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Climate and human security – lessons to be learned from the pandemic

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This meeting organizes in association with Stockholm+50 and the Stockholm+50 is organized exactly 50 years after the first UN environmental summit, that took place here in Stockholm. Sweden's then prime minister **Olof Palme** proposed during that conference that severe destruction against nature should be considered a crime under the Rome Statute, a *ecocide*. Today, with Russia's war in Ukraine and all other destruction against nature, that proposal is more actual than ever, now even supported by the UN general secretary **Antonio Gutierrez** and it is disappointing that our and other governments have done so little to make that happen. Let's make our voice heard so *ecocide* will be considered as a crime that we can take further to national courts and to the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

We usually talk about climate change as something that will happen in a distant future and somewhere else, and not here around us. Perhaps it is in the word; *change* that obscures the fact that the global warming is here and now and that we live in a crisis, a climate crisis.

Let's have a look at our own continent, and with recent data. The summer 2021 was a record of extreme weather in Europe. 2021 was the hottest summer ever. At the same time we saw record rainfall causing catastrophic floodings around Europe. Western Germany had one day in July the heaviest rainfall in one day ever. And that caused extreme floodings and ruined homes and infrastructure for billions of Euros. In Sweden, one month later in Gävle, we saw similar scenes with unprecedented rainfall and floodings.

2021 southern Europe suffered from an unprecedented heatwave with record temperatures in Spain, Italy and Greece. Sicily, in Italy, had the hottest day ever, 49 degrees C. In Greece the heatwave caused deadly wildfires slashing 8000 square km of forests and homes. Spain had similar problems with wildfires also during the summer of 2021. And the heatwave seems to repeat this year as May become the hottest ever in Spain with temperatures about 12 degrees C above normal.

Should we be surprised?

I think not. IPCC and others have long time warned us for rising temperatures and extreme weather. And this is what we see with the global temperature rise about *just one* degree C. IPCC say in their latest report that we are on a current

on 3 degrees rise in this century. A 3 degrees hotter world would be the end of much of the civilization as we know it.

So, we live in the age of extremes and we have it here in Europe.

What to be done?

Of course bring down the emissions. *Fit for 55* is a good first step, but we would need a *Fit for 70* with much greater emissions cuts than proposed. Mitigation the emissions is crucial, but I think we should also put more focus on adaptation. Since the climate crisis is here we need to know how to cope with the extremes of it. Could we build greener and cooler cities, preserve more nature and wetlands, have a better preparedness for both wildfires and floods etc? Shure we can. And if we aknowledge that it is a crisis we are facing we can act much quicker, much stronger.

That is the lesson that can be learned from the latest two years of pandemic. Many misstakes were done, not least we learned how fragile our societies are today, the lack of protective equipment and generally how we protected our elderly and the workers in the health and care sector. But when we got together facing this crisis many great achivements were made. And here we have the lessons to be learned. We learned how to transform streets and parking places into pop up biking lanes and green areas. We learned that we can have meetings without *fly in fly out* to big cities. We learned how to invent and mass produce vaccine in record time. But failed in spreading it to all countries in the world.

We did all that because the spread of the corona virus was declared a national pandemic and thus a national crisis. If we could do that during that crisis we can do the same and even better to solve the climate crisis.

The corona pandemic was the rehearsal. What we are to do now is the real game. Its about time that we once again get together and solve the climate crisis. Because we are here to deal with a *crisis* not only *change* in weather.

Background links:

<https://www.euronews.com/2022/05/22/spain-endures-record-heatwave-as-may-to-become-hottest-month-of-the-century>

<https://climate.copernicus.eu/esotc/2021>

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/warming-in-europe-reached-2c-on-average-in-2021-eu-data-shows/>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-04-22/climate-change-hits-europe-with-new-weather-extremes>