



# ACTING TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Network of Institutions for Future Generations  
2018 Report



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# 1. Welcome by Sophie Howe, Chair of NIFG

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Sophie Howe, chair of NIFG and Future Generations Commissioner for Wales with Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the UN High Level Political Forum in New York, July 2018

Welcome to the 2018 Report of the Network of Institutions for Future Generations (NIFG). We are an independent, non-formal network of national institutions worldwide working to protect the interests of future generations. The NIFG's primary goal is to share knowledge and disseminate good practice in the promotion of responsible, long-term governance, taking into consideration the well-being of future generations and their natural environments. Our members provide a voice for future generations across the world and collectively represent their needs and aspirations. With ever increasing threats to our peoples and planet, organisations like this are extremely important, amongst others, to hold our governments and citizens to account. We warmly invite other similar organisations to join the network and information about this can be found [here](#).



## 2. NIFG Highlights of 2018

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### Wales: Future Generations Commissioner

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Future Generations team at an away day with South Wales Fire Service

*The role of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales was established in 2016 and its powers are set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act gives public bodies in Wales the permission and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. You can find more information about the Commissioner's work at the [Future Generations Commissioner's website](#).*

The Commissioner, Sophie Howe set priority areas to focus her work over her seven-year term. These are: housing, planning, transport, skills, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and social prescribing. The Commissioner has challenged the Welsh Government on their proposals to spend £1.5bn on the M4 relief road. Her published report on 'Transport Fit for Future Generations' can be found [here](#).



The Commissioner helped the Welsh Government to revise the way in which they assess transport plans in future (the WelTAG guidance). As a result, Welsh Government has changed its procedures, ensuring that new transport schemes, including the new South Wales Metro and Rail Franchise, support the seven well-being goals. The Commissioner made sure that the Welsh Government reflects the Well-being of Future Generations Act in its plan for decarbonisation - meeting the target it has set of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050.

The Office has also worked with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to identify how the system can be improved around environmental permitting. The Commissioner's office has co-operated with the Government to re-write Planning Policy Wales (the document which provides the overarching context for planning in Wales) to be more in line with the Well-being of Future Generations of Wales Act.

The Commissioner has also worked with Welsh Government officials to agree a definition of Prevention which has been used for the first time in the Government's budget, and will be used to monitor how much money is being spent on preventative services. More [here](#).

The Commissioner is currently assisting Welsh Government as an expert panel member on its Digital Skills Review to ensure that Wales is prepared and ambitious around skills for the future.

Through chairing the international Network of Institutions for Future Generations, the Commissioner has informed policy and campaign work on future generations across the world. The Commissioner also addressed the High Level Political Forum at the United Nations in July 2018. More [here](#).

One of the Commissioner's main programmes of work is the 'Art of the Possible', a collaborative programme working with, and co-funded by 12 different organisations across Wales to explore and explain the practical implications of public services maximising their contribution to the well-being goals. More [here](#).

## Canada: Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

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*The position of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD), established in 1996, is located in the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. The CESD reports directly to Parliament and performs value for money audits as well as reporting on the progress of the federal government towards sustainable development.*

In 2018, the CESD concluded a historic collaborative climate change audit whereby Auditor Generals from all the provinces and territories of Canada audited their governments on the subject of climate mitigation and climate adaptation. Never before had the AGs from the provinces and territories all collaborated to audit one topic. Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada—A Collaborative Report from Auditors General can be read [here](#).

The CESD concluded a [complex audit on SDG preparedness](#) to review to what extent the federal government was prepared to implement the complex system of SDGs.

In the summer of 2018, the CESD held workshops on the SDGs with the 200 Students on Ice Foundation ship in the Arctic.



As an example of its global involvement, the CESD was on the international panel of experts reviewing, amongst others, the German Sustainable Development Strategy.

The Commissioner also presented on several occasions at the 2018 UN High Level Political Forum in association with her work and the work of INTOSAI (International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions) and the 2018 SDG Index and Dashboards Report produced by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Finally, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada released its own [Sustainable Development Strategy](#) (which is completely linked to the SDGs).

## Hungary: Ombudsman for Future Generations

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*The Office of the Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations, established in 2008 and functioning in its current institutional setup since 2012, continuously strives for safeguarding the environmental interests of future generations nationally and internationally. Some of the most significant highlights of 2018 include the following:*

In efforts to raise international awareness,

Professor Bandi, the Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations has travelled extensively throughout the year. Amongst his international activities most notably he chaired a working group at the "Good environmental governance: the role of Ombuds institutions in protecting environmental rights" workshop of the International Ombudsman Institute held in Spain in May. He also organised a panel discussion "Means and methods of protecting the environment through human rights and promoting the rights of future generations" at the biennial EU's Fundamental Rights Forum in Vienna in September with the participation of Greenpeace International and the EU European Environment Agency.



Nationally the biggest achievements of the year have been the following:

(i) an Amicus Curiae by the Ombudsman addressed to the Constitutional Court of Hungary contributed to shaping the judgment of the Constitutional Court, which ultimately declared a proposed piece of legislation unconstitutional. Had the legislation been accepted, it would have allowed the drilling of groundwater wells down to 80 meters without regulatory authorization or supervision, thereby greatly endangering the quality and quantity of groundwater resources;

(ii) after thorough discussion with multiple stakeholders, the Ombudsman has prepared a complex legislative proposal to the Government aiming for a more efficient regulatory scheme regarding environmental liability;

(iii) the Ombudsman has actively participated in the national implementation of the SDGs by issuing a general opinion on the human rights aspects of the SDGs and has also contributed to the Voluntary National Review presented by the Government at the 2018 UN High Level Political Forum.

The Ombudsman covers a wide range of topics in his national mandate which is also apparent in the conferences, workshops and roundtables organised with his participation. These involve a variety of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, often with the presence of international experts. The events included discussions on international free trade agreements, air pollution due to urban heating, GMO's, the rights of nature, challenges of national waste management, conservation of cultural heritage, landscape and townscape protection, traffic emissions and air quality, Aarhus Convention and airport-related noise and air pollution.

The Ombudsman receives around 300 citizen complaints a year regarding maladministration and potential abuse of fundamental rights related to the right to a healthy environment and the obligation of protecting, maintaining and preserving the natural resources and cultural heritage for future generations.

You can find more information about the Ombudsman's work [at this website](#).

## The Netherlands: Lab for Future Generations

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*Taking the interests of future generations into consideration is definitely on the rise in the Netherlands. NGOs have been striving for the representation of the rights of future generations either through institutionalised means or otherwise - the Lab for Future Generations is a branch office of NIFG.*

With the leadership of Jan van de Venis, Vice-Chair of NIFG, the Worldconnectors' working group Future Generations was vocal at several events and have successfully developed a programme "The Lab for Future Generations". They will focus on both 'green' and 'social' inclusivity topics.

The Lab for Future Generations consists of five focus areas:

- 1. The complaint desk and the unofficial Ombudsperson for Future Generations:** This includes developing the methodology and mandate of the unofficial Ombudsperson, who will 'make an investigation' into complaints received. As a civil society initiative, the unofficial Ombudsperson is not limited to complaints regarding public institutions and will continue to go to events - also as keynote speaker - to ensure that Dutch society at all levels includes the interests of future generations.
- 2. The Council for the Future:** As a multidisciplinary, multicultural, intergenerational, etc. Council who can be asked (by organisations) to advise on certain topics or challenges. It will also address two issues in the first year, one on an environmental matter and one on social inclusivity.
- 3. Research:** The Lab will undertake research on issues impacting future generations, such as e.g. legal and governance models that safeguard the interests of future generations.
- 4. Education:** The Lab will focus on tailoring all sorts of education materials, but also on making existing materials easily accessible to teachers and trainers.
- 5. Consultancy:** For organisations (incl. public and corporate) on how to incorporate the interests of future generations in governance models and decision making processes.

Of the several public events we have contributed to, we specifically want to mention:

Our contribution, also as NIFG and with Shlomo Shoham to the Expert Session: "A voice for Future Generations in PeaceBuilding" at the Carnegie Peacebuilding Conversations in The Peace Palace at The Hague at the end of September.

See: [Carnegie Peacebuilding Conversations](#)

Supporting a brave young Dutch girl Lilly (10 years old and [@lillyspickup](#) on twitter) on her [#FridayForFuture](#) [#ClimateStrike](#). She - and more Dutch children and youth - have been inspired by [@GretaThunberg](#) and every week organise a [#SchoolStrike](#) calling for governments to act effectively and urgently on climate change. Lilly wants: "No more fossil fuels, limiting sea level rising and the Amazon full of trees."





## Intergenerational Justice at the UN

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*Some of you may be aware of the [proposal for a UN Commissioner for Future Generations](#) which gained considerable support during Rio+20 in 2012. Recent initiatives are highlighting again the need to advocate for future generations at the UN level.*

The informal Governmental Group of Friends for Future Generations, co-chaired by the Ambassadors of Kenya and Ireland is focused

on advancing initiatives to give voice to future generations within the UN System. It is comprised of over 20 New York based Permanent Representatives to the UN. The group have endorsed the proposal for Global Guardians for Future Generations, based upon a [position paper by the Mary Robinson Foundation](#).

Global Guardians for Future Generations will ensure that the decisions taken today are informed by the needs of future generations and that the UN can play a leading role in securing intra- and inter-generational equity globally. The innovative nature and normative legitimacy of the Global Guardians will allow the office to play an important role in complementing existing efforts to make the UN development system more inclusive, impactful and coherent. Global Guardians would represent, advocate for and give voice to future generations. The Guardians could represent countries at different levels of development and in so doing help to balance the needs of current generations living in poverty and underdevelopment with the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations. In addition, a UN resolution on the '[Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations](#)' has been adopted.

This is an ongoing, annual resolution, and this time it includes much stronger language on future generations and invites the President of the UN General Assembly (Her Excellency Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa

Garcés) to convene a high-level meeting during the 73rd session:

"Recognizing that, in undertaking its work, the United Nations should promote the protection of the global climate for the well-being of present and future generations of humankind,.... .. 10. Invites the President of the General Assembly to convene a high-level meeting during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly on the issue of the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of humankind in the context of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

As a result, the President of the General Assembly has extended an [invitation to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the UN](#) to participate in the High-level Meeting on the theme "Climate and Sustainable Development for All", focusing on the protection of the global climate for present and future generations, in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The meeting will take place on 28 March 2019 at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The plans for this discussion are ongoing with promising interest and attention to intergenerational justice.

*Catherine Pearce, Vice-Chair of NIFG*

### 3. NIFG Plans for 2019



*NIFG plans for the year 2019 include taking an active role in the sequence of events related to the review and implementation of Agenda 2030 and organising an international conference focusing on raising global awareness, capacity building and best practice sharing.*

The seventh UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development ([HLPF 2019](#)) will address the theme, 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality' and will conduct an in-depth review of, amongst others, SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). In the course of its high level advocacy work, NIFG will develop a position paper under SDG 16.6 'develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. The paper will aim to demonstrate how current governance structures suffer from political short termism and what essential factors would be needed to enable them to function in a more future generations oriented way. The paper will also highlight best practices, national and international wins demonstrating some aspects of intergenerational equity. NIFG would welcome institutions, NGOs, experts to contribute to the position paper by submitting case studies [via our website](#).

NIFG aims to draw attention to the work of its members and will also explore the possibility of organising a side event in the course of HLPF 2019 to be held jointly with two government mission offices, for geographical balance, and to demonstrate political support, covering national experience and promoting UN level Global Guardians for Future Generations.



Building on the rising global awareness of the increasingly alarming legacy we are leaving to future generations, NIFG also plans to organize an international conference with the overall theme of safeguarding the rights and interests of future generations. We aim for a list of speakers including representatives of our established institutions, international scholars, UN officials, NGOs, grass-roots initiatives. We would like to reach global coverage of this matter and involve representatives and experts of this cause from various continents. The date and venue is still under consideration and the actual content of the conference will be developed in the first half of 2019.

## 4. Global Outlook

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In this section we are featuring some initiatives from across the globe that focus on sustainability, environmental protection and future generations. Whether stemming from grass-roots initiatives, political consensus, NGO activities or individual actions, their overarching goal is to raise awareness of policy makers, law courts, public and business alike and contribute to intergenerational justice.

### Vietnam: roots of future intelligence education

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*Judge Shlomo Shoham (retired), former Commissioner for Future Generations in Israel has been working in Vietnam to bring future intelligence education to the Vietnamese school system.*

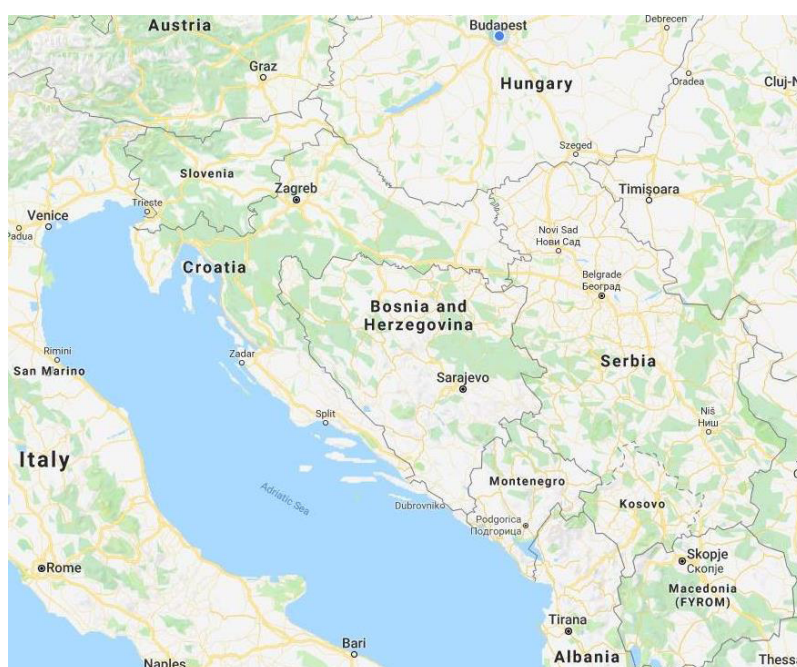
In the summer of 2018, Judge Shoham provided leadership training regarding

sustainability and future intelligence to teachers and administrations which will be impacting some 2500 kindergartens. Additional training for kindergarten teachers and administrators is also being developed. Next steps include establishing an NGO regarding the promotion of future intelligence and the rights of future generations as well as appointing a Commissioner for Future Generations.

*Elisheva Blum, NIFG Secretariat*

## Ombudsmen of South-East Europe: Cooperation in the areas of the Environment and Human Rights

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*In realisation that environmental issues do not stop at national borders, a noteworthy example of regional cooperation between ombudsmen is offered by countries of South-East Europe.*

An international conference with the title "Public Participation in Environmental Matters" was held in September 2017 in Ljubljana where the regional Ombudsmen from Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro signed a Joint Declaration on [Cooperation of Ombudsmen in the areas of the Environment and Human Rights](#) with the establishment of an Ombudsman Network aimed at exchanging experiences and best practices in order to instigate closer cooperation in the matter of environmental protection.

The Ombudsmen jointly agreed on Slovenia's presidency of the network for the first year. The co-operation functions through regular annual meetings, conferences, thematic meetings of network representatives, and joint visits to degraded areas, as well as exchange of documents, information and reports. The Declaration stipulates that the right to a healthy environment is one of the fundamental human rights whose implementation requires adoption of systematic measures in all countries. Further on, it stipulates that a safe and healthy environment is of equal importance for all the neighbouring countries.

The next annual meeting of the Ombudsman Network is scheduled for February 2019 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the chairmanship of the Network will be handed over from the Ombudsman of Slovenia to the Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Anna Martinez-Zemplén, NIFG Secretariat, based on information from the Ombudsman of Slovenia*



## Reporting Initiative on Climate Change, Health, Water and the Environment (RICHWE)

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*The Reporting Initiative on Climate change, Health, Water and the Environment (RICHWE) is a four year programme plan developed by NGOs and legal professionals in the Netherlands with the aim to support National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organisations to promote and protect climate change, health,*

*water and environment related human rights for present and future generations in the UN mechanism of Universal Periodic Review.*

The UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process conducted by the UN's Human Rights Council which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. In this review, sustainability and the well-being of future generations could be better represented in our view through the involvement of the proposed RICHWE elements. Now that a unique precedent has been created through the UPR reporting of the Netherlands in 2017/2018, the stage has been set for a new global chapter in progress monitoring and accountability on rights-based protected sustainable development guarantees.

Nations around the world have enshrined the rights to health, to water, and to a clean environment in their constitutions. As a result, the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council can be used to monitor, address, mitigate, and/or prevent environmental and health related human rights violations. Through this programme, support is offered to NHRIs and NGOs to insert environmental reporting into the UN UPR reporting cycle. The general objective is to ensure increased capacity of key national stakeholders (NHRIs and NGOs) in various countries to monitor and report on water, health, climate change

and other environmental issues and the human rights intertwined with these. In terms of scope, this includes the duties of the State to respect, protect and fulfil each of the RICHWE rights domains, as well as to protect, respect and remedy framework for business and human rights. Additional aims of the programme are (i) to monitor progress and share recommendations and best practices from the UPR process in relation to climate change, health, water and the environment, and (ii) to promote the UN reporting on human rights with such an enlarged scope in relation to environmental sustainability.

*The RICHWE team is looking for partners and (co)funding for the program - if you are interested and would like to have more information, please contact: [jan@justlaw.nl](mailto:jan@justlaw.nl)*

*Anna Martinez-Zemplén, NIFG Secretariat, based on information from Jan van de Venis, NIFG Vice-Chair*

## Sweden: Representation of Future Generations by Effective Altruism

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*The Representation of Future Generations (RFG) Project was initiated by the NGO Effective Altruism Sweden in January 2018 with the aim of finding and implementing ways to change the political system to better account for the interests of future generations.*

The main accomplishments of the Future Generations Project in the past year can be divided in terms of its work on research and political advocacy. The first quarter of 2018 was focused on finding suitable ways to increase the representation of future generations in the Swedish political system.

To do this, the team examined how future generations have been given representation in other countries and scrutinized previous attempts to do so in Sweden. The RFG team was in contact with dozens of stakeholders during the research period, ranging from politicians to researchers and campaigners. The research resulted in the following recommendations, in no particular order:

- Ensure that there are sufficient means to implement and achieve the Climate Act and Agenda 2030 (the Sustainable Development Goals)
- Create a cross-political network for future generations in the Swedish Parliament
- Increase the focus on future issues throughout the legislative process
- Increase engagement from civil society
- Establish an Ombudsman for Future Generations

*Full report: [Representations of Future Generations in Swedish Politics](#)*

Once these recommendations were created, the RFG team focused on promoting them. A position paper was published about the recommendations in one of Sweden's main newspapers and meetings were held with members of the Swedish Parliament. Several MPs have expressed interest in being part of a cross-political network for future generations.

The interesting events held by the RFG team included, amongst others: (i) a seminar during the Swedish Political Week in Almedalen where Anders Sandberg, Senior Research Fellow at the Future of Humanity Institute discussed important long-term issues and ways to approach them; and (ii) a panel discussion where the youth party politicians discussed how each of their parties approached long-term issues leading up to the Swedish elections in September 2018 .

In 2019, the Representation of Future Generations Project will continue with its political advocacy, creating and facilitating a cross-party political network for future generations in the Swedish Parliament, holding events and publishing media articles, all with the hopes of creating a better future.

*Denise Ferreras, Project Leader, Representation of Future Generations Project, Sweden*

## UK: All-Party Parliamentary Group For Future Generations

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*A group of graduate students from Cambridge University, with the support of Lord Martin Rees and the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at Cambridge University, launched a grass-roots initiative to gather support for establishing an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Future Generations at the UK parliament. The APPG project held its launch event on 22 January 2018 in the Westminster Palace.*



The launch event included a panel of speakers focusing on the question: 'If future generations had a voice, they would say...'. Lord Martin Rees, the eminent cosmologist and astrophysicist, a former president of the Royal Society

delivered the opening remarks, which was followed by speeches of Professor David Runciman (Cambridge University) and Marcel Szabó (former Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations, Founder and Honorary Chair of NIFG). A wide array of MPs, Peers, and representatives from academia and civil society were present at the event.

The APPG project continues to work to raise awareness of long-term issues, explore ways to internalise longer-term considerations into decision-making processes, and create space for cross-party dialogue on combating short-termism in policy-making in the UK.

The Secretariat is hosted at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at Cambridge University, an interdisciplinary research group dedicated to the study and mitigation of risks that could lead to human extinction or civilisational collapse. Learn more through the [APPG website](#).

*Katalin Sulyok, NIFG Secretariat*



## Governance for Future Generations: other means besides specialised institutions

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*Research was published in the course of 2018 providing a global overview of the ways in which intergenerational justice is being implemented at a national level to include the interests of future generations in governance, policies and implementation.*

The research highlighted the complexities of governing towards intergenerational equity and emphasised that there is a variety of governance mechanisms through which the rights of future generations can be represented. Besides specialised, future-generations oriented institutions, such as the ones in this network, there have been increasing momentum and noteworthy developments in recent years.

In a number of other countries, groundwork continues for establishing specific institutions, committees or more formalised mechanisms, such as in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, referred to previously in this report. The research also highlights some other countries with additional or emerging institutions whose mandate includes reference to future generations or the protection of human rights and the environment, and NIFG members and experts in the field are keen to learn about their achievements.

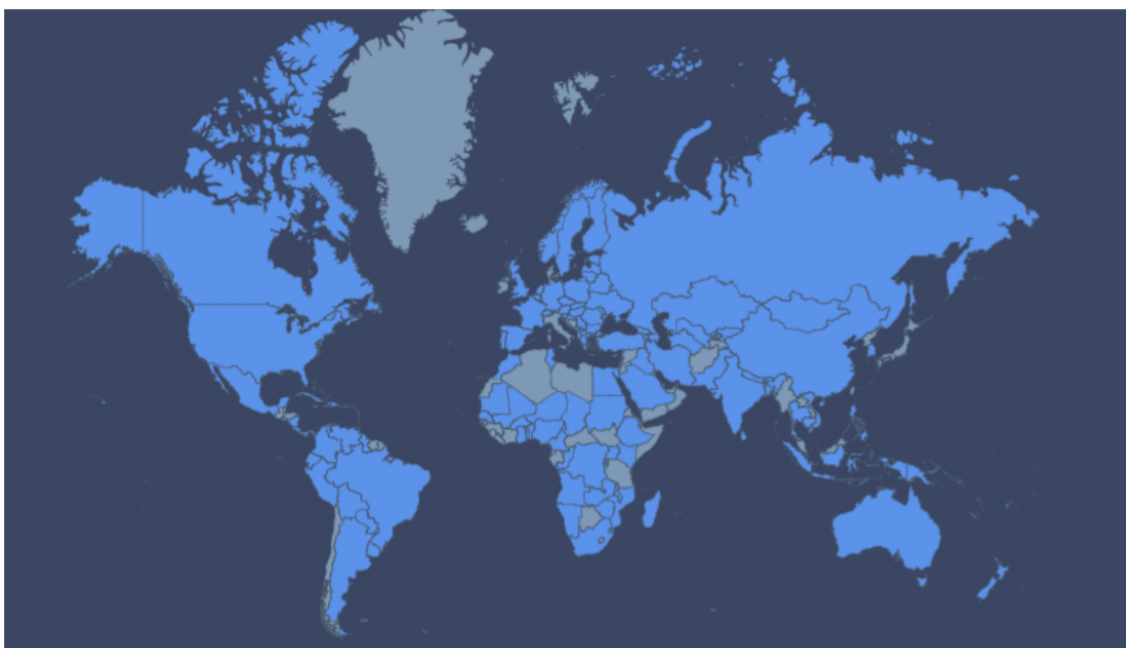
Different means to pursue justice for future generations are emerging through a number of alternative mechanisms. The first one, the legal foundation of the state, namely the constitution, is often not given enough weight. This research illustrated that globally five state constitutions include explicit rights for future generations related to the environment, while 37 include explicit reference to concerns about future generations, and 74 include a legal right to a healthy environment.

This legal foundation has paved the way for an explosion of climate change and future generation related court cases initiated by youth in recent years. Young people are increasingly using legal ways to defend their right to a safe, stable, healthy future using constitutional provisions or legal frameworks to do so. A key example of such court cases is in Norway where Nature and Youth and Greenpeace sued the Norwegian government for its decision to expand arctic sea oil drilling. The case was based on the rights of future generations to a healthy environment as



outlined in their constitution. Although they lost the case, it is now in the process of appeal. In the United States alone, three new cases began at a state level with youth plaintiffs. There are also cases pending in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Columbia - all with youth plaintiffs. The tactics of young people as proxies in court cases is a strategic one as they have rights as citizens which can be defended in court, but also can represent future generations, as their lives continue far into the future.

Initiating court cases is not the only way in which young people were increasingly used as proxies or representatives for future generations in 2018 as means of defending their rights and needs. Recent research found that around 20 countries now use this form of representation either in their national parliaments or in their participation in international governance, such as the UNFCCC.



Overall, the research concludes that 167 mechanisms exist in 134 different countries worldwide (as shown in the world map) which seek to protect the interest of future generations and strive towards intergenerational justice. The full report can be found [here](#).

*Elizabeth Dirth, researcher and lecturer, Utrecht University*

## Future Generations defending themselves: Youth movements and climate strikes

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*2018 witnessed young people and youth movements all over the world uniting behind a discourse of climate justice for their own future and that of future generations. Young people for a long time have been postulated to be representatives or proxies of future generations.*



At the COP24 in Poland in December 2018, 15-year old Greta Thunberg of Sweden gave a powerful speech. She emphasised what is becoming apparent - that not enough is being done to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030 over pre-industrial levels which is needed in order to avoid disastrous effects of climate change. While the end of 2018 was marked with numerous headlines from Greta's iconic speech at the COP24, the entire year saw a remarkable increase in energy and momentum from young people to protect the interests of future generations and their own future. This momentum was by no means the beginning of youth movements on climate change. Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez should be mentioned here, an indigenous climate activist, who spoke at the UN general assembly in 2015, also 15-years old at the time, with essentially the same message. He is now one of the plaintiffs in an ongoing court case in the US suing the federal government for failing to act on climate change. The current wave marks a change in narrative, where youth

united globally behind the idea that climate justice is about justice in the future for them.

In general, 2018 saw an incredible rise in youth activism, and activism on climate justice for future generations was no exception. Activities ranged from youth climate marches globally to specific actions in UN fora to school strikes. While Greta Thunberg has raised the profile of youth climate actions, there are young activists worldwide: as of December 2018, more than 20,000 students held strikes in at least 270 cities in countries including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Denmark, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, where they refuse to go to school if their governments don't act on climate change. The basic idea is: why learn for a future which is not being protected.

*Elizabeth Dirth, researcher and lecturer, Utrecht University*

## The Inter-Parliamentary Union calling for action for the interests of future generations

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*On 14-15 December 2018, young members of national parliaments have come together in Baku, Azerbaijan at the [Fifth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#) organised with the theme of **Promoting sustainability, protecting the interests of future generations.***

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an organisation made up of national parliaments from around the world with the goal to protect and build global democracy through political dialogue and concrete action. The IPU currently has 178 Member Parliaments and 12 Associate members. Young parliamentarians have repeatedly called for there to be “No decisions

about youth, without youth" and for it to be equally applied to future generations. Although the individuals that make up future generations may be inherently absent from public decision-making today, their rights and interests need to be taken into account in the present.

The Conference offered an opportunity for young parliamentarians, youth organisations and other stakeholders to share ideas and expertise and to rally around a common vision that safeguards the prosperity and well-being of future generations. Some pressing questions that young MPs have been dealing with include: what will our planet look like for the generations to come? What resources will future generations have to live with? How will policy decisions taken today impact future generations? How can we better integrate future generations into public decision-making?

Three sub-topics were explored at the conference:

- the role of youth in environmental protection;
- sustainable consumption and production; and
- prioritising youth empowerment.

Two of our NIFG members have delivered keynote presentations at the Conference: Ms. Sophie Howe, NIFG Chair and Commissioner for Future Generations for Wales in the session entitled 'Changing the paradigm: Sustainable consumption and production for future generations' and Julie Gelfand, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development in Canada in the session 'Parliamentary actions for future generations'.

[The outcome document](#) highlights that the needs and interests of future generations need to be integrated into decision-making processes and emphasises that "We therefore commend mechanisms created in a number of countries that serve as guardians for future generations and hope to create and strengthen similar ones in our own countries. These include parliamentary committees or independent agents of parliament that link people to their governments and hold government to account for their performance in implementing commitments. These also extend to audit offices, ombudspersons and commissioners."

*Anna Martinez-Zemplén, NIFG Secretariat*



# Contact Us

We would be happy to provide you with more information, do not hesitate to get in touch with us. If you are interested in submitting a case study or description of your activities, please make your story heard by writing to:

*[info@futereroundtable.org](mailto:info@futereroundtable.org)*

This Report was prepared by the Secretariat of NIFG and was edited by Anna Martinez-Zemplén. NIFG plans to issue regular reports and newsletters to [our subscribers](#) introducing some examples of the challenging work, successful achievements of our members and other similar institutions worldwide and featuring exciting developments in the national and international arena.