

Dear World Leaders,

We write to you as 570 economists and inequality experts from 70 countries, to call on you to support the establishment of a permanent International Panel on Inequality to address the global inequality emergency, as recommended by the Extraordinary Committee on Inequality report to the G20, led by Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

We are experts from a broad range of disciplines, including economists, political scientists, climate scientists, sociologists, epidemiologists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, philosophers. Our diversity reflects a key fact: high levels of economic inequality have a negative impact on every aspect of human life and progress, including our economies, our democracies and the very survival of the planet.

We support the view of the Stiglitz G20 Committee that the world faces an inequality emergency. We are profoundly concerned, as they are, that extreme concentrations of wealth translate into undemocratic concentrations of power, unravelling trust in our societies and polarising our politics.

We agree that economic inequality is an engine that drives rapid climate change and ensures its negative impacts are disproportionately felt by the poorest and most vulnerable people.

Just as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has played a vital role in providing neutral, science-based and objective assessments of climate change, a new International Panel on Inequality would do the same for the inequality emergency. This non-partisan and independent panel of experts on inequality would bring together the most up-to-date work of economists, scientists and other inequality experts from around the world, just as the IPCC does. It would provide policymakers the best, most objective assessments on the scale of inequality, its causes and consequences, and consider potential solutions. It would provide such assessments in international and national contexts, including to inform deliberations at the G20 and the United Nations.

We believe this is in the interests of policy makers from across the political spectrum, who see the importance of this issue and the need to base responses to it on data and evidence and sound analysis. The Panel's analysis would also benefit the private sector, journalists, academia and civil society. We know that scholars and experts across the world would readily contribute their time voluntarily – as thousands do for the IPCC – in support of such a necessary and vital international initiative. We are ready to assist in this process.

Inequality is not inevitable; it is a policy choice. Clear and proven steps can be taken to reduce it and build more equal societies and economies, which are the fundamental foundation stone of a successful future for us all. We urge you to support the establishment of the International Panel on Inequality as a vital first step in building this more equal and inclusive world.

Signed

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