



**The Global Foundation**

*Together, we strive for the global common good*

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**The Rome  
Roundtable**

13 & 14 January, 2017

**Address by Steve Howard, Secretary General, The Global  
Foundation, to his Holiness, Pope Francis, The Vatican,  
Saturday, 14 January 2017**

Your Holiness,

It is my great privilege to introduce to you the Global Foundation. We are a global civil society organisation that, over these days, is convening its most important meeting, its second *Rome Roundtable*.

We seek to be a crossroads of global ethical society. Our motif is this: ***'Together, we strive for the global common good'***.

Our 80 participants have come together from the four corners of the world and from many diverse backgrounds, including civil society, faiths, academia, enlightened business, as well as from global and regional economic institutions, including central bankers and development bankers.

We are inspired by the teachings of the Church and by your leadership, by a firm belief that we will be much more effective if we are faith-enabled and if we work together, rather than apart.

You have constantly called for the **rejection of the 'globalisation of indifference'**. We agree with you. You have called for the restoration of humanity to the centre of our economies, so that economics is in the service of the needs of mankind, fairly and sustainably. We agree with you.

You have urged those with the power to do so, to deliver real and tangible outcomes for the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and the decisions of other global fora, including the G20. We agree with you.

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We agree with you that environmental degradation is a sin against God.

Our group includes the custodians of trillions of dollars of private sector investments. They are already making ethical investments that are completely consistent with your continuing calls for action on these global goals. They are willing to do more. Without these further investment actions, and consistent support from governments, we fear that the global goals may fail.

Yesterday, at our meeting, we heard exciting reports of progress and commitments of further practical action from our participants, who are working together in new forms of partnership and leadership, largely outside the government sector:

The Consumer Goods Forum comprises the 400 largest supermarket and manufacturing companies in the world. At our meeting one year ago, in response to calls by you and other faith leaders, to stamp out the scourge of human trafficking, they announced their commitment to eradicate forced labour from their complete global supply chains. Now they have begun the programs to stamp out forced labour, initially in South East Asia, for the industries of seafood and palm oil. They have invited the Catholic Church and other faiths to join them in this practical action and they will report their progress to us, with the intention that these pilot programs can then be expanded globally.

A second example: The Global Investor Coalition on Climate Change, whose 400 members are custodians of \$30 trillion of funds owned by their members, reported to us on the impact they are already having through their practical actions to counter the threat of climate change, across the world. They are investing in cutting edge green projects, showing leadership and creating employment and sustainable futures in communities everywhere. They wish to do more, and they ask for further encouragement by governments and faiths to do so.

Yesterday, a senior Chinese business leader, chairman of the company responsible for all the investment actions of China's famous Academy of Sciences, offered to us China's willingness to join this effort, so that many more green projects may be implemented across the world.

We heard also from the world's newest multilateral development bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, headquartered in China and with which the Global Foundation is very closely associated. It has already funded 9 infrastructure projects across Asia, to support sustainable growth. It will increase its efforts to invest, in partnership with the private sector and governments, in green infrastructure, in the months and years ahead.

These and other efforts, to realise the Sustainable Development Goals and other related global goals, are practical and tangible, and are now occurring on a large scale. However, we wish to urge all in leadership positions in the global community, including leaders of governments, to do more to recognise and support these efforts.

For example, investors don't yet have the information they need to accelerate this urgent action. The good news is that the new 'Bloomberg' report has made recommendations to solve this problem. It is backed by financial institutions controlling \$20 trillion of assets, already. Please help us to ensure that it is adopted by the G20 leaders at their Summit in July.

Your continuing encouragement and guidance to us at the Global Foundation is sincerely appreciated. Your support will inspire us as leaders in the global community, to build momentum towards what we call '**cooperative globalisation**', for an inclusive and sustainable future.

In this regard, may I mention a final example of practical action that was discussed and agreed at our meeting yesterday: a major company, Anglo-American, is leading the global mining industry, in working in full partnership with churches and local communities in Southern Africa to create genuine and

sustainable futures for future generations in every area where they operate. This patient work is now expanding in Latin America and other parts of the world and can serve as a model for the way in which enlightened business can collaborate with leaders of faiths and in local communities, by building genuine trust and shared goals.

Your Holiness,

We are committed to action, not just words. We intend to act and be held accountable for practical outcomes and we will champion positive and measurable action on the global goals across the wider international system as a whole.

Results, however, are not being achieved in all areas. For example, the economic empowerment of women is a most important global goal, and much has been done, yet progress is uneven at best, since the G20 committed to a worthy target two years ago. The G20, too, needs encouragement to honour these and other commitments.

We plan to meet again in Rome, a year from now, to present an honest and substantial report card on our actions and those of others that we might influence, as a consequence of your support.

We thank you for inspiring us, for meeting with us today and we hope that we can look forward to your continuing encouragement.