

Interventions

Productivity Commission Low Emissions Economy Issues Paper

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Author: Catherine Murupaenga-Ikenn

Overview

1. Thank you for the work invested in the production of the Commission’s Issues Paper, and for the opportunity to comment.
2. First, some general observations: the way forward for emissions reduction must:
 - 2.1 Be value-based, having a spiritual / scientific and traditional knowledge underpinning (these ethical dimensions were emphasized at the [February Pacific Climate Conference](#), and the inaugural [Māori Leaders Climate Summit 2018](#)):
 - a. We won’t have justice for one until there’s justice for all: because the truth is “I Am the water, and the water is Me; I Am You, and You are Me”. Everything is One, so helping a part of ‘us’ is helping the whole; and
 - b. This approach recognizes that Quantum Physics now admits what [ancient spiritual and traditional wisdom has said all along](#), that the underlying basis of all reality is consciousness, and our consciousness creates our individual and collective reality. Therefore, we ought to be devoting urgent and serious attention to understanding that dimension and implementing our knowledge to positively transform our world. Because we have more power to do so than we realize, and (but for exceptional individuals who are selfishly limiting that knowledge to themselves and their networks) we’re under-utilizing that power;
 - 2.2 Take an inclusive approach - “He waka eke noa”; we’re all in this climate crisis together, no-one gets left behind, diverse interests need to collaborate like in WWI/ WWII times with unprecedented levels of sharing and caring for one another;
 - 2.3 Ensure we frame the problem correctly (honestly),¹ and in a way that captures the interest, imagination and attention of the population and decision-makers (“flip the narrative”). For example, rising emissions aren’t merely *contributing* to climate “change”, but is *driving* existential climate “crisis” having grave implications for all “securities” needed for human freedom and existence (biodiversity and habitats, water, soil, food, energy, housing...);
 - 2.4 Where there is policy-level dishonesty (e.g. climate “change” when really it’s “crisis”), hypocrisy, contradiction, ‘false logic’ (insanity) or mis-match - e.g.
 - a. People somewhere always in need of transport, while generally vehicles are parked most of the time;
 - b. Joblessness, while there is yet lots of mahi needed to be done in the family, in community and civic arena, volunteering for environmental and social justice NGOs;
 - c. Homelessness, while many empty and unused buildings are standing around;

- d. Hunger and poor nutrition with simultaneous high percentage of food waste;
- e. An Emissions Trading Scheme which perversely perpetuates emissions by enabling profiteering from and 'greenwashing' polluting activity rather than eliminating and reducing the polluting at source. The ETS also creates another trading 'bubble' that (like all bubbles) has already burst creating losses to the value of \$millions for Māori and others (and is likely to expand/ burst again):-

...we need to be whakamā (meek, less egoic, humble ourselves) and recognize that negative way of being, and rectify it (bring integrity back);

- 2.5 Reconcile/ collapse apparent contradictory values, and instead balance them better - e.g.
 - a. Dichotomous thinking, like:
 - i. "Environmental protection and economic growth are mutually exclusive";
 - ii. "There's too much to do, and not enough money to pay for it";
 - iii. The needs of different populations - "Rural vs urban", "Rich vs poor", "Young vs old", "Indigenous vs non-indigenous";
 - b. Micro and macro contexts, like:
 - i. "Thinking globally, but acting locally";
 - ii. Short-term, medium and long-term;
 - iii. Individual and collective action; and
- 2.6 Ensures practical action, but also more abstract policy "wins" that address the systemic root causes of our dysfunction.

SPECIFICS

- 3. More detailed interventions on emissions reduction are as follows:

Environmental

- 4. Any plan must prioritize not just sustainability, but *regeneration* – recognizing not just the [Rights of Mother Earth](#), but also that humanity relies completely on Her healthy air, oceans, fresh waters, soil, genetic materials, seeds etc for our ongoing existence as a species.

Human rights

- 5. The issues paper seems to exclude recognition of human rights standards. This is a serious omission. Any plan must ensure active protection and compliance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and international human rights Treaties and associated instruments such as the UN [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), and the [NZ Human Rights National Plan of Action](#) (including heeding [New Zealand UN periodic review](#) recommendations).

Social

- 6. With any radical emissions reduction plan, there will be some disruption (which ought to be the whole point, otherwise we're arguably just finessing the status quo). As with most

disruption, the poor and precariat classes who have contributed the least to climate crisis are forecast feel the effects first and suffer the worst. So labour reform to protect these vulnerable families will be critical, and I support Unions' recommendations for greater protections in that regard.

- 6.1 I further emphasize the need to strengthen unions, there being a [strong correlation](#) between that and a more egalitarian society. However, such aspirations will be undermined by a global neo liberal capitalist economy. For example, to compete and profit, companies are forced to increase productivity / reduce production costs (including labour costs, e.g. by [outsourcing](#) to countries who flout labour laws). If not, companies just close shop and relocate. So:
 - a. You have to ensure basic [labour standards](#) across the world, and/or condemn goods and services produced in violation of said labour rights. But then that has implications for those countries where those populations will suffer even more without that business activity (despite it basically keeping the population locked in [slave poverty](#)). So the richer nations need to help the poorer nations; but
 - b. Ultimately, one of the most oppressive mechanisms in history has been people forced to earn the right to live through selling their labour (often in rote jobs they don't even like, which has knock on [negative health and other implications](#)). It puts the whole concept of 'labour for money' into question;
- 6.2 We're in a gig economy, people have less employment certainty bouncing from one short-term work engagement to another. So a [Universal Basic Income](#) or other much needed radical reforms of New Zealand's social welfare system would alleviate the stress associated with that gig economy while addressing the contradiction of capitalism (i.e. the economy needs people who have job so they can buy goods and services). Coupled with a reduced working week to mitigate ever-growing and inevitable [technological redundancy](#), this would free people up so they can focus on and do mahi in targeted, meaningful, critical climate crisis mitigation/ adaptation areas;
7. I support the [New Zealand Nurses Organization's interventions](#), especially its 'surprise' that "the health sector was not included in the industry sectors explored" in the issues paper. I further emphasize that mental health is forecast to worsen with increasing stresses on first responders to emergency situations, and in society generally as addiction to familiar and convenient lifestyles will create profound grief and resistance to radical change. In other words, the psychology of change needs to be addressed if we're to ensure widespread and rapid uptake by the affected population.

Political

8. Protect We, The People's, sovereignty, freedoms and democracy:
 - 8.1 To optimize trust of (and therefore collaboration by) the People in its government's plans, there needs to be more [transparency and accountability](#) of public officials, bureaucracy and governance entities² who will have implementation oversight of the plan.
 - 8.2 High level policy lobbying, e.g. the [Emissions Trading Scheme](#) is demonstrably unethical and has failed to achieve its sole officially-stated purpose for being (i.e. to reduce

emissions), while the popularity of carbon tax schemes (coupled with the return of tax revenues to affected communities) increases.

Economic

9. Any emissions reduction plan must recognize some big truths:
 - 9.1 Economies only exist in a functioning society, which can only exist with a habitable natural environment. So we must protect the environment first, and society second;
 - 9.2 All growth has its limits. That's a law of physics. Therefore, we must detach from the insane idea of infinite economic growth;
 - 9.3 The "free market" isn't: it's rigged to concentrate wealth into the hands of fewer and fewer elites, and correspondingly make slaves of the rest of us. This includes that with environmental and social metrics included in accounting, [all business and industry is technically insolvent](#), non-profitable and a liability on the Planet. i.e. the environment and society are subsidizing private business illusory profit-making. This horrifically perverse situation has to be urgently and radically improved so that there is equitable distribution (democratization) of wealth across New Zealand society to resource all the action that needs to be done;
10. Subsidize and engage in Life-nurturing activities (not Life-destroying ones): divest from Life-destroying activities and 'stranded assets' / invest in Life-nurturing ones;
11. Ensure government constitutional and legal enforcement of environmental protection and natural persons' rights are superior to economic privileges of corporate entities with legal personality;
12. Central and local government must protect themselves against false 'trade' deals like the Trans Pacific Partnership that are an open attack on State sovereignty³;
13. Undertake an aggressive climate crisis education campaign, especially of leaders of the business and industry sector, to ensure as many as possible fully appreciate the imperative for reform of economics and commerce (as there are still out there those who [don't believe](#) in climate change or deny their responsibility to change to help mitigate climate change);
14. Urgently implement the living standards index (ditch the GDP) as the driver for data collection and policy design.

Naku noa,

Catherine Murupaenga-Ikenn

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Indigenous Fellow 2005

¹ See different reports that frame the issues, e.g. [World Economic Forum](#), 17 [UN SDGs](#), [Drawdown...](#)

² Several agencies like the [Ministry for Primary Industries](#), high level officials like the [Minister for the Environment](#), and [local government](#) have been criticized with a decrease in public trust in politicians and political decision-making.

³ E.g. by declaring Councils to be TPP-free Zones, or adopting the four Trans Pacific Partnership recommendations (made by local government TPP campaigners in [March 2018](#)) in their Annual and/or Long Term Planning.