

**A NEW PATH TO PROSPERITY BY BIANCA JAGGER
FOUNDER AND CHAIR BIANCA JAGGER HUMAN RIGHTS
FOUNDATION**

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INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be addressing you at this Paradiso Conference here in Brussels.

Before I begin my lecture, I would like to tell you a bit about myself and about my foundation, the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation.

I was born in Nicaragua, and spent my childhood and adolescence under the brutal and repressive dictatorship of the Somoza regime. I learned first-hand the meaning of oppression and social and economic injustice. I left Nicaragua with a scholarship to study political science in Paris.

For the last three decades, I have spoken about the disparity and injustice that exists between the Global North and the Global South, between countries and within countries. I have campaigned for the most vulnerable members of society, children, women, indigenous people, and prisoners on death row. I am committed to lending a voice to those who have no voice, no means to combat the injustice inflicted upon them and no mechanisms at their disposal to enforce their rights. This sacred duty is at the heart of my work.

I established the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation (BJHRF) in 2007. The foundation is dedicated to defending human rights and social justice, achieving peace, tackling climate change and advocating for a sustainable future. The foundation's objective is to be a force for change, to highlight injustice, and to shine a light on causes that require national and international attention. The Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation is dedicated to protecting the rights of present and future generations.

You may wonder why a human rights advocate, has been asked to deliver a keynote address at this Paradiso conference focused on technology and societal developments. In fact, I am a great believer that the World Wide Web is invaluable to human rights and humanitarian causes; the internet is a powerful tool that gives a voice to people in remote places. It also plays a vital role in the dissemination of information and in raising awareness.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are invaluable to my work and I would not be able to accomplish half of what I do were it not for the internet, electronic databases, broadband, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, Google Voice and Gmail among others. Every day in the course of my work I communicate with hundreds of individuals and organisations, large and small, local and far flung. These technologies

make my job possible because they are the only cost effective way to communicate with people in remote areas of the world, in war torn and disaster ridden countries. I use the internet, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter on a daily basis, to publicise the causes I support. The internet has democratised information and Skype, Hotmail, Gmail, Google Voice and other similar channels have liberated communication.

In my speech, entitled ‘A new Path to Prosperity,’ I will attempt to demonstrate that ‘business-as-usual’ is simply not an option and call for a paradigm shift that moves ‘beyond GDP.’ I will discuss some of the key challenges we are facing in our world today and look at the role that ICT can play in addressing environmental concerns, the Millennium Development Goals, and in building a more sustainable future. Finally, I will address ICT’s negative impacts, and call for legislation to regulate how ICT are produced and consumed.

A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

During the 20th century, the world experienced profound change. On 10 December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nation adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the first time human, civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights were recognized as belonging inherently to all people, rather than being a magnanimous gift bestowed upon them, or denied to them, by design, fate or the whims of regimes.

In 1970 the UN General Assembly pledged that developed countries would commit 0.7 % of their GDP to Official Development Assistance. Ten years ago world leaders committed to the Millennium Development Goals, promising to achieve universal primary education, gender equality and environmental sustainability and to reduce extreme poverty, child and maternal mortality and disease epidemics by 2015. As 2015 approaches, it is evident that the world will fall short of these targets.

There are still 1.2 billion people living on less than \$1 dollar a day. Almost half the world — over 3 billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day. Everyday, 800 million people go hungry. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die every day, mostly from diseases that can easily be prevented or treated. Around 27-28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight or stunted. The two regions that account for the bulk of the deficit are South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. If current trends continue, the Millennium Development Goals target of halving the proportion of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children [i]. The lack of commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals is inexcusable.

Never before has humanity been so overwhelmed by such massive and urgent concerns; explosive population growth, climate chaos, and economic crisis.

The world’s population currently stands at 6.9 billion people and is forecast to reach around 9.5 billion people by 2050. This unprecedented growth has had far reaching implications.

IT IS TIME TO MOVE BEYOND GDP

Lester Brown, founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute states, “*We can decide to stay with business as usual and watch our modern economy decline and eventually collapse, or we can consciously move onto a new path.*”[ii] Business-as-usual is simply not an option. To build a sustainable future, we need to embrace a paradigm shift. We need a model of development that does not prioritise Western notions of profit and economic growth. It is time to move beyond GDP.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita has traditionally been the main indicator used to measure the progress of societies. It measures the economic value of goods and services produced by a country.

In *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a finite planet*, Tim Jackson offers a detailed critique of the existing economic paradigm. He urges us to challenge our concept of growth - on a planet with finite resources, perpetual growth is not only impossible, but it is endangering the survival of present and future generations. Jackson argues that prosperity does not need to be synonymous with income or wealth, rather, ‘*prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings – within the ecological limits of a finite planet. The challenge of our society is to create the conditions under which this is possible.*’[iii]

Over the past few decades other indexes have attempted to evaluate ‘development’ in developing countries. In 1990 the Human Development Index was proposed by the UN, with the inaugural issue of the Human Development Report to extend the way development is measured and takes into account more than mere economic considerations. HDI is a composite index based on per capita GDP, life expectancy, literacy, and school enrolment.

Another well-known initiative is one that emerged 1970’s in the Kingdom of Bhutan. It concerns the Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, based on the vision that collective happiness should be the ultimate goal of governance. On 14 November 2010, David Cameron announced that the UK will be embarking on surveys to measure national wellbeing, in order to steer Government policy. [iv]

Lyonpyo Jigmi Thinley, the Prime Minister of Bhutan said to the participants of the 2nd OECD World Forum, “*We have used GDP to determine wrongfully what is in fact the state of well-being of a country, it does not give any indication of the well-being of society, it does not measure the health of the environment, it does not measure the psychological well-being of our citizens, it does not measure the vitality of our community.. GDP is necessary but inadequate, and we need to develop additional indices that would tell a more comprehensive, a more holistic story about how human society is progressing. ... So, it’s a paradigm shift that we need to make*”.

A number of other sets of indicators or indexes have been put forward by research organisations, NGOs and governments, advocating that it is time to move ‘beyond GDP,’ to find new ways to drive and measure the progress of societies, particularly when taking into account the profound changes that societies are now experiencing.

Integrating environmental issues into a revised progress measure has often driven these new approaches. The Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) was proposed in the 1980's, and led to the development of the Genuine Progress Indicator in the 1990's and to the following joint statement by 400 leading economists, business leaders, and other professionals, including Nobel laureates:

'Since the GDP measures only the quantity of market activity without accounting for the social and ecological costs involved, it is both inadequate and misleading as a measure of true prosperity. Policy-makers, economists, the media, and international agencies should cease using the GDP as a measure of progress and publicly acknowledge its shortcomings. New indicators of progress are urgently needed to guide our society.' [v]

Developing countries striving to improve their economic growth have been forced to open their borders to foreign investment, often at the risk of severe environmental devastation. Growth centred development has fuelled the irrational exploitation of natural resources by multinational corporations. The mantra is "maximum production, minimum cost and open markets." In their pursuit for our planet's natural resources, they have destroyed ecosystems and marine habitats, wiped out precious biodiversity, and endangered the livelihood of communities worldwide. They have caused some of the worst environmental disasters and human rights abuses happening in our world today, for the most part, with total impunity.

The activities of oil, mining and logging companies are contributing to catastrophic climate change.

The Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation has been advocating critical reforms to our model of development, encompassing principles of justice, respect for human rights, good governance, accountability, environmental protection and sustainability. We urgently require a shift in our fundamental values. Development should take into account the needs and aspirations of all sectors of society.

As Hans-Gert Pottering, former President of European Parliament said, at the Paradiso conference in January last year: *'Prosperity is not simply equal to ensuring economic growth, nor is increased economic growth equal to better life quality. Development is only sustainable, when it also improves the quality of life of our citizens in terms of social well-being, health and a clean environment. That is the core meaning of prosperity....'* He went on to say, *'At both European and global level, a sustainable future means doing more with less'* [vi]

Climate change

Today we stand at a crossroads in history. The warnings from our most respected scientists are loud and clear: we have less than a decade left to address the issue of climate change before we reach the "tipping point", or the point of no return, yet government leaders continue to ignore the scale of the threat. The earth is perilously close to dramatic climate change that threatens to spiral way out of control. The task now is to prevent catastrophic climate chaos. Failure to act effectively is likely to precipitate cataclysmic changes that may obliterate life on earth.

Professor James Hansen, head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies observed in March 2009 that “*eleven of the past twelve years rank among the twelve warmest years since records began.*” He is emphatic about the urgency of reducing CO₂ levels, stressing the fact that “*the safe upper limit for atmospheric CO₂ is no more than 350 parts per million.*” [vii]. As of 2010, the planet already has a concentration of around 390 parts per million. This number is rising by around 2 parts per million every year.

Time is running out. We must cut carbon emissions drastically, and immediately, to reduce the levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million. The world situation is deteriorating faster than previously anticipated. In Professor Nicholas Stern’s words “*Global emissions of greenhouse gases are growing more quickly than projected; the ability of the planet to absorb those gases now appears lower than was assumed, the potential increases in temperatures due to rising gas concentrations seem higher, and the physical impacts of a warming planet are appearing at a faster rate than expected*” [viii] Professor Stern has revised his initial estimate of the cost of keeping greenhouse gases from rising to dangerous levels. His 2006 report said countries needed to spend 1% of their GDP to prevent catastrophic climate change. In June 2008 he admitted that he had underestimated the threat and increased the cost to 2% of GDP. In 2009, Professor Stern endorsed the 350 ppm target as ‘a very sensible long-term target.’ [ix]

Columbia University’s Earth Institute asserts that carbon dioxide levels today are nearly 30 % higher than they were in the early nineteenth century. According to NASA, the polar ice cap is now melting at the rate of 9 % per decade. Arctic ice thickness has decreased 40 % since the 1960s.

Climate change is not just an environmental threat, but a critical human rights issue which impacts every aspect of our lives: peace, security, poverty, hunger, health, mass migration and economics. It is a global issue, and it calls for global action and solutions entrenched in an international legally binding framework.

Climate change presents us with extraordinary challenges, including food and water security, with new forecasts suggesting that half the world’s population could face climate-induced food crisis this century. Inevitably, most of those people will be from developing countries that are least well equipped to deal with such challenges.

As climate change kicks in, the tropical and subtropical countries of Africa, South Asia and Latin America will heat up more and more, with temperatures becoming increasingly intolerable. Droughts will affect large parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Melting glaciers will flood river valleys and then, when they have disappeared, unprecedented droughts will occur. Poor, low-lying countries and island states such as Bangladesh and the Maldives and Tuvalu will find hard to cope with rising sea levels.

As I write this, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will convene COP 16 in Cancun. World leaders will have another opportunity to address one of the most serious challenges we are facing today. The world waits to see if, following the failure of COP 15 in Copenhagen last year, they will have the courage to take decisive action, to deliver a comprehensive, legally

binding, international climate change treaty to set the world on the right path to avoid catastrophic climate change

Peak oil

Another impending crisis that has arisen as a result of our fossil-fuel based economy is Peak Oil. Scientists have been predicting Peak Oil since 1956. Until recently, these prognostications have been perceived as distant threats or some sort of myth, rather than an immediate risk. The latest warning has come from the Joint Operating Environment report from the US Joint Forces command, released in April 2010, which warns, “*By 2012, surplus oil production capacity could entirely disappear, and as early as 2015, the shortfall in output could reach nearly 10 million barrels (mb) per day.*”[x].

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has observed that, on present trends, just to replace oil reserves that will be exhausted and to meet the growth in demand, we will need 64 million barrels/day of new capacity between now and 2030 – that is 6 Saudi Arabias, or roughly 1 Saudi Arabia coming on-stream every 3 years [xi]. In order to maintain our current consumption rates, it will take vast amounts of oilfield discovery, investment and drilling. Regardless of the exact timing of the peak – past, present or future – the critical issue is growing demand. Chinese oil demand could double by 2030. Chinese car growth at 28% per annum over the last decade would, if it carried on, mean that their vehicle fleet will overtake the USA’s by 2017 [xii]. China alone accounts for 10% of global oil demand, and its demand continues to increase, currently reaching 8 millions barrels per day. The US is still the largest global consumer, at 19,278 million barrels per day. [xiii]

Our addiction to oil is dangerous and unsustainable. Our oil supply is finite, and the dwindling reserves simply cannot cope with our ever increasing demand. Promoting renewable energy must now become a global and universal priority. Nothing is macro-economically more necessary, but ultimately cheaper than the conversion of our energy systems from conventional energy to renewable energy.

The current financial crisis is further evidence that business-as-usual is simply not an option. As Susan George states, “*We are all passengers of the Titanic, even if some of us are travelling first-class.*” It has also shown us that these crises are linked: they should not be regarded as separate issues. Many of the causes and some of the solutions are the same. For example, the transfer of clean technology and renewable energy can create jobs in the developing world as well as in the developed world, and help stop climate change. This current economic crisis gave the leaders of the G20 a once in a lifetime opportunity to tackle some of the biggest injustices of the world. Unfortunately they failed us.

Given the threats of climate change, Peak Oil, energy security risk, and global inequality, we have no choice but to embark upon a new Copernican revolution. We need to replace our fossil fuel economy with a renewable energy economy. The challenge we are facing now is how to switch to a more secure, lower-carbon energy system that does not undermine economic and social development.

I believe that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can play an invaluable role in our transition to a renewable energy economy, and in building a more sustainable future. In the next part of my speech I will look at some of the ways ICT have already transformed the world, and how they can be used to help us address some of the issues we are facing today.

THE ROLE THAT ICT CAN PLAY IN BUILDING A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In the last twenty years, ICT have changed the way people communicate, access information and knowledge, work, play, manage health and safety issues, produce wealth, govern, control energy, and protect the environment.

As Dr Hamadan Toure, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) states, *'They are at the very heart of all societies worldwide today, both in the developed and developing world. ICT are the great enabler of modern society, helping people communicate across distance and across cultural divides, facilitating trade, and providing access to vital resources – especially in health and education.'* [xiv]

In addition to playing a facilitating role in other sectors, ICT is a significant sector in its own right. According to the ITU 2009 report it accounts for around 5% of global GDP and an even higher proportion of GDP growth. ICTs also have important economic and socio-economic benefits, including those on a range of development goals. [xv]

I would like to briefly share some statistics regarding ICT usage around the world.

- **Internet:** There are around 1.966 billion Internet users in the world today, accounting for 28.7 % of the world's population. This figure is growing steadily. In 2005, there were only 16 million users worldwide (0.4 % world population), and by 2000, only 10 years ago, there were only 351 million users (5.8% world population). [xvi]
- **Mobile phones:** This year, the number of mobile cellular telephone subscribers worldwide has peaked at over 5 billion (over 70 % of the total population). This is a rapid increase from last year, which saw only 4.6 billion subscriptions. In Western Europe, penetration exceeds 100%, where there is more than one connection per person in some countries. It is estimated that by 2015, there will be around 1 billion people accessing financial services by mobile. The Mobile Financial Services market will be dominated by Asia, driven by mobile operator-led initiatives in developing nations. SMS is still the message service of choice, with more than 6.1 trillion messages sent in 2010 to date. Despite the popularity of mobile email, IM and MMS, SMS is predicted to exceed 10 trillion messages in 2013. [xvii]

Ben Wood, mobile phone analyst at CCS Insight said the mobile phone may be *'the most prolific consumer device on the planet... If you just take the UK in 1987, when the first mobile companies launched, an industry insider predicted a maximum of 10,000 phones. Five billion phones means there are more than*

three times as many phones as personal computers ... This device has become part of the fabric of society, whether a teenage girl taking a Blackberry to bed with her, or a farmer in an African village trying to find out the latest crop prices.' He added that more than 10 billion phones have been sold worldwide since 1994, with market giant Nokia selling 3.4 billion alone. 'This means that there are 5 billion phones sitting in people's bottom drawers somewhere.'
[xviii]

- **Skype/ Google Voice:** Some Internet applications, such as Skype (voice over internet protocol) have expanded to hundreds of million users in just a couple of years. Skype, at the end of the fourth quarter of 2009, had 560 million registered users. At peak times, 23 million users are logged into Skype (as of March 2010). Skype is available in 29 languages and is used in almost every country around the world. 35 % of Skype users utilize it for business purposes. Recently, Gmail has launched Google Voice, a phone application, where one is able to voice call other Gmail users, from computer to computer free of charge [xix]
- **Facebook:** This year, Facebook celebrated its 6th birthday, with the extraordinary figure of over 500 million active users! This is up 150 million from 2009. Over 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day, and over 200 million currently access Facebook through their mobile devices. Facebook users post more than 60 million status updates each day. [xx] In November, Facebook announced their introduction of a 'modern messaging system' for their users. This means for the first time you will be able to create your own @facebook.com email address essentially creating one place where you can manage all of your communication needs. [xxi]
- **Twitter:** Twitter users are now sending 50 million tweets per day, which translates to an average of 600 tweets per second. Kevin Weil, member of the Twitter analytics team notes that people were tweeting 2.5 million times a day around the beginning of 2009, up from 300,000 times in 2008, and 5,000 times in 2007. That tally stood at around 35 million tweets a day by the end of 2009, which is equivalent to an increase of 1,400% in the number of tweets per day in 2009 alone. [xxii]

ICT have clearly expanded at an unprecedented rate, and show no signs of slowing down.

They have been invaluable to humanitarian and human rights campaigns. Thanks to the diligence of organisations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation, many of the human rights travesties of the world are documented and posted on their websites for anyone to see.

As I mentioned earlier on, I use Twitter and Facebook to draw attention to the causes I am supporting. This year, I was able to mobilize public opinion against Vedanta plc whose proposed bauxite mine in Orissa India was threatening the survival of an ancient tribe, the Kondh. I joined forces with Amnesty International and Action Aid to campaign on their behalf. I spearheaded e-petitions to the Indian Prime Minister and to the Chief Minister of Orissa, I tweeted, wrote articles in Forbes India, the

Observer in the UK and the Huffington Post and urged investors to hold Vedanta accountable.

Such large scale campaigns were not possible before the internet age. The outcome was a startling backing down of a multinational from a course of action which might have gone unreported outside of the local press. Jairam Ramesh, Indian Minister of Environment and Forests denied clearance to Vedanta and the mining project was halted. I hope you will all join me on Facebook, my profile name is [Bianca Jagger Human Rights](#), and follow me on Twitter: [@Bianca Jagger](#)

ICT can also effectively support environmental objectives, allowing energy to be more efficiently managed, environmental management systems to be implemented and transportation needs to be reduced.

ICT are a critical tool in helping reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. At the Paradiso conference of January 2009, the ITU estimated, *“ICT can help cut global greenhouse gas emissions by 15% to 40% by enabling intelligent transport systems, smart buildings, and better supply chain management.”* [xxiii] They can also be used for monitoring and controlling complex infrastructures and societal interactions to achieve more energy-efficient use of resources. They can facilitate changes in business models, working practices and lifestyles that are inherently more energy-efficient. The internet, for example, has enabled the substitution of physical products and processes by digital ones.

Perhaps the next Paradiso Conference will see me addressing you by video link, rather than travelling here. It is fortunate that we have excellent high-speed rail links to connect Brussels. As a result I did not have to fly to be here. But we have grown very used in the last two or so decades to jet-setting around the world, to having strawberries at our supermarket at any time of year, to leaving a whole range of appliances switched on or on standby. That will have to change. A sustainable future means doing more with less. Business as usual is not an option.

As far as developing countries are concerned, ICT have been recognised as an efficient way to help achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals, and more generally to reduce poverty, strengthen democracy, support education and health projects, and ensure economic growth.

The ITU outlines how ICT can improve health care, (with ICT-enabled health applications such as mobile services and remote monitoring and increased information); education (enabling remote education and mobile learning applications) and promoting gender equality (by helping women into economic activity) [xxiv].

ICTs can also have an impact on growth and welfare, including trade creation and trade facilitation in service sectors (via lower trade costs, improved information and an increasing range of tradable products); employment (with direct effects from investments in ICT and indirect effects from the employment opportunities created by ICT-enabled reforms) and business creation (many services can be delivered from any location). [xxv]

In his study on the use of mobile phones in Africa, Leonard Waverman, Professor and Chair of Economics at the London Business School, has demonstrated that at the macro-economic level, every extra 10% increase in mobile teledensity in the developing world leads to an additional 0,59% point in GDP per capita. [xxvi] In developing countries, modern telecom systems are largely mobile, as the roll out is faster and the cost is lower. As a development tool, mobile phones clearly have an advantage: it has been estimated that a mobile network costs 50% less per connection than fixed lines [xxvii].

At the micro-economic level, a Harvard University study found that Southern Indian fishermen's profits rose by an average of 8% – and consumer prices fell by 4% – once they had mobile phones [xxviii]

ICT can help us meet the Millennium Development Goals. But if we are to build a sustainable future, we must ensure that the latest, most energy-efficient, and cost-effective ICT are developed, rolled-out and used for the benefit of all.

NEED FOR A REGULATED APPROACH

The importance of ICT cannot be measured only in economic terms: mobile telephony, e-mail, electronic databases, and the internet, have had a significant impact on all areas of our lives, from our way of living and interacting, to our access to knowledge, to our political choices. At the same time, we need to bear in mind some of the negative impacts of Information and Communication Technologies. Thus, while I agree with Viviane Reding Commissioner for Information Society and Media at the European Commission's call for investment in ICT, I urge you to bear in mind the challenges that lie ahead.

For example, as Ms Reding notes, the production and use of ICT currently accounts for about 8% of electrical power consumption in the EU and about 2% of carbon emissions. She goes on to state, *'ICT are becoming more pervasive and their energy consumption will continue to grow. We need to take measures to ensure that as their use increases, their carbon footprint does not'*[xxix]

There is an urgent need for legislation to regulate the implementation of ICT, and for a framework that addresses the way technologies are produced and consumed. There is also a need for a coordinated strategy to prevent negative impacts that ICT may have on economic and social issues, for example, the risks linked to an increased inequality between and among nations due to a "digital divide."

Environmentally, a recycling policy needs to be developed and implemented. In the UK, fewer than 20% of mobile phones are recycled every year. 1700 mobile phones are thrown away every hour, 15 million every year. Mobile phones are updated on average every eighteen months and old ones are discarded in the bin. Their heavy metals and other pollutants like mercury, lead, cadmium, and brominated flame retardants are left to pollute the soils. Much of the electronic hardware disposed by industrialized countries goes to poor countries in Africa or Asia that have ineffective environmental protection policies.

A recent study carried out by Deloitte showed that by the year 2012 over 8000 tonnes of mobile phone waste will be polluting the world's landfills, unless more effective ways to recycle mobile phones are found. [xxx]

The problem is not limited to mobile phones. The UN's Environment Programme warned in February 2010 that global e-waste is growing by 40 million tons a year. The United States is currently the winner when it comes to e-waste: 3 million tons a year, followed by China's 2.3 million.

The European Union can play a significant role in shaping new recycling policies. As citizens of the developed world it is our responsibility to ensure that ICT are used and consumed in a sustainable way.

CONCLUSION

It is an intellectual illusion to believe that the crises that besiege our world today can be compartmentalised. Population growth, climate change, food and water shortage will affect everyone, everywhere, in every nation and from every socio-economic group, in hundreds of ways.

The time for further excuses, for procrastination and prevarication, has long passed. Now is the time for decision-makers and leaders to take concrete steps to set us on a new path to prosperity. We need to move beyond GDP and embrace a paradigm shift in order to ensure a sustainable future and a better quality of life

Now is the time for courage and leadership, and for positive and immediate action. If we want to ensure the survival of present and future generations, and combat catastrophic climate change, the only long-term viable basis for economic activity is to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy. In addition, we must hold our leaders to account to fulfil their promises regarding the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs 'are not 'millennium', but are 'minimum' standards rooted in human rights, freedom, equality, sustainability and justice.

ICT can play an invaluable role in our transition to a renewable energy economy, and in building a more sustainable future. They can provide a means of achieving transformation in how we use energy, and how we shift towards renewable sources. They can have significant socio-economic and development benefits. ICT can also, as I have shown, strengthen adherence to human rights and make it harder for abuses to continue.

I hope world leaders, the European Union, the business community and policy makers, will have the vision to move forward and adopt legislation to regulate the implementation of ICT, and a framework that addresses the way technologies are produced and consumed. Our future and the fate of future generations depends on how decisively, courageously and responsibly we act now.

Please join me on Facebook, my profile name is [Bianca Jagger Human Rights](#), and follow me on Twitter: [@Bianca Jagger](#)

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