



Global Commons Commission

Joint Call to Action for Full Legal Recognition the Global Commons

The global commons - defined as those shared resourced domains that transcend national borders and sustain the conditions for human well-being and prosperity - demand a new approach to governance, accountability and finance.

While international [law actively acknowledges](#) some of the global commons (like the ocean and outer space), it only [passively recognizes concern](#) for a few (such as climate and biodiversity), and ignores others altogether. The global commons are under-governed, and at risk.

We, the signatory parties — drawn from the constituencies of Indigenous Peoples, Civil Society, Scientific and Academic institutions, the Private Sector (including financial services), and Governments — recognize that our current international governance frameworks do not adequately safeguard the ecological integrity and long-term resilience of the global commons. Moreover, the scientific community has demonstrated that integrated global responses are urgently needed to [avoid planetary tipping points](#) and restore natural systems.

To build new global frameworks that align individual and collective choice across financial flows, market behavior and governance of the global commons, we make this call to action.

Article 1 – Recognition of the Global Commons as a Jurisdiction

1. We affirm that the global commons constitute a [legal domain and jurisdiction](#) in their own right — meaning that the interdependent systems of atmosphere, ocean, forests, outer space, freshwater, biodiversity, and digital / knowledge commons are subject to an obligation of stewardship, accountability and collective governance, transcending purely national jurisdictional frames.
2. We commit to operationalizing this jurisdiction through voluntary participation in, and adoption of, financial governance mechanisms designed to serve as a system of checks and balances. These financial governance mechanisms are a first step toward global inclusive commons stewardship.

Article 2 – Financial Mechanism: Variable Transaction Fees and Incentives

1. We will harness the [global financial system](#) to advance this legal / jurisdictional recognition by establishing variable transaction fees that guide behavior toward stewardship of the global commons.
2. Under this system:
 - a. Good actors — those whose commercial, financial or consumer behavior supports the integrity and resilience of the global commons — will benefit from lower transaction fees in certified banking/payment services.
 - b. Free riders or bad actors — whose actions degrade or externalize costs to the global commons (e.g., deforestation, ocean damage, irresponsible AI, space weaponization, etc.) — shall incur higher transaction fees or penalty levies.
3. Consumers, in turn, will lead. By voluntarily switching to “global-commons-compliant” banking and payment services (i.e., services certified to operate under the standards of this jurisdiction) they will drive market pressure for merchants and service providers to apply for certification and seek compliance with standards that safeguard the global commons.
4. The revenue generated by this system will be channeled into functions that help restore and protect the global commons, and that are not yet adequately addressed by development aid or philanthropy, such as tropical forest conservation, ocean health recovery, refugee resettlement, and more.

Article 3 – Subsidiarity and Non-Interference

1. The mechanism will operate on a [principle of subsidiarity](#): local, regional and national authorities retain responsibility for their territories, while the global commons jurisdiction will complement and fill gaps where cross-border externalities exist.
2. Until it becomes a financial industry standard or a mandate of national legislation, participation will be voluntary for consumers, service providers and States.
3. We acknowledge the experimental character of the initiative, and recognize that if adoption remains limited, the mechanism may not achieve its intended effect.

Article 4 – Trigger for Charter and Institutionalization

1. Upon generating the first \$10 million of revenue from transaction fees under this mechanism, the signatory parties will convene a convention to draft a Charter of the Global Commons and develop the political and institutional systems needed for scale.

2. The convention shall bring together five core constituencies: (a) Indigenous Peoples, (b) Civil Society, (c) Scientists & Academics, (d) Private Sector / Financial Service Providers, and (e) Governments.
3. Additional constituencies may be added by decision of the convention.
4. The charter will define governance structures, accountability mechanisms, certification regimes, rule-making procedures, and dispute resolution / enforcement modalities that are consistent with the overarching goal of protecting, restoring and governing the global commons.

Article 5 – Scale, Impact and Ambition

1. We estimate that a system of this kind could generate on the order of [\\$68 billion per year](#) in the United States alone, without fundamentally disrupting business-as-usual. That number approaches the scale of US foreign aid, yet would be directed specifically to needs of the global commons, such as preventing [the Amazon forest tipping point](#) and conserving the region, which may require an estimated [\\$1.7 to 2.8 billion per year](#).
2. We recognize [the precedent-setting power of consumer-led governance innovation](#), considering that across multiple sectors — labor, environment, etc. — citizens have led adoption of frameworks that later became global norms.
3. We further recognize that while banking and financial institutions do not traditionally have a mandate to set behavioral and political norms for society, the [current stalemate, both at the United Nations and in the wider multilateral system](#), demonstrates the need for complementary action from civil-society-led mechanisms.

Article 6 – Commitment and Signatories

By signing this Call to Action, the signatory parties support:

1. The creation, adoption and deployment of global-commons-compliant financial services (banking, payments, certifications, etc.).
2. The development of institutional arrangements, certification standards, and auditing protocols required to operationalize variable-fee financial transaction mechanisms.
3. The implementation of consumer adoption campaigns, merchant certification drives and educational activities (including among Indigenous communities, civil society networks, academia and the private sector) to ensure broad participation.

4. The design of systems for regularly reporting publicly on progress, adoption rates, revenue generated, use of funds, and governance outcomes.
5. Reassessment and refinement of the mechanism as adoption grows and as the charter convention undertakes its work.

Conclusion

This is a historic moment: responsible management of the global commons is an idea whose time has come. We recognize the urgency of preserving, restoring and governing the Earth's life-support systems for current and future generations. We believe that through a voluntary, consumer-led financial governance mechanism — aligned with market incentives, behavioral change, certification regimes and global coordination — we can establish a credible legal jurisdiction for the global commons, begin a new era of planetary governance, and channel financial flows to where they matter most.

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Learn more about the Global Commons Commission at:

www.GCCommission.org