

A Common Agenda for Health and Environment Goals for the Next Generation and Steps to Get Us There

A Summary

In 2007, nearly 100 leaders of healthcare, community development, environmental, labor and agriculture organizations began a conversation about the world we want to leave our children, and what it will take to get there within a generation. A group of labor leaders discussed goals for jobs and workplaces; a group of conservation leaders discussed biodiversity goals; a group of climate and energy leaders discussed climate and energy goals—seven discussion forums in all. When the groups presented their work to each other, distinct common ground and ideas for action emerged—visions that cut across the silos which often divide environmental and health leaders. What emerged is A Common Agenda for Health and Environment, a statement of commitment to six ambitious cross-cutting Generational Goals with measurable objectives to be achieved within one generation that will leave our children a healthy world full of hope and possibility:

- Goal 1. Safe and Healthy People
- Goal 2. Vibrant Communities
- Goal 3. Green Jobs in a Green Economy
- Goal 4. Protected and Restored Ecosystems
- Goal 5. Shared Responsibility for Environmental Justice
- Goal 6. A World at Peace

A Common Agenda for Health and Environment inspires people and the organizations that represent them to take bold action to realize the future it envisions: one in which human ingenuity drives sustainable production and energizing work; healthy social and physical environments nourish both human and non-human life; and vibrant communities thrive, without discrimination and without violence. The Common Agenda outlines 12 Priority Actions to get us there, such as: establishing a National Council for Sustainability and Future Generations to support action across federal agencies to promote public and ecosystem health as well as promoting energy security and independence with an Agenda for Renewable Energy and Efficiency.

Authors of the Common Agenda see generational goal-setting as a promising policy tool for overcoming roadblocks to sustainable practices by: (a) providing clear guideposts to hold decision-makers accountable, (b) prompting reassessment of policies and practices in light of clear goals, and (c) encouraging a focus on and commitment to lasting solutions.

The Common Agenda can be used as:

- Guideposts against which to assess proposed decisions in the public and private sectors
- A tool for outreach about the interconnections among health and environment issues, and the availability of solutions
- A standard for assessing candidates' platforms or track records

The Common Agenda for Health and Environment is a project of the Toward Tomorrow initiative, led by faculty and staff at the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Read the full Common Agenda and sign on in support of its generational goals at www.towardtomorrow.org.