Tinto, Monsanto and ArcelorMittal. Our member groups have won a groundbreaking climate and human rights legal action against Shell. In 2014 a people's victory was celebrated at the United Nations Human Rights Council establishing an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) to develop an international legally binding instrument to regulate transnational corporations and other companies with respect to human rights. Each year Friends of the Earth International joins the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples' Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and End Impunity to participate in negotiations and mobilise for a binding treaty to stop corporate impunity. While we face many challenges and setbacks, a growing global movement to dismantle corporate power is winning victories at the national, regional and international level. Consensus is building on the need for international legally binding regulation of transnational corporations to ensure people's rights are protected.

For decades we have exposed the failings of the current development model, resisted corporate trade and investment deals and denounced corporate power. Our work with trade unions and other allies contributed to the swift dispatch of the OECD's proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in 1998, and contributed to the collapse of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations that threatened people and their environment, in Seattle (1999) and Cancun (2003).

We demand a new economic paradigm that puts people's rights and living within planetary boundaries over profit and economic growth: a more equal, just and sustainable economy by design that distributes wealth, protects ecosystems and challenges inequality, with a more active role for government and social actors. The work of many of our allies demonstrates that thousands of solutions for a new economy exist. Today one in seven people globally is a member of a cooperative. From health clinics in South Africa to clean water in Uruguay and public transport in Vienna, public services provide the necessities of life to billions of people. New economic indicators should focus on achieving the fulfilment of the right to dignified life (health, water, housing, food, energy, education and mobility) and value domestic labour and environmental limits.



'Stop the Trojan Treaty!' action by Friends of the Earth Europe in Brussels against Transatlantic Trade and Investment Treaty (TTIP).
© Lode Saidane / Friends of the Earth Europe

Our challenge is to scale up the solutions and build a new economy by:

1. Providing public services for all through tax justice and debt cancellation.
2. Scaling up economies based on social ownership and cooperativism.
3. Supporting local markets and fair trade.
4. Changing the goal of the economy to put people and the planet first, not profit.
5. Ensuring binding rules to dismantle the power of big business.





Far right: CESTA/ Friends of the Earth El Salvador's "No Bicycle, No Planet" campaign won the 2021-2022 energy category of the Transformative Cities People's Choice Award.
© James Kao / CESTA

Right: Friends of the Earth International delegation joined the mobilisation week organised by the Global Campaign for the United Nations Binding Treaty on corporations and human rights, 2019.
© Victor Barro / Friends of the Earth International

Gender justice dismantling patriarchy

Today a global intersectional feminist movement is winning significant cultural and political struggles. Millions of women are asserting the right to respectful relationships and more equal sharing of care work with men and the state. Women are protagonists in the defence of our territories and the fight for autonomy over our bodies, lives and labour. Many governments are providing public services to build gender justice through specific programmes that have increased education rates for women, childcare provisions and political representation in some countries. We are continuing to build alliances with grassroots feminist organisations including the World March of Women and the women of La Vía Campesina.

"The factors and systems that lead to the exploitation of natural resources also defend patriarchy and lead to violations against women that create injustice and inequality. Friends of the Earth International as a federation working to change systems and promote justice has to invest in dismantling all unequal and unjust power bases including patriarchy and must thrive to empower women, ensure their unhindered access to natural resources and strengthen their economic, political and bodily autonomy within our organisations and societies." Rizwana Hasan, BELA / Friends of the Earth Bangladesh

We demand a revolution in gender relations, which is about:

1. Reclaiming the body-territory.
2. Ending the sexual division of labour.
3. Building a feminist care economy, a feminist just transition and food sovereignty.
4. Building power with feminism at its heart.



Building on internationalist solidarity

Our Internationalist Solidarity System (ISS) responds rapidly to violations and mobilises internationalist support for threatened peoples and communities, according to their needs and wishes.

Working on internationalist solidarity means accompanying struggles against injustice in any part of the world, feeling them as our own causes. We support our member groups in preventing violations and fighting the interests of transnational corporations and states that are complicit in such crimes. We ensure that defenders of territories and peoples' rights, with their communities and social movements, have the capacity to pursue a system change agenda, aimed at protecting the environment and securing collective rights.

Our Internationalist Solidarity System is led by a decentralised team acting from the local to the global level, and works through four main axes:

1. Political formation
2. Documentation and analysis
3. Rapid response
4. Mobilisation



How we're changing the system today

We're changing the system by building a movement that addresses the root causes of our crises, with solutions based on justice and peoples' rights, sovereignty and political power.

We are:

- standing with communities who are fighting back against acts of oppression and environmental destruction
- building alliances with other movements and organisations so that the gains they make today take root and grow into deep and lasting change for more and more people
- nurturing a movement driven by solidarity, compassion and effective action
- reclaiming politics and the state as the structures that provide for everyone
- redirecting economics, knowledge and technology to serve social justice
- telling a story of hope to counter the despair of neoliberalism.

How will we know system change when we see it?

Friends of the Earth International measures solutions against four key criteria. They should:

01	Harmony & Justice	• lead towards living in harmony with nature, within Earth's ecological limits, and contribute to ecological, social, economic and gender justice;
02	Equality & Balance	• contribute to equitable power relations and challenge unequal power relations;
03	Challenge	• challenge corporate power;
04	Sovereignty	• contribute to peoples' sovereignty and power.

Basma Giacaman, Director at Al Basma Center Arab Women's Union and manager of the solar energy system that runs the centre's facilities.
© Hussein Zohor / PENGON



case study

Women as leaders in clean & sustainable energy Palestine

For many years PENGON / Friends of the Earth Palestine has advocated for energy sovereignty in Palestine. Working with communities under siege in Gaza and marginalised Bedouin communities in the Jordan Valley, PENGON has supplied solar units so that families have clean energy.



Along the way PENGON grew to understand the impacts of energy scarcity on women, particularly on Bedouin women. In these communities, women are responsible for domestic care work and for producing yoghurt and cheese from sheep's milk. Energy scarcity made this labour burdensome and time-consuming. Women were working longer days than men, leaving them little opportunity to do other things such as study or support their children's education. Women were also under-represented in formal decision-making, notably regarding clean energy.



An energy revolution is a gender revolution

The project involved women and women's organisations in drawing up proposals for Palestine's clean energy future. Following women-led workshops, a framework was set for mainstreaming gender in Palestinian clean energy policy, including proposals for gender planning and budgeting. Interviews with women from Bedouin communities fed into a fact sheet, which included recommendations for the government to support women as leaders in clean energy. A legal review identified gaps in energy laws in relation to gender and was used as a lobbying tool by PENGON and partners.

Women and community members install solar panels on houses, farms and public buildings, bringing light and energy to thousands. To scale up the impact PENGON has launched a 100% Renewable Energy Gaza campaign that is demanding global financing and technology transfer. They have started to link different systemic changes together - food, water, energy and an end to the Israeli occupation - under the banner of a 'Just Recovery from COVID'. When people have power there is hope for all forms of justice, and for a more harmonious relationship between communities and ecosystems.



Far left: Jamelah Hasasnah working on the hydroponics and aquaponics system powered by solar energy, Al Basma centre Arab Women's Union, Beit Sahour, Palestine.
© Hussein Zohor / PENGON

Left: Rasmeya Ali Jmassi in the Gaza Strip. "My daughter used to study using a battery operated light, and the mobile. It was really hard for her. At night when the batteries were empty we used to sit without lights." Now her daughter is able to study in the evening, creating long-term positive impacts for her education.
© Hussein Zohor / PENGON

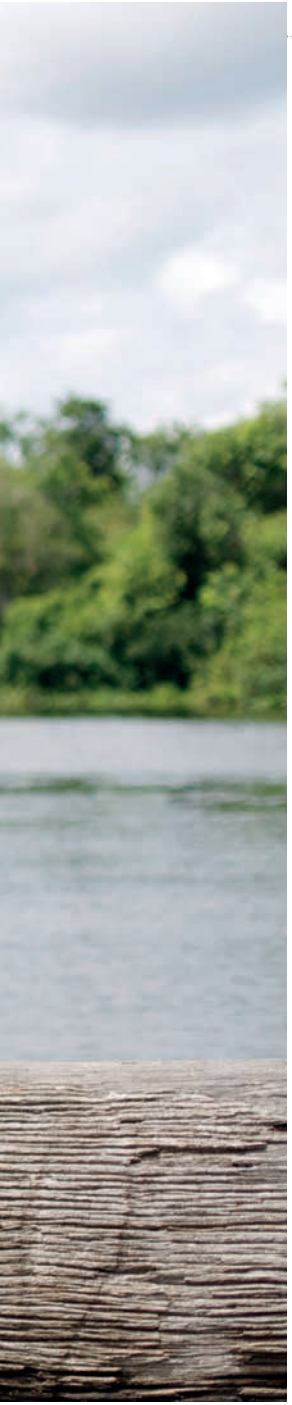
Ibu Mardiana from Tamiang Layang village.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International



case study

Community forest management: turning the tide on deforestation
Indonesia

For decades Friends of the Earth Indonesia/WALHI has been developing a community-led model to protect the country's forests. It is based on recognising the land rights of subsistence farmers, collective management of non-timber forest products and traditional knowledge.



WALHI is currently working with farmers and peasant unions across the country to defend land rights and promote community control of natural resources. WALHI supports their struggle by providing free legal services, training in community organising and connecting local producers directly with consumers.

Their approach is working. Not only have individual communities won land rights in the courts, but families have benefited from improved vegetable sales. This model is already being massively scaled up due to its success. The government has promised 12.7 million hectares of forest area for Community Forest Management.

In 2022 the total area of community managed areas supported by Friends of the Earth Indonesia/WALHI has reached 1.1 million ha. A total of 161,019 households from 28 provinces benefit from the protection and development provided by this Community-based Area Management.[2] This inspiring initiative has achieved so much on the pathway to systemic change, but much more is needed to be done.





Above: Palm oil protest, COP 21, Paris, 2015.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International

Left: Pa Yusep in an abandoned mine bordering rainforest near Gunung Karasik village.
© Luka Tomac / Friends of the Earth International

2 Walhi - Community-based Area Management (WKR).

Friends of the Earth Togo solar oven exhibition at the national forum on Just Energy Transition.
© Ekue Assem / Friends of the Earth Togo



case study

Renewable energy plan for Africa

Without rapid large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach. Friends of the Earth Africa's Just Recovery Renewable Energy Plan for Africa shows that it is possible to reduce emissions, transform the energy system and support a just recovery from Covid-19 on the continent.



The 'Plan for Africa' outlines how the continent can dismantle existing dirty energy systems, and shift to 100% renewable energy for all by 2050 and create 7 million new jobs in renewable energy. It would cost US$130 billion a year, funded through public finance from the global North, and by putting an end to tax dodging and dropping of foreign debt.

The plan explores how renewable energy systems must be socially owned and community based - not a pretext for privatising the electricity sector. The transformation to renewable energy must be underpinned by the principles of energy sufficiency, energy sovereignty, and energy as a common good rather than a commodity. The energy system should protect biodiversity, strengthen community land rights, promote gender justice, and lead us away from extractivism. This is not just a technical plan but a vision for system change.







Above: We Care Solar, Africa.
© Ashden

Far left: Solar energy, Madagascar.
© KRISS75 / Shutterstock

Left: Solar hybrid power plant in Somalia, Africa
© Sebastian Noethlichs / Shutterstock

Eric Dooh overlooking the oil devastated landscape of the Goi community. Eric Dooh became one of the plaintiffs in the case against Shell.
© Amelia Collins / Friends of the Earth International



case study

Game-changing win against Shell The Netherlands

In a historic step towards a liveable future for everyone, Friends of the Earth Netherlands led the work to take energy giant Shell to court for causing climate change - and won. In May 2021 the District Court of the Hague held Shell liable for causing dangerous climate change. It ruled that by 2030 the company must slash its carbon dioxide emissions by 45% compared with 2019.



It's the first time a court has ruled that a major polluter must align its plans with the Paris climate agreement. It's also the first time a change in policy – rather than compensation – has been demanded from a polluting company.

The verdict has enormous consequences for other big polluters globally, setting a legal precedent about accountability and responsibility in supply chains. It could trigger a wave of litigation to force others to stop extracting and burning fossil fuels. And with just 25 fossil fuel companies and state-owned entities responsible for more than half the world's greenhouse gas emissions, we could be witnessing a tipping point.

This is no overnight success. We can draw a direct line between the Shell verdict and years of grassroots activism and advocacy that Friends of the Earth International has been part of. This is the movement that has consistently pushed for international agreement on just and ambitious emissions targets and for national laws to galvanise action on the ground.

The verdict sends a clear signal that the rules of the game have changed: profit can no longer be pursued at the expense of the climate. Our hope is that this verdict will inspire a wave of climate litigation against big polluters globally, to force them to stop extracting and burning fossil fuels. This is system change in action.





Above: Milieudefensie celebrating outside court.
© Friends of the Earth Netherlands / Milieudefensie

Left: Standing hand-in-hand for a just transition.
© Friends of the Earth Netherlands / Milieudefensie

© Edgardo Mattioli / Real World Radio



case study

Seed saving network Uruguay

The National Network of Native and Local Seeds of Uruguay is made up of more than 350 small family holdings, and involves some 500 farmers across a majority of the country's 19 departments. Network members are committed to reviving and re-valuing local seeds, to developing and exchanging them to grow their own food, and to supplying local markets – all with the aim of avoiding reliance on corporate-controlled seeds.



Network members get access to seeds and, in return, commit to reproducing them so as to continue building up a living reserve. Farmers in the network use a range of agroecological practices. Seeds are air- and sun-dried; crops are fertilised with cow dung, poultry litter or other organic matter; macerated nettles or other natural preparations are used to control pests and diseases; and crop rotation and fallow periods provide nutrients and rest for the soil. These practices not only help conserve the soil but also avoid costly inputs and fuel, and the health impacts of agri-chemicals.

Scaling it up, the Seeds Network has been a key proponent of a National Agroecology Plan, to promote agroecological food production more widely. The Plan passed into law in December 2018 acting as an inspiration nationally and to the region.





Above: Seed Farmers' Meeting in Termas del Arapey.
© Edgardo Mattioli / Real World Radio

Left: **© Edgardo Mattioli / Real World Radio**

Members of the Friends of the Earth Brazil team in front of their headquarters in Porto Alegre.
© Luiza Dornelles / Friends of the Earth Brazil



case study

"Every small market is a fertile site where we spread our ideas" **Brazil's CaSanAT.**

Brazil

The CaSanAT community centre in Brazil has been fighting hunger, the Covid-19 pandemic and repression by the Bolsonaro government all at the same time. The Centro de Arquitetura Sócio-Ambiental para o núcleo Amigos da Terra/ Socio-Environmental Architecture Centre for the Friends of the Earth (CaSanAT) occupies a colourful single-storey house on a quiet residential street in Porto Alegre.



Friends of the Earth Brazil moved here during the early 2000s and refurbished the building to high environmental standards. Original materials were reused, walls are plastered in lime, there is natural ventilation throughout, and plants in the yard provide shade, while fruit and veg grow on the patio all year round.

CaSanAT is a hub for a multitude of activities. It houses the Magda Renner Environmental Documentation Centre - more than 3,000 publications about the environment and documents containing the history of the gaúcho people and Brazilian environmental movements. The centre is a focal point for community activists, and a point of connection between the city and countryside.

CaSanAT also hosts a vibrant monthly market attracting people from all over Porto Alegre to buy fruit, vegetables, snacks, handicrafts and more. There is live music, a live radio station and discussions on socio-environmental issues. The CaSanAT team has shared the project with indigenous and quilombola (African descent) communities.

Vania Pierozan, who has been coming to the market since 2016, says: "I believe in these markets as I believe in seeds. Every small market is a fertile site where we spread our ideas."

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit Brazil, CaSanAT organised food for thousands of families left high and dry by the state. The feminist and trade justice movements used the market, community kitchen and local garden networks as a powerful organising space to feed people and challenge corporate trade agreements, like the EU-Mercosur deal. The market acted as a practical and political alternative that still supports local peasant farmers and peoples' needs in an equitable exchange.

CaSanAT's work to challenge existing power relations through local control and participatory democracy and establish a locally based sustainable economy won the Transformative Cities Peoples' Choice Award in 2020.





Right: CaSanAT is a focal point for community activists, and plays host to a vibrant market once per month. People come from all over the city to buy fruits, vegetables, snacks, handicrafts and more.
© Friends of the Earth Brazil

Far right: The Sementes de Baobá group present an artistic musical show at the 15th Fruits of Resistance market in October 2019.
© Carol Ferraz / Friends of the Earth Brazil

A rallying cry for life: Thousands of people gathered on the Environmental Axis of Avenida Jiménez for a historic mobilisation during the National Strike in Bogotá, 4 December 2019.
© Alfonso Cañón / Equipo de comunicaciones Censat Agua Viva

case study

Internationalist solidarity with the people's uprising in Colombia

In 2020 Colombia exploded in mass protest with millions taking to the streets against three decades of neoliberalism that had stripped back public services and left more than half the country in poverty. The government has also failed to comply with the peace agreements signed with the FARC in 2016.





Yet this people-powered movement faced severe repression. In December 2020, we joined CENSAT Agua Viva/Friends of the Earth Colombia in categorically condemning the systematic violence inflicted by the government, and urgently called for a redoubling of internationalist efforts in support of the Colombian people. Our member groups joined solidarity protests around the world and sent letters to Colombian embassies that stated:

A government that resorts to military force to quiet the demands of its people is not a democratic one. We call on the Iván Duque administration to uphold its international human rights obligations, put an immediate stop to the assassination of demonstrators, and provide guarantees of the right to protest and mobilise.

In May 2021 we reiterated this call and showed solidarity with the National Strike and mobilisations against President Duque's tax reform bill. Our film 'Colombia on fire to defy neoliberalism' sought to raise awareness of the peoples' struggle and show solidarity with it.





Left: Various activities for the National Strike took place every day from 21 November for over a month: rallies, artistic performances, marches and mobilisations that brought together approximately 20,000 people in the main cities of Colombia.
© Alfonso Cañón / Equipo de comunicaciones Censat Agua Viva

Friends of the Earth International is the world's largest grassroots environmental federation, with 73 national member groups and millions of members and supporters around the world. Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfilment in which equity, and human and peoples' rights, are realised. This will be a society built upon peoples' sovereignty and participation. It will be founded on social, economic, gender and environmental justice and be free from all forms of domination and exploitation, such as neoliberalism, corporate globalisation, neo-colonialism and militarism. We believe that our children's future will be better because of what we do.

Friends of the Earth groups around the world

Africa

Cameroon
Ghana
Liberia
Mali
Mozambique
Nigeria
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda

Asia Pacific

Australia
Bangladesh
East Timor
India
Indonesia
Japan
Malaysia
Nepal
Palestine
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Russia
South Korea
Sri Lanka

Europe

Albania
Austria
Belgium (Flanders & Brussels)
Belgium (Wallonia & Brussels)
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
England, Wales & Northern Ireland
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Hungary
Ireland
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Norway
Poland
Russia
Scotland
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
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