

Towards an Earth Democracy plan to approach Michelle Obama regarding a National Commission

Goal

The goal of this initiative is to recognize the Rights of Future Generations to a healthy and livable Earth and to institute the practical means for honoring those rights through federal policy, legal frameworks, and new institutions at the national and international level beginning with the executive branch. These frameworks and institutions would also be models for states and other nation states.

Plan

Approach the First Lady to convene a commission to explore the Rights of Future Generations to a healthy and livable environment and the mechanisms for fulfilling present generations' responsibilities to them. The commission's results will be used to guide the First Lady's work internationally and as a plan for the President and Congress to institute domestic measures to protect the interests of Future Generations.

Scope of Work

The Commission's scope of work:

- Identify the rights of Future Generations and the responsibilities of present generations to the future;
- Spearhead a UN Declaration on the Rights of Future Generations;
- Develop new institutions for present generations to fulfill their responsibilities to Future Generations. These institutions could include a cabinet level office of Guardian of Future Generations, or a guardian housed at the Department of Justice. It could include an Office of Future Generations at the U.N.
- Design the principles that will allow present generations to fulfill their responsibilities to Future Generations. Such principles could include budgetary concepts (no debt to Future Generations without a corresponding asset), legal precepts (restorative justice), and others to support the rights Future Generations hold.

Background

Disasters associated with climate change raise the question of the kind of legacy we wish to leave to Future Generations. We are at a decisive moment in history where it is clear that our institutions and legal tools are inadequate for the challenges ahead.

There are seeds of our responsibility to Future Generation law in the U.S. Constitution and in other key laws. The Constitution uses the word 'posterity' in the preamble: *we instituted the constitution to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity*. The law that created the national park system says that those parks are for present generations to enjoy and to be passed on to Future Generations unimpaired.

The great advances in law over all of history have been the expansion of rights - whether it is women's right to vote, the abolition of slavery, or the declaration of human rights. Eleanor Roosevelt led the world in human rights and was instrumental in getting the U.N. to pass the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. The time has come to formally acknowledge the rights of Future Generations to inherit a livable planet.