**Time to End the Abuse of Our Mother Earth**

**The Equity Movement**

Politicians claim to be dealing with the catastrophic damages [to our planet, caused by our lifestyles and production/consumption models; by following the free-market paradigm of economic growth, as they have done with almost all human and social challenges of our time. However, this is precisely the logic that has led us down the path of planetary destruction. It is akin to put out fire with gasoline.

We are the Earth’s children and simultaneously guardians, but we have stood silent and watched her be brutally abused:

* We know the limit of planetary emissions is 2mT per person per year, and have not had the conviction to enforce it at individual, community and international levels..
* We boast about allowing “progressively less” abuse against mother earth in the form of emissions, with the hope that aggressions will cease within 20-30 years (global commitments towards [Paris COP 21](http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en)),
* We allow abusers to pay their way out of following rules. As long as money is given in exchange, the abuse will be “forgiven”: this is the emissions trading program, a sort of “emissions purgatory.”

We are depleting Her by extracting fossil fuels at a rate 1000 times faster than they can be replenished, which in the case of hydrocarbons, it could perhaps be impossible to recover, and asphyxiating her by burning fossil fuels faster than the atmospheric recycling capacity. The planetary limit for carbon dioxide emissions is about two metric tons (MT) of carbon dioxide per person per year; however, today, the world average emissions are 3 times higher. In some countries, like the US, [it is 8 times higher](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC/countries/1W?display=default) than the planet’s reprocessing capability.

The harm inflicted on our planet does not only come from burning fossil fuels, and the cycle of greenhouse effects, but also through dehydration, starvation and contamination: running her dry of freshwater and nutrients, and dumping toxic waste on her land and oceans, with a blatant disregard for her biodiversity, including our species. We overuse and waste freshwater for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes; not allowing the soil to absorb rain by using asphalt, concrete and other impervious surfaces, and limiting transpiration by stripping the vegetation off the land. It is estimated that every year the European continent throws away, via rainwater collection systems, about [20 billion cubic meters](https://www.sciencenews.org/article/paved-paradise) of rainwater into the ocean, instead of letting it be absorbed by the ground filling out the stocks of groundwater, replenishing springs and humidifying the climate through evaporation. Over 25 years, an amount equal to the fresh water contained in [Lake Erie](http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/pr/ourlakes/facts.html), one of North America’s Great Lakes, will have been discarded into the ocean. The small water cycles are being disrupted, which increases the risk of extreme weather, with a [growing spiral of droughts and floods](http://www.waterparadigm.org/download/Water_for_the_Recovery_of_the_Climate_A_New_Water_Paradigm.pdf). Meanwhile fresh water is an increasingly scarce resource. The UN estimated that by the year 2025 the number of people living in a state of water stress would probably increase to [more than three billion](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/267/hdr06-complete.pdf). Our agricultural land is progressively devoid of essential nutrients due to overuse, and we unload fertilizers at a rate of [120kg per hectare of arable land per year](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.CON.FERT.ZS/countries?display=graph). These chemicals pollute freshwater sources and the ocean, and, together with all urban and industrial waste, end up further poisoning the ocean, where man-caused increases in temperature and acidity, coupled with relentless overfishing are also destroying its biodiversity.

Worst of all, as we allow our politicians to gamble with the destruction of our planet, hidden behind a parody of concern, we remain largely oblivious to how much damage our consumption habits inflict in our planet.

Mother earth, our common heritage [and our only known sanctuary of life in the universe], with all of its grace and beauty, is being assaulted every day because of our blindness and lack of consideration for the consequences of our actions. We have left her fate in the hands of politicians who represent corporate interests in their shortsighted race to continue growth inducing senseless consumption at any cost.

It is time for us to radically change deleterious consumption habits and demand appropriate climate change policies that can be enforced. Now is the time to end this abuse.