



April 26 Afternoon Round-Up

The first [Nobel Prize Summit](#) “Our Planet, Our Future” kicked off today with a full program focused on actions that can be achieved this decade to put the world on a path to a more sustainable, more prosperous future for all.

The following are selected quotes reflecting on the summit’s themes from today’s discussions and remarks. Registered press can view recordings from the day’s main stage sessions after they conclude by logging in to your registration link.

Welcome from the Three Presenting Hosts

“Today, more than ever, we need leading minds from across a range of disciplines to come together to address very urgent and very complex challenges that our planet is facing, challenges that our very human existence is facing. And we need those leading minds to engage with policymakers — those who make critical decisions for our future.” — **Vidar Helgesen, executive director of the Nobel Foundation**

“The pandemic required massive mobilization of scientific resources, of international cooperation ... Now I urge that we bring this same sense of urgency to the coupled problems of climate change and inequality, as this summit explores humanity’s most pressing challenges: Can we reduce inequities to safeguard the long-term potential of all of humanity? And can we rapidly become effective stewards of Earth’s climate and biosphere — the ultimate global commons?” — **Marcia McNutt, president of U.S. National Academy of Sciences**

“We can no longer act incrementally. We need to act exponentially, we need to act collectively, and we need to act in parallel. This is a systemic transformation of societies, and the biggest lift has to be done in the next 10 years. The world has to cut global emissions by half to have a chance of landing the world in a net-zero world economy by 2050.” — **Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research**

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Setting the Stage: Our Planet

“The opportunity to create tens of millions of new jobs is becoming irresistible ... A study from the Oxford Review of Economic Policy shows that green stimulus measures have both short- and long-term job creation and economic advantages over traditional stimulus measures. In fact, green investments generate three times as many jobs as fossil fuel investments, dollar for dollar.” — **Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, Nobel Prize laureate, co-founder and chair of Generation Investment Management, and founder and chair of the Climate Reality Project**
Think Globally, Act Locally

“Science tells us that living nature is much more than an inventory of species ... It’s the intricate tapestry in which all the living, including us humans, are intertwined. This living fabric is essential to the functioning of the planet and to humans within. Unfortunately, we now have incontestable evidence that the living fabric of the Earth is being unraveled fast.” — **Sandra Diaz, professor of ecology at Córdoba National University and senior member of the National Research Council of Argentina**

“We have destroyed so much terrestrial nature that there is as much carbon from destroyed nature in the atmosphere as survives in current ecosystems. A good ending to climate change will require bringing a significant portion of that back to ecosystem restoration. We exist on a living planet which works as a linked biological and physical system. For a satisfactory outcome, that means we need to manage ourselves.” — **Thomas Lovejoy, professor of ecosystems, George Mason University**

Pay It Forward: Envisioning Next Steps with Our Leaders of Tomorrow

“In this journey of emissions reductions, we must keep in mind that our target is zero worldwide ... We must keep in mind that there are communities who rely on the health of the Amazon rainforest, the Congo basin, the Yucatan jungle, the Arctic and Antarctic, the Himalayas, and the health of our oceans, lakes, and rivers. We must keep in mind that climate justice is social justice.” — **Xiye Bastida, climate activist and youth leader**

Evidence of Urgency: An Island Nation’s Call to Action

“If we are 607 islands today, untold numbers will disappear by the end of the century — unless climate change can be overcome by the nations that caused it. This reality is very profound and frightening. For the Federated States of Micronesia, climate change is our single greatest security threat. Part of the answer to this threat is that the world must transition to sustainable and renewable energy.” — **David W. Panuelo, president of the Federated States of Micronesia**

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Giving Power to Solutions

“Relieving poverty, increasing education, and improving health care means that you aren’t on this population growth treadmill rat race. Yes, we’re going to need technology to grow more and better food for a growing population ... But it becomes harder to do that when we go from 7 billion, to 10 billion, to 15 billion people and beyond.” — **Steven Chu, Nobel Prize laureate and professor of physics and molecular and cellular physiology at Stanford University**

“Over time, the world realized you can’t dictate population size. It’s the woman’s choice, and given the choice, women know exactly what they want. They want the number of children they can afford and nurture ... Right now, there are 218 million women in the world who want to avoid pregnancy, but they lack access to modern contraception.” — **Natalia Kanem, United Nations undersecretary-general and executive director of the United Nations Population Fund**

A Commitment to Cooperation

“If we don’t do what we need to do between 2020 and 2030, we can’t hold the Earth’s temperature to 1.5 degrees ... we can’t achieve net-zero by 2050. So this is a critical moment, where lots of different previously easily accepted voices of respect in our society have got to reclaim a baseline of truth and reclaim the capacity to build consensus ... We are in a war against facts, against science, and so I think we have to fight back. And I think scientists have to be at the front of that fight” — **Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, Secretary John Kerry**

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Journalists with inquiries or interview requests may contact:

Office of News and Public Information, U.S. National Academy of Sciences; +1-202-334-2138
or news@nas.edu.

Rebecka Oxelström, head of press, Nobel Foundation, rebecka.oxelstrom@nobelprize.org