

**OUR COMMON FUTURE**  
**A STRATEGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

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The future is a common public good that does not yet exist, but has a tremendous potential value. It cannot be measured and it cannot be evaluated in itself. It can only be measured and evaluated by its past, that is, by what we do now. Like water or air, the future may be better or worse according to how we treat it now. The future as well as the public is a mix of tangible and intangible inputs that are the result of the form on how we use natural capital. The “way” in which societies take ownership of the natural capital comprises social relations, structures and political relations between individuals and states and the cultural heritage in which we are immersed.

Human history has produced, until now, a wide range of knowledge, goods and technologies, which because they have been accumulated, we consider them as results of progress. But culture, with its accumulated tangible and intangible assets, also left its mark in this process. Humanity has developed countless activities that resulted in the modification of landscapes, through deforestation and the burning of natural forests, interference in the hydrological cycle and the extinction of plant and animal species, causing deep scars on the planet.

Since the 19th century, many thinkers have recognized the gravity of the situation and expressed their concern with what has since been called the “limits of the planet”. The first to announce an insurmountable crisis was Thomas Malthus. The arithmetic progression of food production versus geometric progression of population

growth was the irreducible mathematical antagonism that would lead us to the collapse. In the 20th century, particularly in the last 50 years of that century, other great works were published announcing the physical limits of nature, the economic growth and the exhaustion of models of social organization, culminating in the publication of the Club of Rome report and the First World Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference), both in 1972.

The call for attention in the Club of Rome report, as well as numerous publications from previous years created the awareness that the time had come forth to discuss these issues at the level of international institutions with greater seriousness. Or that is, recognition by the international community of the potential explosive for capitalism and the maintenance of social organization such as that we know, to reach the physical limits of the planet mobilized the community international. Furthermore, it gave rise, based on the results of the 1972 UN Conference (Stockholm Conference), to an entire decade of reflection and progressive international institutionalist construction (through numerous treaties) aimed at building a new standard of development capable of guaranteeing a sustainable future for Humanity. Important conceptual advances have been achieved and agreed internationally through multilateral negotiation.

The pioneering work in this process was the preparation of the Our Future Common Report, source of inspiration for the Our Common Future Platform, this report prepared by a broad commission under the coordination of the Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Brundtland. This report was published in 1986 and has since been transformed into a theoretical and epistemological framework for the international community to reflect on the future that we need and want.

The Conference on Environment and Development - Rio92 shaped the concept of Sustainable Development, and at the UN General Assembly of that time approved the most comprehensive and ambitious change in history program, the Agenda 21. A new paradigm of thinking about a sustainable future for the planet has been available to the countries and citizens of the world. An action program that it could and should focus especially on education, science and technology. The education for a sustainable future. Science and technology as mechanisms for problem-solving, shared through multilateral cooperation, for a common future. A future built on freedom and diversity.

Subsequently, the UN approved other important action plans with the objective of promoting development and overcoming poverty, inequality, as well as promoting development based on heritage of natural conservation for future generations. We can mention the Great Environmental Conventions, the Millennium Goals and in 2015 the so-called Sustainable Development (SDG) or Agenda 2030.

These were the wishes and the promise of great international agreements. Nevertheless, we are still stuck in the inertial movement of the past. We continue with old problems that threaten humanity. The climate crisis, the persistent inequality, the pandemics, the democratic challenges and the failure in the models of economic growth demand, as never before, that the concept of sustainability understood and applied. Our future may depend on it. The future needs to be protected from the tendency to have it all at once today, or maybe there will be nothing left for the rest of us tomorrow.

This is the challenge and context of the Our Common Future Platform that the Humanitas Institute presents. We need education and research without limits to creative thinking and, at the same time, committed to a new chain of values. The concept of sustainability has been eroding over time and we need to invigorate it. The Platform can provide this environment of renewal, creation and liberation from the ideological bonds that many environments are immersed these days.

PNFC is being thought based on the following principles:

1. The future is a common public good with potential value.
2. The value of the future is measured by what is done in the present.
3. The constant search for equal rights in all fields of life, in particular for the right of minimum standards of quality of life and a means of healthy and preserved environment from the degradation of natural resources.
4. The acceptance that sharing knowledge will lead to greater understanding, mutual commitment and greater commitment to sharing global resources equitably and, finally,
5. Methodological acceptance that a future other than the present will only be achieved with conceptual, theoretical and cultural innovation. The repetition of this has not taken us to a different future.

These guiding principles of the PNFC seek to develop in a specific place and at a specific time. The UFRN Humanitas Institute is the host of this initiative, which will require methodological and conceptual creativity to generate new ideas. It is no longer possible to think of the future with the same ideas as the past. This will be the effort that we will have to make in order to enable a real contribution that should: be both relevant and lasting.

All this abstract conceptualization will require objectification in terms of a concrete work program, with objectives to be achieved and measurable results and liable to be disseminated and used at different scales, be it the individual or institutional. The common good must be understood as that which promotes individuals and institutions.

As soon as among the activities to be developed within the scope of the PNFC, we can say that the promotion of research activities based on the paradigm of sustainability, as well as the promotion and dissemination of information and knowledge relevant to sustainable development for different social groups, using the best available technologies as well as through extension projects in the university are among the most important. Encouraging the development of institutional and technological mechanisms to facilitate and guarantee access to information and relevant knowledge on the themes related to sustainable development on the part of the university community and the general public are among the main results to be achieved.

Likewise, strengthening knowledge through education based on excellence and scientific rigor, taking into account the new paradigms of sustainability and incorporating them into existing knowledge are paramount to the Platform. Courses, lectures, exhibitions and events with a view of contributing to the improvement of existing levels of information on topics related to sustainability on the part of individuals, groups and communities are also attribution this initiative.

Supporting and stimulating innovation and the development of technologies aimed at the sustainability and conservation of natural resources existing in all fields knowledge, as well as the promotion of research on transdisciplinary themes related to

Our Common Future, as conceived by the Brundtland Report, Agenda 21, Millennium Goals and Agenda 2030 must be at the forefront of Platform activities.

Finally, it must be said that the Platform should not be an exclusively academic effort. Support of other institutions through projects and / or actions in the reflection and construction of public policies based on the principles of PNFC that contribute to a sustainable future for the population of the State must also be among our concerns. As soon as it is disseminated at UFRN and with other State and regional institutions the principles of the Development Goals Sustainable (Agenda 2030) must be a permanent work and a mission of the Platform.