



Introduction by the Founder

Thank you for your welcome, Madam President, and your welcome, Minister.

I also welcome all those present from the Foundation, in particular the President of the University of Trier and ...

My thanks go back to my colleagues from the Umwelt-Campus...

I would like to fill the remaining time - as a kind of introduction to the further contributions - with some uncomfortable truths.

In 2006, Al Gore caused a sensation with "An Inconvenient Truth," which meant that climate change is real & man-made.

I would like to add some more inconvenient truths:

1. Climate change, or rather the impending climate collapse, is not the only problem that our civilization can fail to cope with.
2. At present we live in a +1°-world. Bad enough, because catastrophes already exist almost weekly somewhere in the world. Therefore the 1,5°-target so important, because the situation is getting worse with every tenth of degree. And it must be clear: however bad it is – it can get even worse.
3. In order to achieve this goal, only a small amount of CO₂ is allowed to enter the atmosphere, which means that there is little time left. The really relevant priorities should be clear for everyone, including politicians – but on the contrary: globally governments spend 1.6 trillion on subsidies that are harmful to the environment, in Germany alone 65 billion.
4. +1.5° as global mean means for us approx.. +3°, which alone is life-threatening or fatal as a higher temperature in summer.
5. But it is not the temperature alone: we are all witnessing an increase in extreme weather conditions: devastating droughts with heavy crop losses and extensive forest fires, as well as massive heavy rains with the destruction of billions in infrastructure and private property, which will probably soon only be insurable at horrendous costs. This will sum up for every one of us to more than e.g. an heat pump.
6. The knock-on effects already in the present +1°-world, e.g. the disappearance of the Alpine glaciers, the melting of the Arctic ice and the thawing of the permafrost soil in Siberia with the release of huge amounts of methane are even worse because they are accelerating climate change – and they are irreversible. Which clearly shows that we are not on the 'safe side' if we manage to restrict global warming to within +1.5°.
7. Any further waiting drives the costs both for the repair of the resulting damage and the necessary defensive measures higher and higher. At present approx.. 2-4% of GDP would suffice, which is less than the costs for fighting against Covid. If further tipping points of



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the planetary ecosystem are exceeded, all the money in the world won't be able to save anything.

8. +1,5° as the resulting global warming at certain CO₂ concentrations is only a best estimate; it could also be only +1.2° or - which is more likely - +2,5°, because the probability distribution has positive skew.
9. 'Calming pills' come from parts of politics and interested circles: with better technology everything would stay in order; especially we could adapt to the changing climate. These are wishful thinking that primarily serve to continue earning as much as possible. Because (a) time is pressing and the technologies are risky and not yet ready for use; they will be very expensive and all products will cost us all more accordingly. And (b) the changes will probably be so massive that an adaptation in the suggested sense will not be possible.
10. The probably strongest calming pill provided comes from the climate economists of the ruling neoliberal camp provide. The Nobel Prize-winning William Nordhaus calculates that +2.6° is the optimal global warming by 2100 and only means little loss of GNP. His colleague from the same science camp, Martin Weitzman, has shown: (a) the mathematical method he uses does not apply to skewed distributions, but this has not disturbed anyone, and (b) this temperature already means a 10% probability of the earth being largely uninhabitable. What if not this, is reason enough to take to heart the precautionary principle – it is better to be safe than sorry.
11. In general, with the myths they propagate, these ruling neoliberal economists have contributed a great deal to the fact that the state of the world today is so frightening:
 - (a) markets that would regulate everything for the best,
 - (b) low taxes for the rich(est) because all others would profit from their prosperity (trickle down'),
 - (c) gross national product as the only indicator of prosperity and well-being,
 - (d) unlimited growth.

The truth is that

- (a') Markets serve only those who have the money. The starving dead in Africa, for example, do not exist because there is no food, but because people do not have the money to buy;
- (b') the low taxation of the rich(est) has made the states poor and often incapable of acting and led to the situation that the 62 richest people own as much as the poorest 50%,
- (c') GNP does not measure our well-being nor the environmental damages caused,
- (d') unlimited material growth is not possible on a finite planet, and the growth of whatever money figure cannot feed the hungry.



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12. The consequence of this exorbitant income and wealth inequality is also that the richest 10% are responsible for about 50% of global CO2 emissions with their consumption (directly or indirectly), so having a ecological footprint of about 70-100 planets Earth.
13. The rich(est) like to contribute everywhere 'constructive' proposals for saving the earth, but only such that do not touch their wealth. The protests of the young generation which has to live with the consequences of our behavior is too quickly labelled 'Climate terrorism'; on the other hand violations of governments against the Paris Climate Treaty and related laws passed over silently.
14. The growth so far is based on the unrestrained exploitation of nature and people. The reserves of raw materials are not enough to go on with 'business as usual - only in green'. Nature is on the verge of collapse, which is also the end of this business model.
15. Thus this economic theory and this economic mode - including all its lobbyists - deserves no confidence, if it wants to deceive us, with further growth all problems could be solved – which means that the problems can be solved in the same way they were caused. May the responsible politicians who finance this counterproductive economic enterprise with billions come to realize this.

What is needed is a different approach to both economics - and economic theory, which is the flip side of the coin. An economic theory that shows ways to an economy that offers enough for everyone without growth and is economically, ecologically and socially sustainable.

Our award winner Professor Jørgen Randers has repeatedly made specific proposals for such an economy in the more than 50 years of its work; most recently in 2022 in the context of the "Earth-for-all"-project.

Let us finally follow the scientists whose statements have been valid since 1972, and not any longer those from the ruling neoclassical camp who propagate the above myths and claim to be able to explain everything, but have not been able to see any of the past crises coming - it's high time to act right.