

# 3 LET CITIZENS DECIDE

*We are in a climate and ecological emergency that requires quick and substantial changes in all domains of society.* Scientists across the board call for massive changes to our social and economic system. The IPCC advises 'rapid and far-reaching transitions' that are 'unprecedented in terms of scale'. The IPBES advocates 'a fundamental, system-wide reorganization'. These changes are needed to avoid near-term ecological collapse and protect people's lives in the Netherlands and globally.

*We need a form of change that takes into account the interests of all citizens in the Netherlands. We need everyone on board to face this emergency.*

Yes, we all need to change our lives. Some changes will make us happier and healthier, but there will also be difficult trade-offs. We need to ensure that no one has to take an unbearable burden when we transition towards a truly regenerative society that protects life on this planet. To ensure that everyone takes their fair share in this transition, we propose that a Citizens' Assembly takes the lead in formulating socially just policies for this time of emergency.

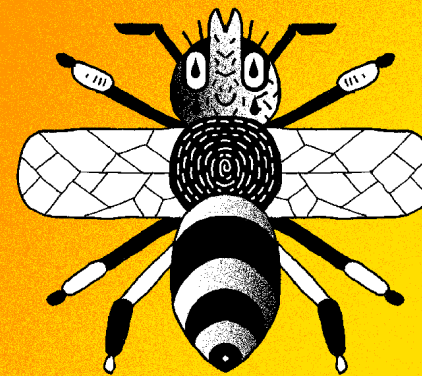
*What is a Citizens' Assembly?* Citizens' Assemblies (CAs) are institutions in which randomly selected citizens deliberate on public policy or law. From Ireland to Iceland, from Canada to India, CAs have been used successfully to end political stalemates and find solutions to problems of long-standing controversy. CAs represent diverse social groups and take political decision-making out of the realm of political power games and lobbying. They are ideal tools to tackle this climate and ecological crisis democratically.

*How does it work?* CAs are run by an independent organization. The members of a CA are chosen according to demographic quotas (sortition). This ensures that the CA represents a cross-section of society in terms of age, gender, place of residence, level of education, etc. The members of the CA then hear balanced information from experts and stakeholders. They deliberate the pros and cons of different policy options in small, facilitated groups.

*Finally, they draft and vote on a policy recommendation, which Government implements.*

## LET CITIZENS DECIDE BY ESTABLISHING A CITIZENS ASSEMBLY WHICH TAKES THE LEAD ON CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

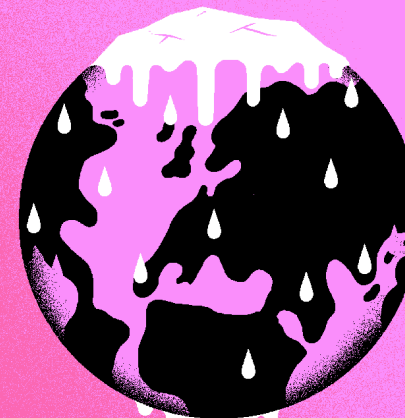
*CAs are NOT the same as People's Assemblies.* While People's Assemblies are great tools to facilitate deliberation within an already existing group, they don't have the democratic legitimacy of a CA, wherein citizens are chosen to adequately represent the entire population of a country. *CAs are also NOT the same as direct democracy (e.g. referendums).* While in direct democracy every citizen has a direct vote on a pre-given option, CAs mean that a representative sample of the population gets the chance to inform itself, deliberate and find their own solutions to a problem.



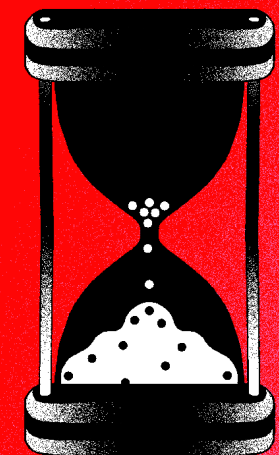
**WE  
ARE**



**EXTINCTION  
REBELLION NL**



**THE 3  
DEMANDS**



**TO OUR  
GOVERNMENT**

# 1 TELL THE TRUTH

*For decades, climate scientists, activists and politicians have been telling us a positive story about the climate crisis and ecosystem breakdown. According to the popular narrative, we might be facing ecological challenges sometime in the future, but nothing unmanageable. The idea behind this story-line is that citizens need to be taken by the hand, comforted, baby-sat. If being told how dire the situation actually is, they would fall into apathy. **The problem with this positive story is that it gives us all a false sense of security.** Climate goals remain non-binding and are set for the far-away future. Substantial measures do not receive public support, because we cannot see the urgency for change. Environmental issues are marginalized as secondary concerns that should not compromise economic goals. Instead, citizens are held responsible for saving the planet through individual actions such as ethical consumption, recycling, and energy savings.*

***The Government must be honest with its citizens.  
It must declare a climate and ecological emergency.***

It is paternalistic to assume that citizens cannot take the truth. Just as a doctor must not conceal a diagnosis from a patient, Government has a duty to communicate to its citizens if and when their lives and the lives of their children are endangered. It also has a duty to inform citizens about how they can protect themselves and their loved ones, even if this means difficult trade-offs.

***The truth is that the climate and ecological crisis are already having major impacts on people and communities worldwide, which will worsen in the years to come.***

Sea levels are rising, oceans are acidifying, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, and animals and plants are going extinct at rates unprecedented in human history. All of this is already causing injuries, illnesses and deaths - for instance through water depletion and food scarcity - and will lead millions into poverty in the coming decades. The truth is also that we are far from addressing this problem at the required scale. CO2 emissions per capita in the Netherlands range among the highest globally, and there has been no significant reduction since the 1990s. Current efforts for diminishing greenhouse gas emissions place us on a disastrous pathway to a 3-4°C global temperature rise. *History shows that, when faced with an emergency, people can shift their priorities, they can mobilize, they can act.*

**WE DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL CRISES THAT THREATEN OUR EXISTENCE AND COMMUNICATE THE URGENCY FOR CHANGE.**

# 2 ACT NOW

***Why is more rapid action necessary?** The Paris Agreement stipulates that efforts must be made in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Unfortunately, we are already at 1.1°C global heating and even if we became carbon neutral today, the lag between greenhouse gas emissions and their effects will lead to further warming. The threats to our environment, to water and food supplies, and to our health and livelihoods are already present. They will increase at 1.5°C global heating, and become unmanageable at 2°C - meaning we should limit emissions as much as possible. Moreover, if global warming passes a certain threshold, self-reinforcing feedback loops in the Earth system (such as methane releases due to permafrost melting) could rapidly accelerate climate change. **The climate and ecological crises require immediate action by the Government.** We realize that aiming for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 is challenging and requires massive mobilization, but we need to focus on what is necessary to keep people safe, rather than what seems possible.*

***Economic interests still seem more important than protecting the planet.***

The Government still acts as though there is no connection between economic growth and climate change. Unfortunately, there is no empirical support for the notion that 'green growth', where economic growth is decoupled from rising emissions, is possible. Rather than maintaining indefinite economic growth in a world with finite resources, Government should find an economic arrangement that is compatible with ecological sustainability. ***The situation is dire.** The Netherlands has hardly reduced its CO2 emissions since 1990 and its CO2 emissions per capita range among the highest in Europe. It subsidizes the fossil fuel industry with approximately €7.6 billion per year, and refuses to comply with the Court rulings of the Urgenda case to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 25% by 2020. **The total pesticide use in the country has not diminished, and water quality is still below standards in many regions, meaning that not even its own sustainable agriculture targets established in 2013 have been met.***

**WE DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTS NOW TO HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO BY 2025 IN A JUST AND FAIR MANNER.**