



# E3G 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Speech

Nick Mabey, E3G CEO

The Deck, National Theatre

London, 2 July 2014

Thank you for coming – it is wonderful to see so many familiar faces here.

Following Tom’s masterclass I am left with two tasks.

Firstly to thank those that made the last 10 years possible. Secondly, to outline the next stage of E3G’s journey.

E3G has never – yet - been accused of throwing a bad party - though some people have vowed never to attend another one.

So I am under strict instructions not to kill the fun by speaking too much – which as you know is very hard for me – hence the notes.

Without the generous support of many people - Tom, John and I would not have been able to turn E3G from a set of ideas into a thriving organisation.

This support was most vital in the early days when the only thing we could tell people for certain was that E3G was an experiment, and that we could not say exactly what we would do or how we would do it until we had started doing it!

**“Emergence” may have been the right concept but it was a hard sell.**

It was a leap of faith for people to back us in the beginning. Without early support from WWF and LEAD International neither John nor I would have had the space to work on E3G. John Gummer gave us a place to meet, Michael Manelli at Z/Yen lent us the Lady Daphne for brainstorming, the Centre gave us a platform in Brussels, Marta Bonifert at REC connected us to Eastern Europe, and Lindsay Sharp persuaded the Science Museum to offer us an affordable – and rather glamorous - office.

**The gift of early stage support was vital for E3G. We repay this gift by giving our pro bono support to other early-stage NGOs.**

E3G has received advice and guidance from too many friends to mention. Thank you all. I have personally benefitted from the thoughts of many of you with deep experience in running organisations.

**Thank you for helping me on my journey from policy wonk to small business manager.**

E3G is founded on ideas but these only live through its people.

We aimed to provide a platform where experienced sustainable development players could work in new ways. Where Jennifer Morgan could establish GCCA, Ingrid Homes could develop the Green Investment Bank, Ed Matthew could grow Transform-UK and Amal-Lee Amin - another refugee from the UK government – could take forward her ideas on international climate finance.

We also hoped that E3G would find, nurture and grow new talent. Watching this happen has been one of the most satisfying aspects of E3G's journey.

Some have stayed with us - rising to senior positions: Jonathan Gaventa running our EU power programme, Liz Gallagher running the Climate Diplomacy team and Manon Dufour running our Brussels Office.

Others have moved on: Claire Langley to Brookings, Pelin Zorlu to DECC, Martin Frick (back to) the German Foreign Ministry, and Monica Araya to set-up her own NGO "Nivela" – via a short diversion through Costa Rican politics!

We have also been fortunate to attract senior associates that have lent their energy and expertise to E3G. Simon Skillings from Eon-UK who has contributed his powerhouse intellect on energy markets. Eamon Ryan who works with us to take forward the North Seas Grid project he helped start as Ireland's Energy Minister. Chantal Naidoo from the South African Development Bank who is taking forward national climate financing strategies.

**I can't mention all E3G staff past and present, but our thanks go to you all for your imagination, insight, capacity for hard work and emotional resilience to the inevitable highs and lows of trying to drive change.**

**Thank you for helping us grow and improve E3G, and for developing an organisational culture which is professional and challenging but also fun.**

As John Ashton says – E3G is like Hotel California – “you can check out but you can never leave”. We see the extended E3G family as one of our greatest achievements and it is great to see such a large part of it here.

I also want to pay a special tribute to the heroes of E3G's early development. The staff who stuck with us through the leanest and most turbulent years. Anita Neville as Chief of Staff, Chris Littlecott – who has recently returned to E3G - and above all Martin Rands E3G's COO.

Martin came to us via a friendship with John Ashton at Kew Cricket Club and a career as a senior manager in the private sector. It has been his responsibility to impose financial and business disciplines on a group of people better known for their mastery of political narrative than of balance sheets.

**That we have survived for 10 years is a tribute to Martin's dedication and determination to make sure we did things the right way. Thank you Martin.**

Even in the world of E3G the truth holds that though money can't buy you love, it is impossible to change the world without it.

E3G has only thrived due to investment from its funders. Starting with Corrado Clini and the Italian Government who gave us our first major grant, and Hugh Raven at the Esmee Fairburn Foundation for funding John Ashton and then Jennifer Morgan.

Our early work on CCS was supported by Kurt Hoffman at the Shell Foundation and continued by Chris Hohn through the Children's Investment Fund Foundation – CIFF. CIFF remains a vital supporter of our work on zero-carbon power systems in Europe and on the North Seas Grid through its funding of the European Climate Foundation.

ECF has been the funding anchor for E3G's activity in Europe on energy market reform, infrastructure and efficiency. In the UK, Matt Phillips and then Keith Allott at ECF supported work to build the demand-side into electricity market reform; the creation of the Green Investment Bank; and pulling together the world's largest energy efficiency campaign - the Energy Bill Revolution.

The FCO and BMU enabled us to build a China Programme including the work which led to Low Carbon Zones being established which cover 350 million people. The Blue Moon Fund and Mercator Stiftung have supported our continuing work on Chinese urbanisation and green finance reform.

Allison Robertshaw at Zennstrom Philanthropy has invested in our international finance team working in Latin America and South Africa, as well as internationally at the Green Climate Fund and UNFCCC.

**We would like to thank all our donors for their support.**

The majority of E3G's funding comes as grants from philanthropic foundations and governments. But we would not have survived without the funding that has come from our strategic advisory work. Strategic advisory is a minority of source of E3G's funding, but has been vital in keeping E3G afloat financially and also invigorated intellectually.

Our clients have ranged from DFID and the German Foreign Ministry to Greenpeace and Avaaz. The work has been as diverse as diplomatic support for the German G8 Presidency, policies for low carbon technology co-operation, the UK's anti-corruption strategy, and how to make oil revenue-sharing in Sudan support peace.

Unfortunately the last one didn't end that well!

Delivering this incredibly diverse portfolio was only possible through the analytical rigour and hard work put in by Shane Tomlinson. Shane joined E3G from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. He led E3G's analytical team and was core part of E3G management for 7 years. **Thank you Shane.**

**Shane still works closely with E3G as a Senior Associate at Chatham House, which brings me to my last round of thanks.**

We always saw E3G as adding to the ecosystem of sustainable development organisations; a symbiote not a competitor species.

All of E3G's work is done through partnerships. Our work in China has been done with Chatham House, Germanwatch and Chinese partners. The campaign for European CCS demo funding involved Shell, Alstom and Bellona. The initial Green Investment Bank concept paper was co-authored by E3G and Climate Change Capital. The Green Investment Bank campaign was led by Transform UK coalition including partners such as Green Alliance and the Aldesgate Group. E3G has formed strong partnerships with ClientEarth and RAP as part of the ECF Roadmap 2050 process.

E3G shares the joy of trying to inject rationality into UK debates on European policy with Green Alliance, Greenpeace, WWF and others. We collaborate on European politics with IDDRI in Paris, Germanwatch in Berlin and ECF in Warsaw.

We would also be unable to help bridge between politics and policy without our relationships with "insiders" in governments, companies and international organisations. E3G has built strong networks with political actors in Europe, US and China and among climate, energy, finance, diplomacy and security policy makers.

These relationships work because they rest on a sense of common purpose. E3G is always completely clear about its objectives. This transparency underpins the trust which is needed to "tunnel through" organisational cultures and boundaries, to align agendas and to create the transformational solutions we all need.

**Thank you to all our partners past and present for working with us, and being open to collaboration when we were still the "new kid on the block".**

**Thank you to all those who have trusted us with their insights and information, especially when this meant taking risks.**

I hope you agree that your trust in E3G has been justified.

Information and collaboration are the life blood of E3G's work. Without it we would not be able to achieve anything. We look forward to another decade of collaboration with all of you.

## The Way Forward

The final thing I need to do is to outline what E3G plans to do next.

E3G has a secret. The secret is that 10 years ago we had a planned out what we wanted to achieve. A plan we hid in plain sight as the "Europe in the World" pamphlet.

We translated the plan into 10 languages – including Russian and Turkish – so no-one could miss what our real intent was.

The plan was driven by our belief that if we don't solve the political dilemma of sustainable development we risk unravelling the post-war progress on democracy, development, human rights and peace. The result would be a world where raw power successfully pushes back against the rule of law.

**E3G's mission is at its heart an attempt to preserve these values in a world of 10 billion people living on a finite planet.**

E3G is a European organisation and we saw Europe as a pathfinder for global sustainable development. Not because Europe is uniquely enlightened, but because Europe has learnt the hard lessons from bloody conflict on the need to put limits on power and gain the benefits of pooling sovereignty.

For the last ten years E3G has been working to put the choices we outlined in Europe in the World in front of decision makers, and in building the political coalitions needed to deliver real outcomes.

**It hasn't gone exactly as we planned, but more progress has been made than many thought possible at the time.**

But since then many things have changed. Some we expected like the continuing rise of China, others were surprises like the global financial crisis.

But most fundamental to E3G's mission has been the general decline in belief that governing institutions can shape events - either at national or international level. This decline in "agency" affects elites as much as the general public. It has led to a rise in populism and authoritarianism, and in many places to a profound despair that anything can change for the better.

**Sustainable development cannot be built on this political foundation.**

Inside E3G we have been reflecting on what these changes mean for our mission and for us as an organisation. We have also been talking with others around the world grappling with the same dilemmas.

We have come to four main propositions about the future we must respond to. These result as much from the successes of the environment movement as from its deficiencies:

- **Arguments will be easier but political battles will be harder.** Rising climate impacts make the analytical case for change stronger, but vested interests have only just begun to take the impact of policy on their assets seriously and will push back much harder than we think.

- **Economic reforms must be deep and broad.** The idea that the global energy system could be transformed from high to low carbon by just putting a marginal price on carbon has gone from fanciful to dangerous. Shifting capital to the right investments will require fundamental rewiring of economic systems and the political and social economy that supports them.

**Rules need to be defended:** Shifts in geo-politics are undermining global norms and the international rules-based system cannot be taken as a given. Investment will not flow to sustainable solutions unless corruption, weak governance and democratic deficits are tackled.

**Short-term pressures will overwhelm long-term necessities:** as the impacts of climate change and resource scarcity grow attention will focus on preserving short-term security and economic interests. Creating the political space for long-term preventive investment requires managing these pressures while ensuring fair and orderly transitions. It will also become increasingly difficult to explain what success looks like.

We will need to adapt our work to a world where our **politics will be driven more by events than analysis.**

On the positive side our problem will not be one of lack of access or being marginal – we can now get into the debate at all levels.

But access is not enough – even progress is not enough – we need to work out how to win fast enough.

We need to take our own arguments more seriously.

If we believe that the future is at risk we need to say this clearly and simply, and not hide behind technical caveats. We need to be comfortable making both the moral and the scientific case for action.

If we want to change the fundamental way society functions we need to invest in driving changes over the long term and not demand short term wins.

If we want to win political choices we need to make sustainability an unavoidable objective for all political families, no matter how different their objectives and solutions. This requires us to embrace democratic pluralism.

**E3G will do its part in responding to these challenges**

E3G will continue to do much of what it currently does - getting the right people, in the right place at the right time with the right choices in the right context.

**We will also keep investing in making Europe a driver for global sustainable development.**

Though it is unfashionable to back Europe as a global player, there is still no other actor with the reach and intent to support the necessary global transformations. As Europeans we also have a moral duty to do this.

We will deepen our work on making Europe an innovator of sustainable solutions; focusing on areas requiring deep economic, financial and governance reform. We will work to make European diplomacy maximise its influence in a more multi-polar but less multilateral world.

We will also work with others to keep the UK inside the EU, because without this Europe is much less likely to pursue a global vocation.

**We will invest more in re-shaping the political landscape for action.**

Unless we shape the “realm of discourse” beyond the news cycle we will have no chance of shaping politics to support sustainable policies. E3G is already investing more in shaping the public debate and working with others to generate more compelling narratives on climate change.

Cities are the main source of wealth creation, but have fixed assets exposed to climate risk and little agency in shaping the national mitigation responses. We will work to bring cities and other “climate takers” into the political debate on mitigation as force for radical action.

We will work to bring new, powerful actors into the climate change debate by providing strategic analysis and political advice on how they can engage. We are doing this around the EU 2030 Climate and Energy package, and as a founder member of the new Climate Briefing Services network will expand this work internationally in the run-up to Paris 2015.

**We will work to build larger coalitions for deeper reform**

The Energy Bill Revolution campaign brings together 200 organisations to argue for £65 billion of public investment in super-insulating UK homes, focusing on the fuel poor. This campaign aims to deliver healthier, warmer and lower carbon homes; many objectives not just one.

**We will build more multi-objective coalitions because the political and economic reforms we need are too deep to be won through an environmental agenda alone.**

E3G will step up its work with the national security and peace-building communities to make preventative action – including against climate and resource risks - a core pillar of forward security policy.

We will continue working with mainstream foreign policy actors to strengthen the national interest case and diplomacy for maintaining a global rules-based system.

We will work with new alliances and blocs of countries who champion this agenda.

Finance reform is at heart of re-engineering the economy. E3G will move from a focus on clean finance instruments to building coalitions which can shape macro-economic management and broader financial reforms, including financial stability reforms which can address the “carbon bubble”.

We will work to integrate climate and resource risks into the heart of economic decision making, and help shape a new social contract which informs, empowers and protects those exposed to unmanageable climate impacts.

Decarbonisation plans have failed to provide politically-credible solutions for industry and infrastructure. We will work to create coalitions for driving radical industrial transformation and growth through the deployment of smart, resilient, integrated and clean infrastructure.

Recently we have seen a rising tide of repressive state action taken against environmental campaigners in countries as diverse as Poland, Turkey, India and China. Without an open society we cannot win, and the open society is under threat in many places. We will work with other groups and governments to push back against this closing of political freedoms, and put climate change and sustainability at the heart of global discussions on good governance.

**Collectively we have won the argument. We now need to organise the wide but too often latent support in favour of a sustainable and secure future into political change.**

We founded E3G to help make the transformation possible. That’s what we intend to do – in new ways and with more diverse partners.

We look forward to working with all of you to achieve our common goals.

And hopefully in 10 years time we can all come back here for another party in a more peaceful, stable and better world.

Cheers!

**Nick Mabey**

**2 July 2014**



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).