

**Speech by Dr. Marc Weiss, Chairman and CEO, Global Urban Development (GUD),
at Climate March, Porto Alegre, Brazil, November 29, 2015**

Good afternoon and thanks to everyone!

It's great to see so many people here today in Porto Alegre raising our voices together to address leaders from Brazil and nearly 200 other countries who will meet for the next two weeks in Paris at COP-21. We are telling them loud and clear that now is the time to drastically reduce greenhouse gases in the world's atmosphere in order to prevent irreparable damage from catastrophic climate change. And we are telling the thousands of earth activists demonstrating in Paris and the millions of people who are marching today around the world, that we stand in solidarity with the global movement for a more sustainable future, where everyone can live and thrive in peace with each other and in peace with nature.

It's especially wonderful to be here with you in Redencao. My wife Nancy and I have been living for the past two years on Jose Bonifacio, directly across from this beautiful park, where the trees have become our dear friends. Preventing catastrophic climate change also protects these trees, along with the birds, the turtles, and many other plants and animals here in Redencao, as we urgently raise our voices on behalf of preserving all of life worldwide.

Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, when world leaders first recognized the vital necessity of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 percent below 1990 levels, emissions have instead exponentially increased, and they are continuing to rapidly rise. Our organization, Global Urban Development (GUD), worked with the United Nations in 2009 on the innovative Global Climate Prosperity Agreement for the COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen, and though we did achieve modest success with the Green Climate Fund, the world has still mostly been moving in the wrong direction since then. Sadly, world leaders did not take bold actions six years ago, and now it is far more urgent that they do so in Paris. And it is even more important that all of us work together to take bold actions, because we cannot rely on governments to solve this immense problem. We need citizens, communities, businesses, workers – everyone must work together now if we are to preserve life on earth for the next 10,000 years and beyond.

Given the existential threat to human survival, why are people failing to boldly act now, in many cases even denying the potential dangers? In my view, it is because people are paralyzed by economic fear. Since burning fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas -- for energy, heating, and cooling has enabled global industrialization over the past two centuries, people have accepted carbon pollution as a necessary byproduct for raising their living standards. Many people are deeply afraid that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will make them much poorer. In order to change directions, we need to replace economic fear with economic hope. As Albert Einstein has brilliantly observed, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it." We can only solve the problem of climate change through a new level of consciousness that we call Sustainable Innovation and Inclusive Prosperity.

Therefore if we are to successfully follow the path of environmental sustainability, it is essential that we show it will lead to greater prosperity and higher quality of life. People, places, and

organizations will “get richer by becoming greener” not poorer. Businesses, jobs, and incomes will grow by conserving, renewing, and reusing resources much more efficiently.

I have been an environmentalist since the first Earth Day in April 1970, and since the 1970s we have proved in California that being good to the environment also is very good for the economy. Through stricter standards of energy efficiency for all new buildings, new motor vehicles, and new electric appliances, and through renewable energy, Californians have saved nearly 80 billion dollars, a huge pay increase for everyone that also created millions of new jobs. Clean and green technologies have spawned new sustainable industry growth through companies like Tesla, Sunpower, Solar City, and many others in Silicon Valley and across the state. Urban communities have pioneered new green lifestyles from recycling to bike sharing, and vast new 21st century skills have been developed to upgrade a high-quality workforce, because smart people are now the world’s most valuable economic asset.

As I mentioned, GUD calls this new approach Sustainable Innovation and Inclusive Prosperity, based on the “four greens” – Green Savings, Green Opportunities, Green Talent, and Green Places. Sustainable Innovation has proven to be a major economic and environmental success in California since the 1970s, with significant positive impact on public opinion about catastrophic climate change. Today California citizens enthusiastically support ambitious state policies and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are now very popular with most people. During the past few years the fossil fuel industry has tried very hard to reverse these sustainability efforts, but they have been consistently defeated by a large majority of voters.

For the past four years GUD has been working hard to bring our Sustainable Innovation and Inclusive Prosperity framework to Rio Grande do Sul, enabling the Gauchos to lead the way in proving that the California approach will work even better in Brazil. Last year we completed a World Bank-funded “Leapfrog Economic Strategy” for RS to become the most sustainable and innovative place in Latin America by 2030. A key step in implementing this strategy is to create Sustainable Innovation Zones. These Zones in urban areas combine six key elements: Innovation and Technology; Entrepreneurship and Startups; Sustainability and Resource Efficiency; Creativity and Collaboration; Participatory Community Management; and Business-Friendly Environment.

Currently GUD is working with Paralelo Vivo, Pulsar, the city government, and many other organizations, to organize Porto Alegre’s and Latin America’s first Sustainable Innovation Zone, located in the 4th District, in Bairro Independencia and Bairro Floresta. This morning many people marched together from the Sustainable Innovation Zone to Redencao, and there they are, waving their signs!

We especially invite all of you to get involved in enabling the Sustainable Innovation Zone to succeed in making Porto Alegre one of the world leaders of the 21st century path of Sustainable Innovation and Inclusive Prosperity, truly the Barcelona of Brazil and the San Francisco of South America.

Thank you very much!