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Headline: Not a decade to spare for climate action

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POTSDAM — The last decade was the hottest on record, according to independent data analyses from Nasa and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The reality of climate change is sinking in, with millions now feeling its effects—from rising sea levels and disappearing coastlines to more frequent extreme weather such as droughts, floods, and wildfires. Indeed, given current atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and the projected trajectory of future emissions, more record temperatures are inevitable.

Scientists have been sounding the alarm for decades that climate change is real and getting worse. As the adverse effects of unabated emissions keep mounting, the alarm is becoming deafening. But at the same time, other current realities cannot be ignored. The imminent threat posed by climate change is coinciding with shifts in longstanding geopolitical alliances; continuing economic inequality, which is fueling social unrest in many countries; and the advent of artificial intelligence, big data, and a constant stream of new technologies, which are transforming the way we live and work — with both positive and negative consequences.

The challenges are daunting. But it is not too late to chart a different course for our planet and its inhabitants. We need to put the world's best minds to work now on finding solutions that will not only help us mitigate and adapt to climate change, but will also reduce inequality, lift people out of poverty, and build trust in international cooperation. We must find ways to harness the best that technology has to offer while anticipating and mitigating potential harms. And we can ill afford another decade of inaction — the consequences are far too high.

This is why the Nobel Foundation is hosting its first-ever Nobel Prize Summit, with the theme “Our Planet, Our Future,” in Washington, from April 29 to May 1. The summit — supported by the US National Academy of Sciences, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, and the Stockholm Resilience Centre/Beijer Institute — will bring together more than 20 Nobel laureates and other experts from around the world to explore the question: What can be achieved in this decade to put the world on a path to a more sustainable, more prosperous future for all of humanity?

The summit takes place at a pivotal moment. This year, the United Nations launches the Decade of Action toward achieving its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Countries around the world will be making transformational decisions regarding biodiversity loss, climate change, and the state of our oceans. Demand for action is also growing. In the past few weeks, prominent global business leaders have pledged to make sustainability a top priority in their investment decisions. And in many parts of the world, young climate activists are drawing the world's attention through rolling school strikes.

Amid this flurry of activity, the Nobel Prize Summit will provide the space to propose real-world solutions grounded in science and evidence. The summit will create a new platform for scientists, policymakers, business leaders, and civil-society groups to meet and share ideas.

Today's leaders must not bequeath a dangerously destabilized planet to future generations, and we will be placing special emphasis on engagement with today's young people. But we all have a

shared responsibility to make this a better world. If we start now, this decade can become the turning point that puts us on course toward a more vibrant, viable, and equitable future for humanity.

—Project Syndicate

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