

## BACKGROUND

**The Context for the Strong Universal Network (SUN<sup>x</sup>) and its focus on Climate Resilient Impact-Travel, is the paradigm shift, 2015 Finance, Sustainability and Climate Summits.**

These created a long-term road-map, with real targets and indicators, to hit Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and survivable temperatures by 2050. The complexity, scale and scope of this three-decade, multi-trillion-dollar, Green Growth transformation is like no challenge we have faced before.

**Climate Change is a unique challenge** – it is existential and that means if we don't fix it, our grandchildren will freeze or fry. And it also means we have to keep the pressure on that through other mega-challenges such as poverty, hunger and terrorism dealt with in 17 SDGs (with 169 targets and 304 indicators). All are vitally important but secondary if we do not deal with global warming.

**The Reality is post-industrialisation build-up of greenhouse gases** and massive increases in fossil fuel based energy have created rapid warming of the planet, air pollution in major cities, melting ice-caps, significant weather pattern changes, dramatic floods, fires, droughts, strained agricultural and water resources, and, ultimately, a greenhouse gas tipping point where the cycle cannot be reversed. The intensity is increasing.

**The Paris Agreement calls for a gradually strengthening three decades mix** of voluntary national carbon-reduction targets, diminishing dependence on fossil fuel, a new era of renewable energy resources, biodiversity conservation and smarter lifestyles. The goal is to keep temperature growth at no more than 2° Celsius by 2050 – more likely 1.5° – and, importantly, a solid platform to ratchet up over time if climactic conditions worsen and as technology driven innovation creates new transformation opportunities.

**The Bottom Line is for increasingly complex yet coherent actions** at international, regional, national and local levels with a whole new focus on measurement and management of impacts. Every community will have its own starting point, local socio-economic characteristics, vision and pace of change.

## IMPACT-TRAVEL

**Impact-Travel is a means to help Travel & Tourism destinations and stakeholders build Climate Resilience** in line with the Paris Agreement & SDG 13 (Climate Action) targets. The travel and tourism sector - transport, hospitality, services and infrastructure - must change itself to respond: balancing its well-recognised positive benefits to GDP, jobs and trade: with an equal focus and action on negative sustainability impacts

**The Term was coined by Professor Klaus Schwab**, Founder of the World Economic Forum, to describe, simultaneously, the immense socio-economic benefits and serious consequences of human mobility as well as fitting with the Forum's vision of an evolving Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) of hyper-connectivity, 24/7 mobile communications, robotics etc.

**The Concept was developed by SUN<sup>x</sup> as a basic testbed for Travel and Tourism** that is responsive to Paris Climate targets & related SDG: -

- **Measuring** & managing positive and negative impacts, coherently.
- **Green Growth** at the core - low carbon, inclusionary, nature-based “re-connection”.
- **2050 proof**, reflecting Paris climate targets & WEF 4th Industrial Revolution

**Designed as a Sustainability Template**, for an industry now identified by most states, the G20 and the UN, as a major driver of positive development – particularly in poor, emerging and island states: but with no framework to deal with its unintended socio-economic consequences. And increasingly recognized as behind the green curve, despite embracing the overall principle. Now impacts from carbon (transport – particularly, fossil fuel dependent, aviation – and buildings), resource utilisation (water, food, and waste) and “people congestion” will need to be more effectively measured, managed and controlled. This Climate and SDG based reality will escalate progressively as the sector grows.

**Impact-Travel is broad enough to embrace existing forms of sustainable tourism**, green enough to reflect different areas of focus and long-range enough to allow progressive adaptation. It is also a framework to guide SUN<sup>x</sup> Maurice Strong Legacy Scholarship programs, for graduate lifetime learning.

**To Succeed, Impact-Travel also needs major paradigm structural shifts:**

- **Meshing Economic and Environment Accounting** as well as embedding the hybrid results in core corporate and government strategies with one balance sheet. We have had 25 years of promoting the real benefits of growth. Now we must deal with consequences in the same way. The climate clock ticks louder every day.
- **Delivering Balanced Policy at Community Level.** Fragmentation of the sector means that effective policy depends on a myriad of political and industry decision makers – tourism, transport, environment, finance, infrastructure, immigration, security, land use and so on. Too many decisions get lost in silos, bogged down in bureaucracy or watered down by lobbying as they devolve locally. Moreover, 80% of the industry supply chain is SMEs. How do you get them and global players on the same page when their interests and impacts are so different?
- **Revamping Education and Training.** Tourism is not taught in many schools; it tends to get shifted to vocational trade disciplines such as catering or cross-sector training like ICT with limited university positioning around the world. We need to add cyberspace, home learning, transferable workplaces, MOOCs, webinars and the like to our traditional books and bricks- and mortar-based systems. And now we need to find innovative ways to advance Impact Travel when education structures worldwide are confronting massive financial austerity and new-tech information disruption. We have introduced the “*Maurice Strong Legacy Scholarships*” as a vehicle to help achieve this goal. We are seeking partners to help empower tens of thousands of “*SUN<sup>x</sup> Champions*” - likeminded, committed, graduate trainees and lifetime learners to help drive progressive change across our sector.

## **RATIONALE**

**SUN<sup>x</sup> is a legacy programme of Maurice Strong**, one of the fathers of the sustainability movement, Secretary General of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and friend of its co-founders Professor Geoffrey Lipman and Felix Dodds. It operates globally under an EU based, not-for-profit Green Growth and Travelism Institute. Its core goal is to help communities and their stakeholders become climate resilient through Impact Travel, with lifetime learning support.

**SUN<sup>x</sup> eXchange is a linked global network** of prefabricated solar-powered centres. The Centres, can be delivered worldwide in a single container and erected rapidly, without heavy equipment. Connected instantly over the internet and with academically trained support staff.

**SUN<sup>x</sup> Centres will be very versatile.** They will provide “4IR sensitive” space for analysis of global and local data, strategies and good practice, in-house and digital learning, capacity building, innovation, entrepreneurship incubation, skills training and so on.

**They will bring together the rapidly expanding global climate resilience knowledge** and response, with local conditions, requirements and practice. This is an ongoing need, given the extensive research, massive databases and constant innovation. They will be operated by smart, next generation, climate change curators, with industry CSR support.

Each centre will link to a cloud-based, web platform that will encourage Impact Travel support services from around the world to engage directly with local community stakeholders. We have already established partnerships in such areas as roadmaps, visioning, certification, modelling, impact investment and promotion.

### **As the Network scales, it will be:**

- A primary climate resilience contact point for the Travelism sector, for governments, for environmental and NGO communities, as well as for citizens.
- A standard bearer for renewable energy, with their solar panels and battery systems
- A system to help turn global and national targets into measurable action on the ground, that accentuate the positive impacts of the sector
- A response node in disaster management systems.
- A culture, art and education focal point

### **Education is Pivotal.**

**SUN<sup>x</sup> Centres will serve as learning and innovation exchanges** that will hook into community schools, business colleges, universities and vocational systems with integrated training and skills development. We have built-in academic linkage at the core to focus on green growth, Impact Travel & 4IR trends, targeting new media & mobile delivery.

**Complimenting evolving tourism or educational strategies** they will link them in global climate-resilience systems and be a rallying point at community level for the best of both. Support material already exists for digitally delivered learning modules at all levels in the education spectrum. With our books on “Green Growth & Travelism”, and related summer schools with Hasselt University in Limburg, Belgium, and Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia, the base is there today. There is already an evolving network of academic partners.

**Nature based solutions will be at the core of our work:** reflecting our Green Growth philosophy and integrating the seminal work on “re-connection” by our partner Ignace Schops, Goldman Award Winner and Director of the National Park of Belgium, where the first SUN<sup>x</sup> Centre will be placed. We believe that inclusion of this mind set, plus a focus on lifestyle balance and cultural will be pivotal for mega city and rural integration as well as a decent lifestyle balance. We will also source 4IR material from the World Economic Forum.

**The SUN<sup>x</sup> Global Hub will be in the Hoge Kempen National Park in Belgium,** linked to Hasselt University with its Climate Science Research Field Unit, and UNFCCC linked ECOTRON carbon measurement system.

**Network Expansion will incorporate regional hubs, as well as Belt and Road countries** in 2018/19, with a global roll out at Expo 2020, and one in every country by 2030, when the SDG targets are scheduled and the Paris Agreement begins to bite.

**The Ultimate Goal is a progressively growing global support network** to deal with the speed, scale and complexity of grass roots change needed for Climate Resilient transformation of such a dynamic, diverse, cross-cutting sector.

**Future Generations are the ones who can make the adaptation difference** and they will need to be well prepared. But it is the current generation who must lay down the foundation stones now, and **SUN<sup>x</sup>** can play a pivotal role.

***Professor Geoffrey Lipman***

***Co-Founder SUN<sup>x</sup>***

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