



Wales Protocol for Future Generations

- *from Declaration to Implementation*



“Benthyg dros amser byr yw popeth a geir yn y byd hwn”
Everything you have in this world is just borrowed for a short time

Welsh Proverb.

Chair's Note

The UN Summit of the Future presents a critical opportunity to rethink local, national and global governance to meet the challenges of the 21st Century and reach our collective desired futures. This opportunity must be met with action.

It is vital that the Summit be the catalyst for reclaiming realistic optimism for current and future generations. It must be a moment where we come together to build commitment and solidarity for our common futures and to build the anticipatory governance this century demands.

With the aim of supporting the implementation of an ambitious Declaration for Future Generations, a community of leaders and early adopters – currently innovating and practising long-term governance – from around the world met in Wales as part of a collective thought process to put their experiences at the service of this process.

The result is the 'Wales Protocol for Future Generations', a reference document and pragmatic guide aimed at governments and stakeholders interested in promoting and implementing the Declaration for Future Generations.

It is a collective plea, rich with global leading edge wisdom, for the importance of long-term governance to be recognised and acted on. It provides a series of practical recommendations so that States, citizens and the United Nations can implement the Pact for the Future in a fair manner, taking into account intergenerational solidarity.

We are proud that this collective Protocol was developed and co-designed in Wales, the home of the Well-being of Future Generations Act - the first legislation of its kind in the world to place a legal duty on our public bodies to implement sustainable development and provide guardianship for the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of current and future generations.

As we reach the 10th anniversary of our legislation in Wales, we are now, more than ever, convinced by the true wealth of nations lies not only in what they achieve individually, but in their willingness to share their learnings generously. For it is through this collaboration that we pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for all.

Derek Walker

Chair, Future Generations Forum 2024
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

With thanks to Catarina Zuzarte Tully and the School of International Futures for their partnership in facilitating the design and development of this Protocol.

The Wales Protocol for Future Generations

This Protocol has been developed by the Office of the Commissioner for Future Generations of Wales with the support of a high level coalition of global early adopters. The substance of the protocol was informed by a community of over 150 policy leaders, activists and practitioners from more than 60 countries in a consultation process that explored pioneering experiences from all over the world. The Protocol was developed across three iterations of global consultation undertaken by the **School of International Futures**, culminating at the **Future Generations Forum**, taking place in Cardiff (Wales) from 29th April to 1st May 2024, where the final text was agreed.

Calls to Action

Aware that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be achieved without a multilateral consensus that is fair and supportive of future generations, the Protocol invites citizens, nations, and international organisations to adopt the following commitments to achieve the goals embedded in the Declaration for Future Generations.

The process demonstrated that transformation will only be possible if action is taken across all sectors and governments. We require a holistic approach where long-term thinking is the norm, and collaboration and integration of the world's problems are identified as the key to enhancing resilience and leaving no one behind.

There are three 'groups' who have distinct parts to play in implementing sustainable development and long-term thinking: 'The people', nations, and the United Nations and other international and multilateral systems. **The protocol assigns a set of proposals for each group.**

The proposals in this protocol should be implemented with the following understandings:

- Future Generations are defined as those not yet born.
- We face a tipping point of gender rights reversal. Action must be taken to not just stabilise, but push on.
- The rights of people with disabilities, which are not explicitly referenced in the SDGs, must be safeguarded and strengthened.
- We understand that thinking about the future is not a new phenomenon. We recognise the value of the indigenous communities who have acted as stewards for many centuries and millennia.
- The voices of children and youth are paramount. At the same time, the burden of developing sustainable development should not fall solely to the youngest in our societies.
- Those voices who are furthest from the decision making process are not just given a seat at the table, but handed the pen.



- Restoring resilience to our environment and biodiversity is the cornerstone of decision making.

Summit of the Future Expectations

This Protocol has been written under the expectation that the United Nations uphold their commitments at the Summit of the Future to:

- Agree an ambitious Declaration for the rights of Future Generations
- Appoint a strategically positioned and well-resourced UN Special Envoy for Future Generations
- Commit to substantive action to build futures-oriented governance
- Institutionalise the principle of intergenerational fairness.



1. People

'People' and communities, are central to how we feel and make choices about the world we live in. We bridge this learning and understanding from our ancestors to our future descendants. We, the people, have the right and the responsibility to become good ancestors for the generations to come.

It is in civil society where often issues are raised and surfaced, and where many of the initiatives originate and are driven. It is often locally that visions of the future arise. Our responsibility as a global community of leaders is to protect the diversity and uniqueness of cultures, languages, beliefs and practices that we, the citizens, have inherited from past generations and to deliver them to those that come after us.

As a species of storytellers, we can unlock our ability to share stories of our preferred futures, using these as a way to build solidarity across generations, and nurture communities that can work together to not just imagine better futures, but also act to transform the future in a way that is respectful to different generations.

Proposal 1 - Developing collective narratives anchored in local and community contexts

- The future looks different for different people and communities. Conversations about futures must take into account the culture, values and language that reflects our identities and in a way that makes sense to us.
- We need to better connect with youth and indigenous voices, as well as all generations, providing appropriate spaces and platforms that allow for representation of both current and future generations.

Did you know?

- In 2022, **UNICEF** released a **Youth Foresight Playbook** for youth-focused and youth-led organisations, as well as foresight practitioners, building on the experiences of its nine youth Foresight Fellows centred in foresight and Meaningful Youth Engagement approaches.
- The **Pacific Women's Indigenous Network** pushes forward a strong advocacy agenda in multilateral processes to protect the populations and territories of the Pacific Islands, which are threatened by climate change.

Proposal 2 - Convening intergenerational conversations about the future informed by the future

- People have different values, desires and visions for the future. We must acknowledge this diversity of perspectives and ensure that we are not just solving issues today, without understanding their impacts on future generations.



- This requires spaces and mechanisms that hear and protect intergenerational and diverse voices at a local level.

Did you know?

- Indigenous communities in **Canada** uphold intergenerational knowledge sharing as a cornerstone of sustainable living.
- Resources like the **ANR India Mobility project** and publications from Manchester University offer insights into mobility patterns and social dynamics, which are crucial for understanding intergenerational interactions.

Proposal 3 - Investing in futures literacy and recognise the importance of education in building hopeful futures

- Futures literacy is often defined as the capacity to imagine the future, but critically it is about agency, helping individuals and communities to prepare for, imagine, and navigate societal challenges. It provides agency.
- It is critical to build futures literacy across society and across all generations, but especially our youth, helping them to have greater agency over the future, as they become tomorrows' leaders.

Did you know?

- In **Wales**, WJEC (a qualifications awarding organisation) has developed a suite of 'Sustainability Qualifications' to meet the needs of learners across a wide range of settings. This is in response to Wales' own Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Curriculum for Wales Four Purposes, and the United Nations' Global Goals.
- **Bangladesh** focuses on future education initiatives, including the National Curriculum Framework and Smart Education Master Plan, to ensure the wellbeing and development of future generations.
- **Teach the Future** is a global network working to bring futures thinking into classrooms, nurturing the next generation and promoting 'futures literacy' as a life skill for students and educators.

Proposal 4 - Establishing participatory mechanisms to ensure that citizens shape their communities

- Businesses, academics, media, civil society, educators, faith-based organisations, and volunteers are not only critical allies in supporting systemic change but should also put future generations at the centre of the way that they operate, innovating to ensure their governance models incentivise and respect the needs of all generations.

Did you know?

- **NGO Asuntos del Sur** published **Escenarios Futuros de Gobernanza**, is a research organisation about youth political participation amid democratic dissatisfaction. The research covered diverse topics such as youth participation and regional cooperation for sustainable development, involving over 150 individuals from



academia, public and private sectors, civil society organisations, and multilateral bodies.

- Local Agenda 21 in **France** aims to promote sustainable development at the local level by addressing essential needs, strengthening social cohesion, and inventing responsible development models.

Proposal 5 - Promoting cultural shift and protecting the Commons, including utilising the power of the Justice system.

- Protecting the rights of future generations requires a shift in mindsets. Long-term participatory approaches need to go beyond economic thinking and broaden the space to think about wellbeing through care and community building.
- For centuries, community approaches that transcend the public-private division have protected the Commons, understood as the resources and practices that ensure the reproduction of life (including nature and cultural practices). Those practices need to be embedded, protected and scaled up through trust-based alliances between citizens and their governments.

Did you know?

- **#FridaysForFuture**, a youth movement started in 2018 to overcome the climate after the protests by Greta Thunberg and other activists, has reached over 14 million young people in over 7500 cities.
- Hosted by the **UN Foundation**, the Unlock the Future coalition gathers the world's largest organisations working with and for young people and children
- **Germany's** Supreme Constitutional Court ruled the country's climate legislation [violated the rights of future generations](#) in 2021.
- In the **United States**, the case *Held v. State* 2020 saw Young people in the State of Montana win a lawsuit on the basis of their 'right to a clean and healthful environment'.
- The **Montevideo Programme** is a United Nations framework that supports the development and implementation of environmental law worldwide, aiming to promote sustainable development and the protection of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

2. Governments

Meaningful steps need to be taken to build appropriate governance structures that support long-term policy and decision making that is intergenerationally fair.

This will involve innovating across three fronts: building the technical capability of government, public services and officials; stewarding and facilitating anticipatory citizen participatory exchanges; and supporting leadership to follow through and act in the interests of future as well as current generations. This also requires working with politicians and parliaments of all kinds, and maintaining fair and constructive scrutiny.

Nationally, regionally and locally, governments have the opportunity to utilise the Pact for the Future and Declaration of Future Generations to catalyse and inspire change.

Proposal 1. Support political leaders to take the interests of future generations into account in their decision

- Adopting long-term, preventative, and systemic policies that respect planetary boundaries and promote intergenerational equity/
- Introducing legislation and institutional structures to protect the rights of future generations and ensure intergenerational fairness.
- Strengthening parliamentary oversight for future generations, or appointing an independent Commissioner/Commission/Ombudsperson for Future Generations.
- Building national strategies that better account for the needs of youth and future generations.
- Improving mechanisms that support transparency, accountability and representation through assessment, data transparency, and other mechanisms that decentralise and distribute decision-making and oversight.

Did you know?

- **Iceland's** Constitutional Council exemplifies inclusive policy-making involving ordinary citizens.
- In **New Zealand**, Long-term Insights Briefings are designed to be 'think pieces' on the future, providing information about medium and long-term trends, risks and opportunities that may affect Aotearoa New Zealand.

Proposal 2. Build technical capabilities of government, departments, agencies and public bodies as well as officials to be future-prepared

- Embedding future generations and long term thinking in government by creating departments with a mandate to ensure future generations and the future is at the heart of policy and decision making.
- Ensuring evaluation and resource allocation is coordinated through 'whole of government' approaches that break down silos, and ensure intergenerational fairness and long term thinking is embedded in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policy as well as the disbursement of resources.



- Build technical capabilities around foresight – including horizon scanning, long-term trend analysis, and scenarios – and use these to create anticipatory, resilient and fairer policies that meet the needs of future generations and the country as a whole.
- Supporting the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals and establishing decentralisation mechanisms that enhance bottom-up policy-making.

Did you know?

- Wales localised the UN SDGs into Welsh law by introducing the 7 Well-being Goals as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.
- **Brazil** established in November 2023 the National Network of Welcoming Cities, where local government, migrant associations, youth and civil society participate in the discussion and design of policies that address the rights of displaced populations
- The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act of **Nigeria** empowers the Agency to be responsible for enforcing all environmental laws, guidelines, policies, standards and regulations in Nigeria, as well as enforcing compliance with provisions of international agreements, protocols, conventions and treaties on the environment to which Nigeria is a signatory.

Proposal 3. Co-create future-prepared policies and visions for the future with intergenerational groups of citizens

- Running intergenerational dialogues, including national listening exercises that **empower** youth through meaningful participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles.
- Holding future-focused citizens' assemblies to support dialogue and help ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- Actively seeking to **embed and protect local knowledge and indigenous legacies in policy.**
- Establishing partnerships between **states and stakeholders** to protect the commons — our cultural and natural resources — and to navigate the impact of shared challenges – such as the impact of emerging technologies.

Did you know?

- **New Zealand's** Wellbeing Budget exemplifies a holistic approach to governance prioritising broader wellbeing outcomes. New Zealand developed a wellbeing framework *He Ara Waiora for a mātauranga Māori*.
- **Welsh Government** held a national conversation “The Wales We Want” (2014) with the people of Wales to inform the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- **Cameroon** appoints youth representatives in parliament, develops national development strategies and mobilises youth focused organisations to address intergenerational issues and promote long-term development.

Proposal 4. Engage the private sector in long-term national strategies and hold them accountable for the achievement of wellbeing goals



- As a central actor in the use of our societies' human and natural resources, the private sector has a responsibility to act in the interests of future generations above short-term profit.
- Governments must incentive legislative mechanisms to enable the private sector to participate positively in the development of shared societal goals and to be held accountable for damage to people's rights and the environment.
- The private sector can and should play a catalytic role in the sustainable and mutually beneficial use of existing resources.

Did you know?

- **Riversimple**, a company producing sustainable cars, has embedded future generations into their governance, using a Future Guardian model of governance.
- **Kenya** Vision 2030, the Kenya Climate Change Act, and initiatives like the National Youth Service and Youth Enterprise Development Fund contribute to Kenya's intergenerational approach by promoting sustainable development and youth empowerment.
- Triodos bank has established the **Triodos Future Generations Fund** to invest in companies that are considering the welfare of children and adding benefits for future generations.

Proposal 5. Establish Independent Measurement and Accountability Mechanisms for long-term governance

- Ensure continuous improvement and momentum of sustainable development is encouraged by setting clear expectations at the national and regional level.

Did you know?:

- The **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** designed a 'Maturity Matrix' for Wales' public institutions to measure their progress in implementing sustainable development.
- In **Portugal**, the municipality of Póvoa do Varzim intends to pilot a project to appoint an Ombudsman for Future Generations.

3. Multilateral Systems and Institutions

Global cooperation is central to delivering on collective hopes for the future, while protecting the values and ideals of current and future generations. The Summit of the Future is a critical opportunity to ensure future global governance is fit for the future, setting an example and supporting nations. .

Nations also have a critical role to play as part of their commitment to signing up to advocate for and ensure the multilateral agenda is effective, while ensuring that their governance systems — from the national to local level — are fit for the future.

This requires action at three levels: ensuring the UN and global institutions are effective and building capability; enabling regional bodies to collectively respond and set an agenda for change; and working to ensure that space is created for powerful future generations whose agenda is bold, inclusive and safeguards the future.

Proposal 1: Fostering Inclusive Multilateralism

- Fostering inclusive, accountable, and legitimate multilateralism, with increased participation of civil society and youth actors.
- Considering the rights of future generations in contemporary decision-making processes is paramount. Various mechanisms and frameworks already exist within corporate, national, and subnational spheres to ensure meaningful representation of future interests. It is incumbent upon the United Nations system to explore and adopt such mechanisms, integrating them into its governance structures, policymaking endeavours, and collaborative partnerships.
- Assisting Member States in establishing similar mechanisms at local and regional levels, thereby ensuring that the voices and interests of future generations are effectively represented across all tiers of governance.
- Appointing a well-resourced UN Special Envoy for Future Generations to represent those not yet born, and advise States and the UN on wider implementation.

Did you know?

- In October 2023, the UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, launched his **Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments**, to inform on local and regional governments' dimensions for consideration in preparatory processes of the Summit of the Future.

Proposal 2: Setting a clear strategic direction

- Setting a clear strategic direction beyond Agenda 2030. The 2030 SDG goals are no longer a long-term plan. We require a plan to 2050, and beyond, which encompasses solutions to long-term trends and plausible futures.



Did you know?

- **AGENDA 2063** is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future.
- The **EU** aims to be climate-neutral by 2050 – an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. This objective is at the heart of the [European Green Deal](#), and is a legally binding target thanks to the [European Climate Law](#)

Proposal 3. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

- Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress towards future-oriented goals and hold stakeholders accountable.
- Making use of legislative frameworks, regulation, policy and other mechanisms that incentivise and support future generations' rights.
- Embedding robust accountability and oversight measures at the General Assembly, ensuring the UN itself and States make necessary progress.

Did you know?

- The **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)** provides frameworks for promoting sustainability and intergenerational solidarity.
- Through action research, the **School of International Futures (SOIF)** has developed “the SOIF triangle” as an assessment tool to monitor the preparedness of countries for long-term governance frameworks that ensure intergenerational solidarity and justice.

Proposal 4. Working regionally strengthening and enabling regional future-preparedness

- Acting and responding to challenges and opportunities at regional level, through regional bodies and organisations (e.g. African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank) and regional commissions (e.g. CEPAL, UNESCWA) helping them to unlock value from futures work: managing global shocks, setting a clear agenda and building resilience.
- Connecting national networks (e.g. Resident Coordinators) regionally and globally to sense and respond to challenges; and to help them embed future generations in their work.

Proposal 5. Building capability, ramping up and accelerating assistance and adequate resources

- Strengthening foresight capability at the agency and country levels, leveraging UN actors' outreach and representation globally.
- Fostering ongoing innovations across the UN — innovation labs, foresight units, data initiatives – while developing knowledge, guidance, and tools that can support across the system.



- Promoting multi-stakeholder policy-making spaces where States and stakeholders can co-create strategies and share experiences to mainstream participatory foresight across all levels of government and sectors of society, connecting policy with research and action.
- Developing technical assistance and advice on what works, helping regions and Member States to develop solutions and protect the rights of future generations in a way that is appropriate to their local context.

Did you know?

- **Youth2030** acts as an umbrella framework to guide the entire UN as it steps up its work with and for young people across its three pillars – peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development – in all contexts.
- The **UN Futures Lab** is a network that empowers the UN System and beyond to use futures thinking and strategic foresight in planning, policy- and decision-making

Conclusion

This Protocol is an implementation guide for a better future. It is, importantly, the voices of people across the world who have a collective understanding that we need a new way of thinking that safeguards our futures.

The Protocol is a set of proposals that communities, countries and the UN can translate into their own decision making systems and act upon. There are many other ideas and examples of good practice championed by communities and experts globally that do not feature here, but are further examples of the wealth of learning available which you should draw on. We look forward to continuing the discussions in Wales and building the momentum together.

If you would like to learn more about our work, or of the proposed IMPACT Coalition for Future Generations (a multi-stakeholder umbrella community) which met informally on the fringes of the Future Generations Forum (April 2024) please do reach out.

We strongly encourage you to share this Protocol with others including community groups, government representatives (official and political) and with partners across the UN spectrum. Thank you in advance for your support.