



# Governance

## Global Governance

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Governance

# Crisis in Governance

- governments sign up to beautiful promises at the UN and fail to deliver
- powerful lobbies, widespread corruption
- loss of trust, no accountability
- retreat of peace and security
- failure to act on multiple crises

# The governance problem

- National sovereignty: war is the final recourse to impose one state's will on others
- International anarchy, no rule of law
- Struggle for power and world domination
- Push back against multilateralism
- Governments have sovereign right to exploit their resources as they wish without regard for global impacts
- Multinational corporations out of control
- World filled with ego, corruption and aggression
- Rise of reckless political leaders and autocrats

# Governance of corporations

- governance gap in the corporate sector, exploiting resources in the new colonialism
- escape from national government control
- need a global legal framework for business and the corporate sector
- non-state economic actors such as corporations should be required to include in their legal charters an obligation for social and environmental responsibility to perform some useful service for society, in addition to profit as a measure of economic efficiency
- this would empower them to be effective partners in the system-wide challenges facing the world

# The forces of global integration

- How do we encourage the forces of integration?
- We need ethics, values, goals and perspectives of a better future
- A vision of a more just and equitable world
- Able to motivate positive actions for the Earth System
- Can an ethical, even spiritual, perspective help us to change our lifestyle and consumption patterns?
- We need institutions of global governance for planetary environmental problems

# Dangers and hope

Never before have human affairs been so threatened by conflict, chaos and destruction. Dangers beyond anything in history gather around a lost humanity. However, the world's leaders should not allow this crisis to cast doubt on where this process is leading. A world is passing away and a new one is trying to be born.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Faith and resolve

The habits, attitudes, and institutions that we have built over the centuries are being tested in ways necessary to human development. What is required of us today is faith and resolve to match the energies which the Creator of all things has granted to this spiritual springtime of the race.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Universal laws and institutions

To build a global civilization, we need laws and institutions that are universal in both character and authority. This can begin only when those who make decisions accept the concept of the oneness of humanity.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)



# Bahá'u'lláh

*"Be united in counsel", is Bahá'u'lláh's appeal, "be one in thought. May each morn be better than its eve and each morrow richer than its yesterday. Man's merit lieth in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches. Take heed that your words be purged from idle fancies and worldly desires and your deeds be cleansed from craftiness and suspicion."*

(quoted in Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Bahá'u'lláh

*“Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavours be spent in promoting your personal interest. Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss. Adversity is followed by success and rejoicings follow woe. Guard against idleness and sloth, and cling unto that which profiteth mankind, whether young or old, whether high or low. Beware lest ye sow tares of dissension among men or plant thorns of doubt in pure and radiant hearts.”*

*(Bahá'í International Community, The Prosperity of Humankind, 1995)*



First International Bahá'í Convention, Haifa 1963  
Election of the Universal House of Justice

# A global strategy

Creating a global strategy for humanity's maturity will require reshaping fundamentally all the institutions of society. This will involve all of the inhabitants of the planet: people in general, members of governing institutions at all levels, those serving in agencies of international co-ordination, scientists and social thinkers, all those with artistic talents or with access to the media of communication, and leaders of non-governmental organisations.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)



United Nations Conference on the Human Environment  
Stockholm 1972

# A global governance strategy

The response must start with the recognition of the oneness of humankind, a commitment to justice as the organising principle of society, and an effort to build human capacity through a systematic dialogue between the scientific and religious sides of humanity.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# A global governance strategy

This will require a radical rethinking of most of the concepts and assumptions currently governing social and economic life. It must be driven by the conviction that, however long and difficult the process, the governance of human affairs can serve humanity's real needs.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# A new stage of governance

This might seem an impossible dream, unless our collective childhood has indeed come to an end and our adulthood is coming. People today cannot imagine that such an effort can be carried out by today's despondent and fundamentally opposed peoples and nations.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)



# A new stage of governance

Such a possibility can be imagined only if, as Bahá'u'lláh has stated, the course of our social evolution has arrived at one of those turning points when all of our existence is driven forward into a new stage of development. This statement comes from our deep conviction that just so great a transformation in human consciousness is under way.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Universal laws and institutions

We need laws and institutions that are universal in both character and authority. The concept of the oneness of humanity... and related principles [must be] taught through both educational systems and the media of mass communication. This process will draw the peoples of the world into the task of setting common goals and working to reach them.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Universal laws and institutions

This fundamental change can protect them, too, from age-old ethnic and religious conflict. Only when the inhabitants of the planet become conscious that they are a single people will they turn away from the conflicts of past social organisation and begin to learn to work together and forgive each other. "*The well-being of mankind,*" Bahá'u'lláh writes, "*its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.*"

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

Seat  
of the  
Universal  
House of  
Justice,  
Haifa,  
Israel



# This is the day

To all who see in it what they have felt within their own hearts, Bahá'u'lláh's words bring the promise that God has, in this day, given humanity the spiritual resources fully equal to the challenge:

*O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared.*

*This is the Day in which God's most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things.*

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*, 1995)

# Bahá'í-inspired initiatives in governance

Governments must find their way to collective security and the Lesser Peace.

Bahá'ís have chosen professions where they can contribute to public discourse showing the way to peace and sustainability.

# Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century

Augusto Lopez-Claros  
Arthur L. Dahl  
Maja Groff

**Cambridge University Press, January 2020**

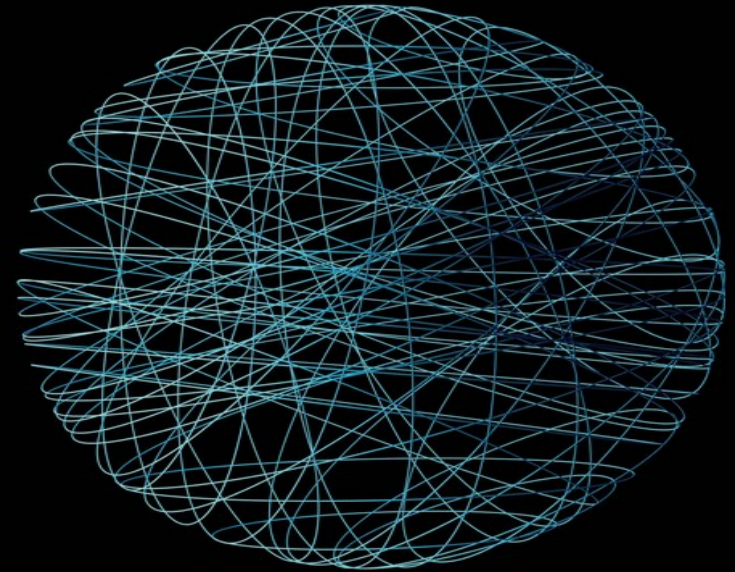
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/global-governance-and-the-emergence-of-global-institutions-for-the-21st-century/AF7D40B152C4CBEDB310EC5F40866A59>

**Global Governance Forum**

<https://globalgovernanceforum.org/>

# Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century

Augusto Lopez-Claros, Arthur L. Dahl  
and Maja Groff



CAMBRIDGE

# Human Right to a Healthy Environment

On 8 October 2021, the UN Human Rights Council approved the Human Right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The UN General Assembly endorsed this on 28 July 2022.



# What environmental governance is necessary for our survival?

Existential environmental threats: Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, land/ocean degradation

Crises interconnected, must address together

**Global Environment Agency** to address interconnected global environmental challenges and protect the global common good

Polycentric governance system based on the principle of subsidiarity, with the Global Environment Agency as a global level institution that would have binding authority over certain essential areas of planetary commons

# Global Environment Agency



Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen

Arthur Lyon Dahl

for the

Climate Governance Commission

<https://globalgovernanceforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Towards-a-Global-Environment-Agency-Effective-Governance-for-Shared-Ecological-Risks.pdf>

Climate Governance Commission

## **Towards a Global Environment Agency Effective Governance for Shared Ecological Risks**

SYLVIA KARLSSON-VINKHUYZEN AND ARTHUR LYON DAHL

# Global Environmental Governance

- High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism  
<https://highleveladvisoryboard.org/>
- Rethinking Global Solidarity Accounting to replace GDP as the primary measure of progress  
<https://iefworld.org/accounting>
- Climate Governance Commission  
<https://globalgovernanceforum.org/climate-governance-commission/>
- *The environmental imperative to transform global governance* (Arthur Dahl) for Global Governance Forum  
<https://globalgovernanceforum.org/summit-of-the-future-global-environmental-governance-and-gender-equality/>

# Unity is our Destiny

The world is, in truth, moving on towards its destiny. The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the earth, whatever the leaders of the divisive forces of the world may say or do, is already an accomplished fact. Its unity in the economic sphere is now understood and recognized. The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has, in His own words, “lent a fresh impulse and set a new direction” to this vast process now operating in the world.

# Unity is our Destiny

The fires lit by this great ordeal are the consequences of men's failure to recognize it. They are, moreover, hastening its consummation. Adversity, prolonged, worldwide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses, precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come* )