

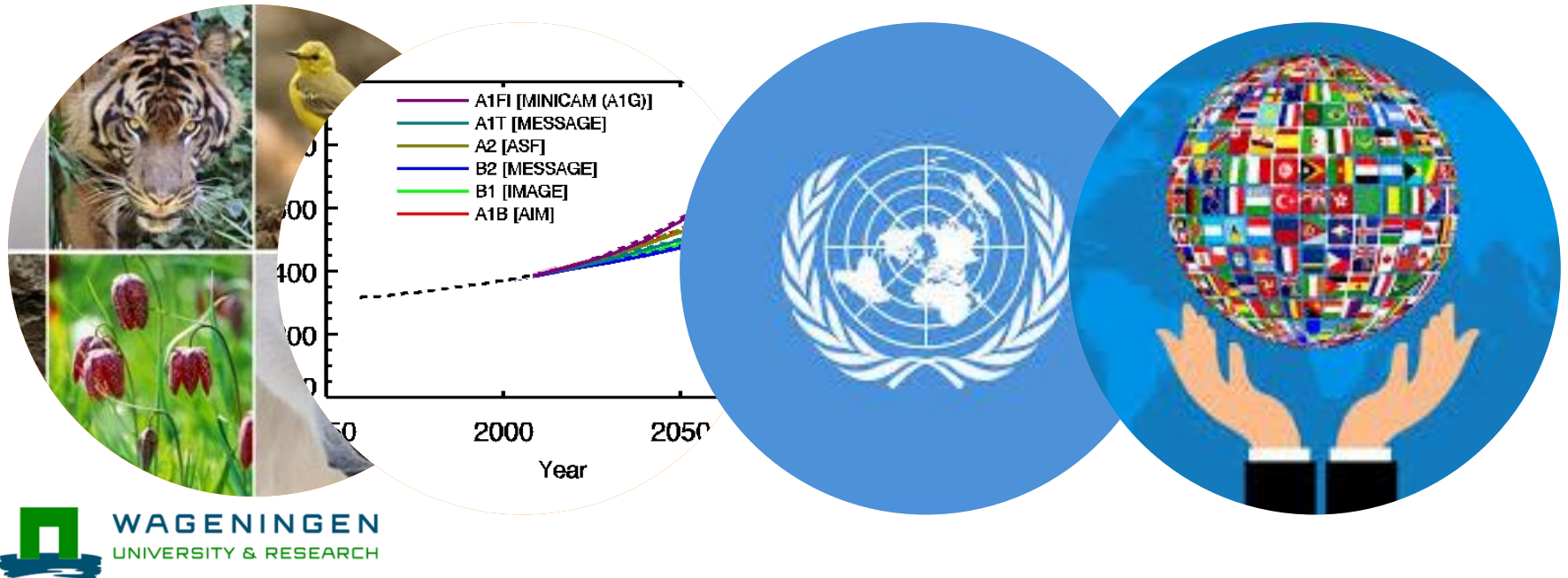
Filling the gaps of a failing governance system for global sustainability goals: Exploring the role of self-accountability and reflexivity

The Convergent Innovation Webinar Series: Farm, Food and Diet

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Today I will...

1. Paint the picture of the current status of global public governance and highlight its core weaknesses
2. Provide some directions for how to strengthen global public governance – even if they are not plausible (in the near future at least)
3. Explore what remains for us to do *now*

1. Current status of global public governance

- weak intergovernmental organizations
 - unenforceable international law
- low legitimacy as a result (and cause)



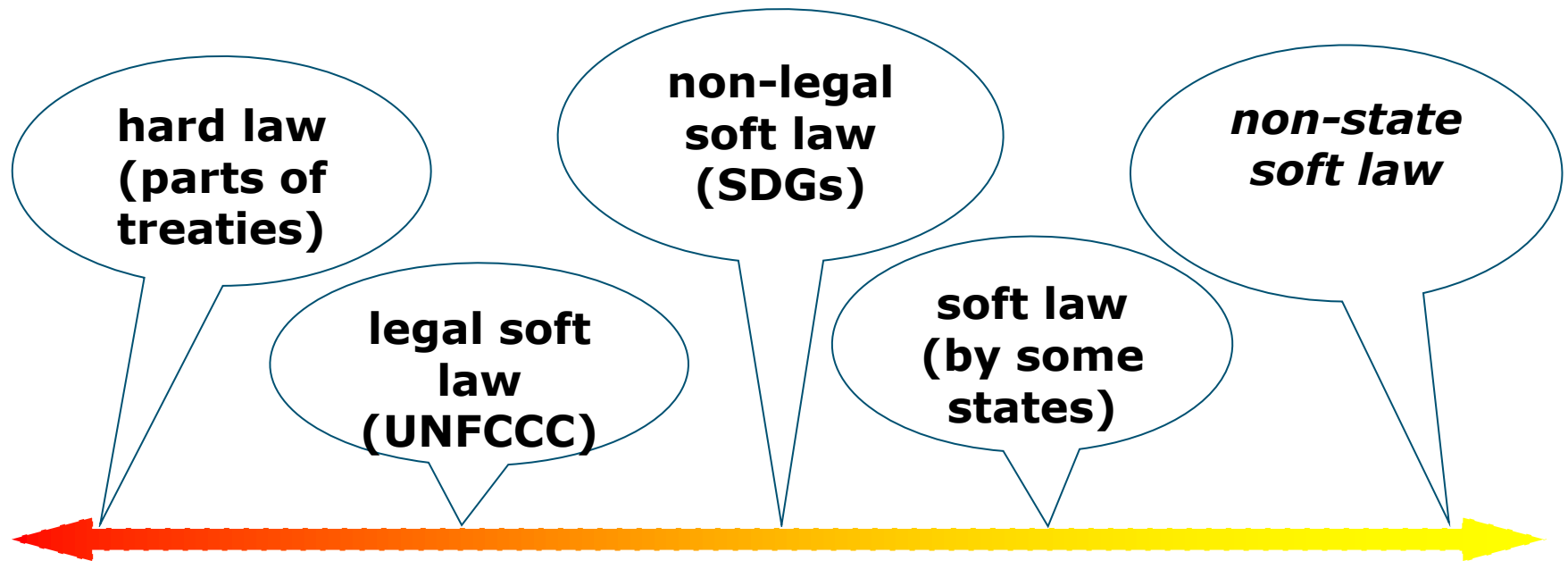
Intergovernmental Organizations



States



Diversity of international law/rules/norms

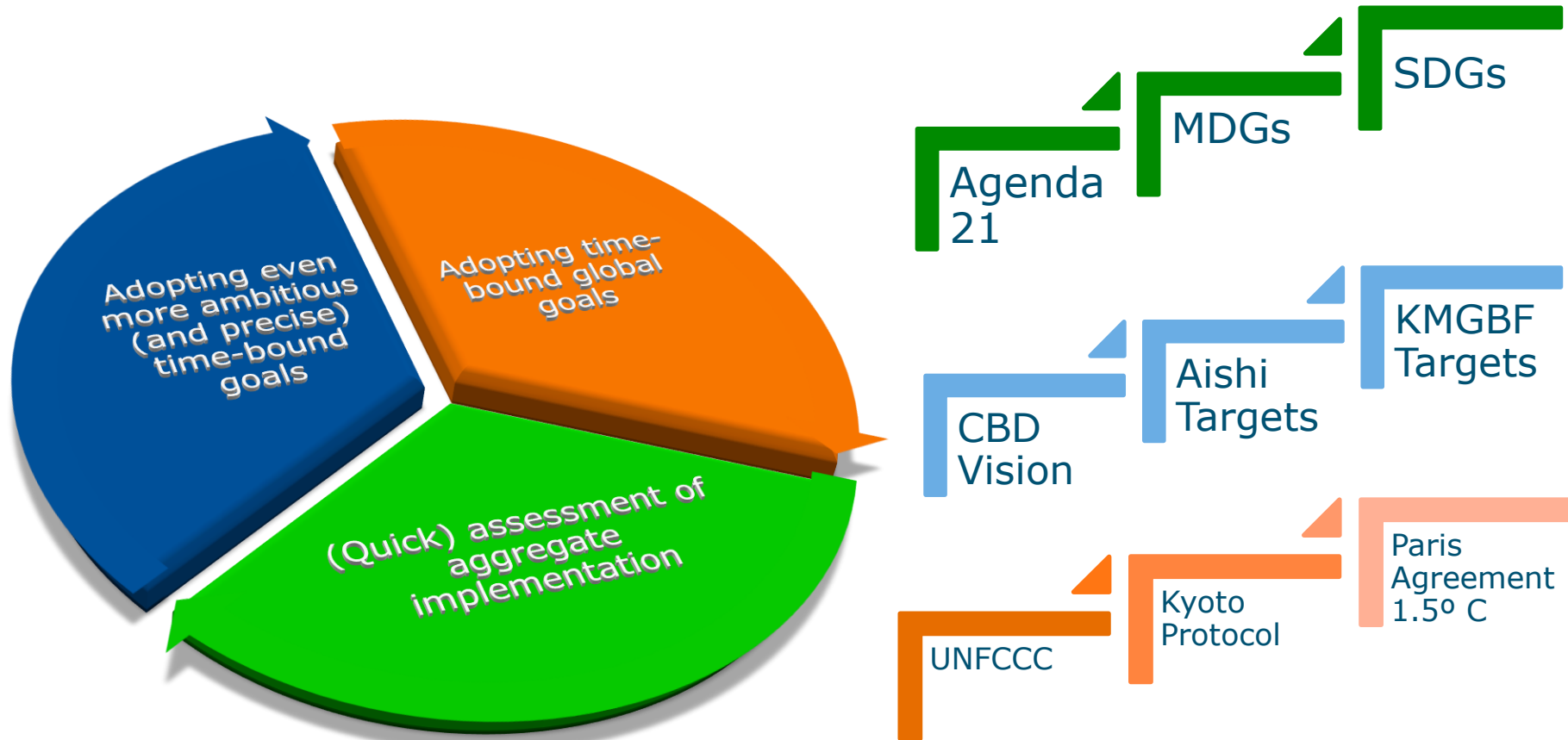


- obligation
- precision
- delegation

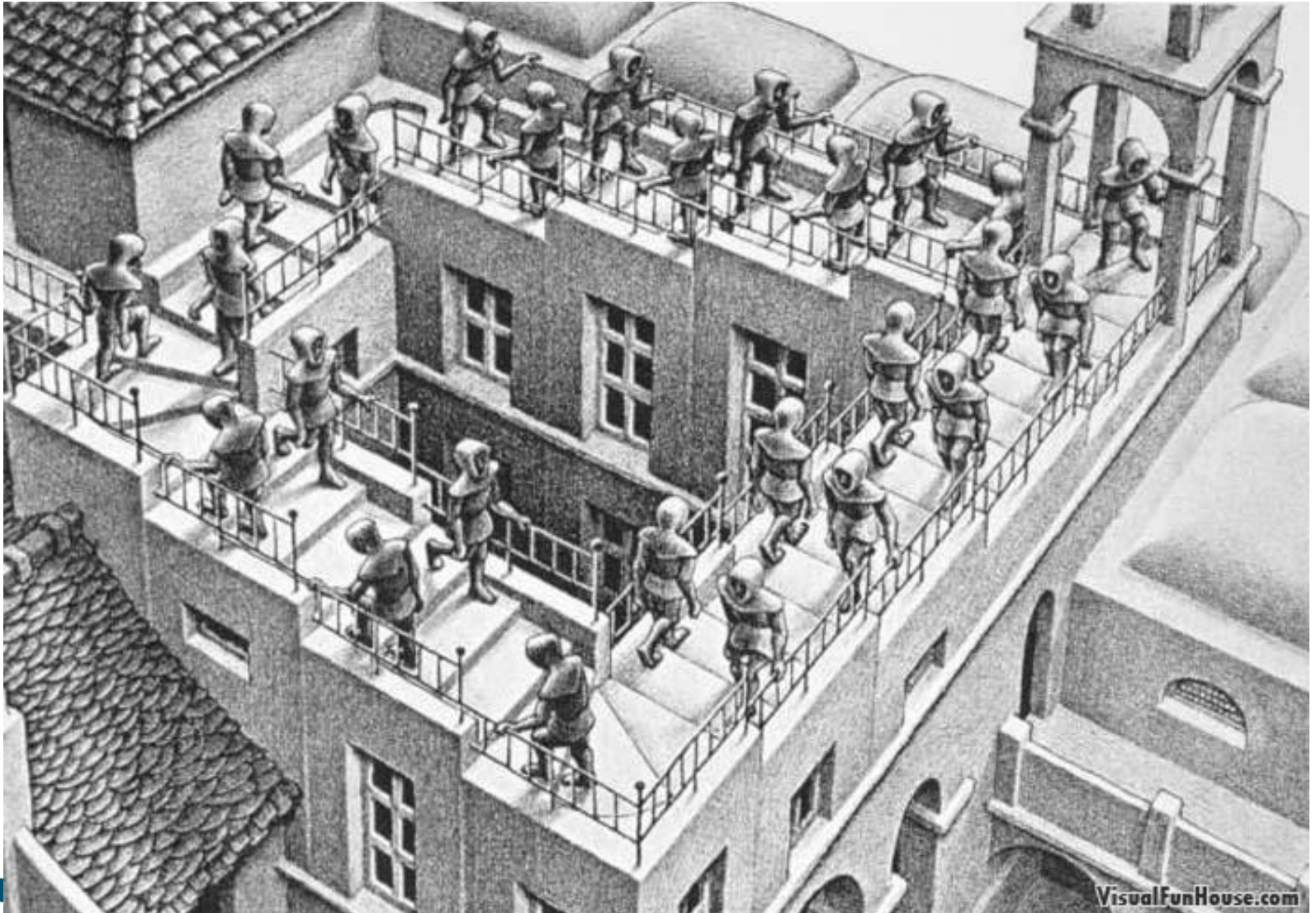
- voluntarism
- vagueness
- lack of accountability



The global goal setting dynamic



The global goal setting dynamic – as a painting



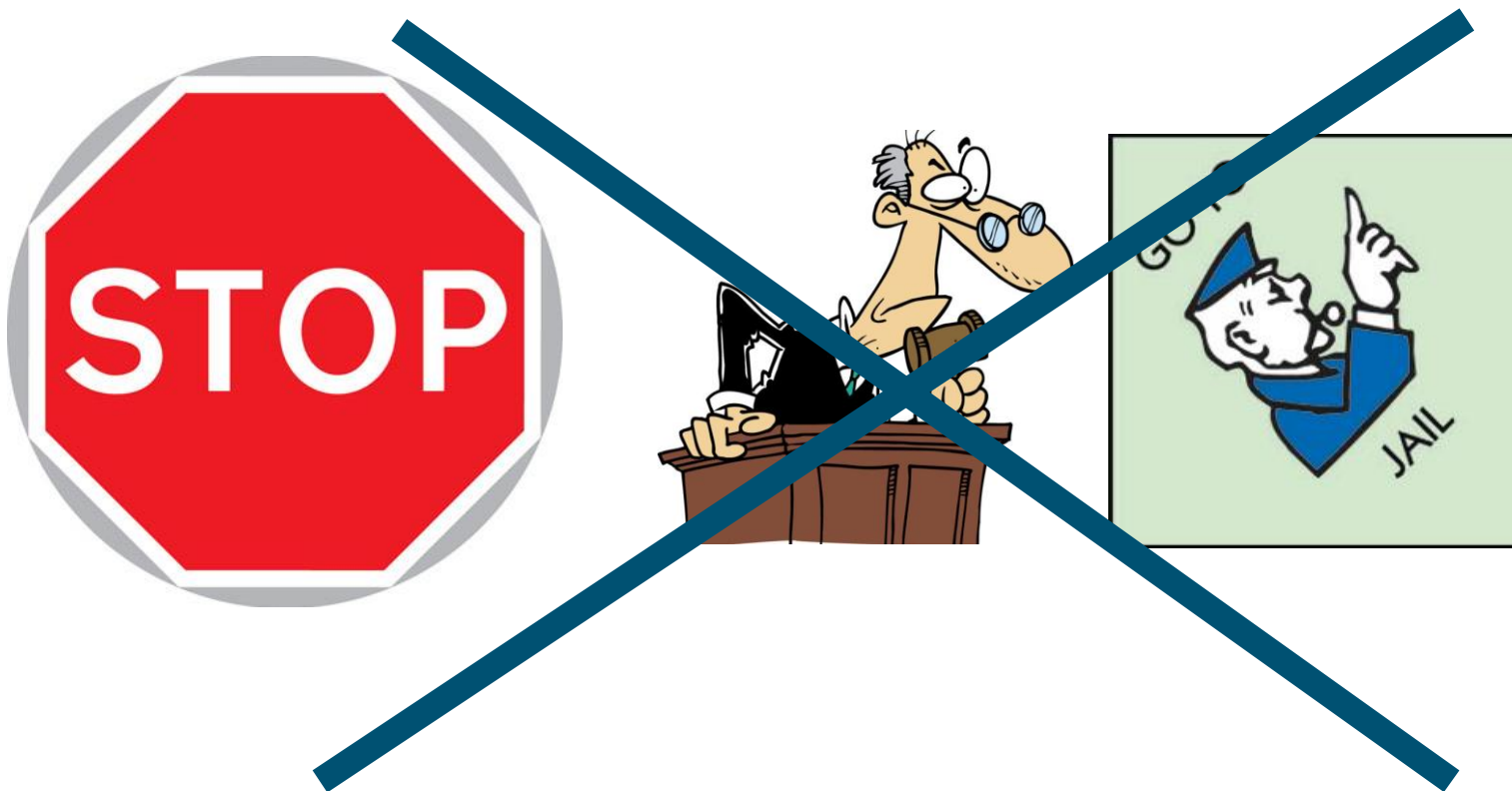
Results?



Low implementation



Low goal achievement



Global accountability gap



Sovereignty blocking accountability and rule of law among states



The diagram consists of two light blue speech bubbles pointing towards each other, forming a larger, irregular shape. Each bubble contains the text 'Sovereign State'. The background of the entire slide is a photograph of numerous national flags flying from tall poles in front of a modern building.

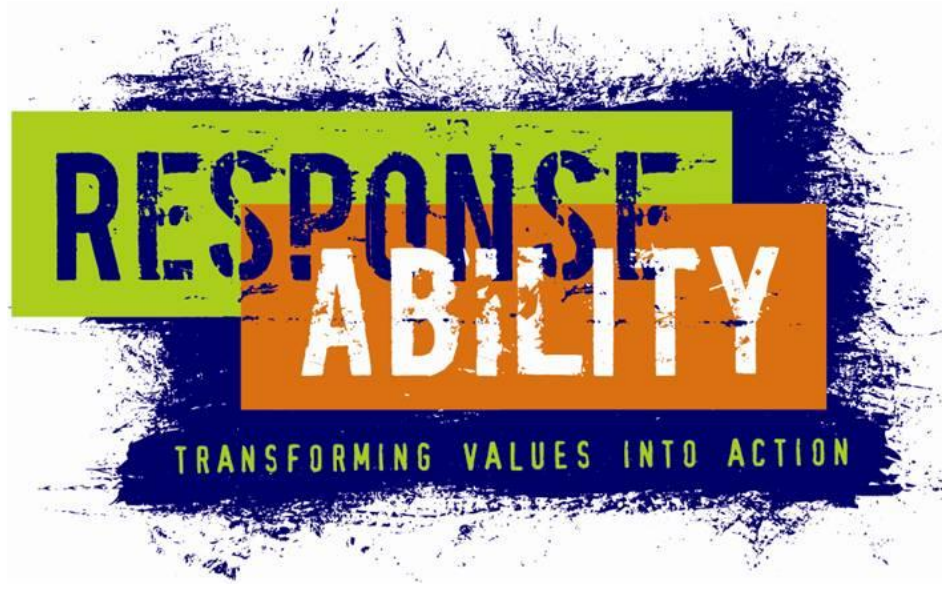
Sovereign
State

Sovereign
State

What can then make states comply with international law?



Example: the Paris Agreement



- Core responsibility: states (national governments)
- Legal obligations under the agreement: procedural (sending in plans and implementation reports)
- States decide what and how much they do



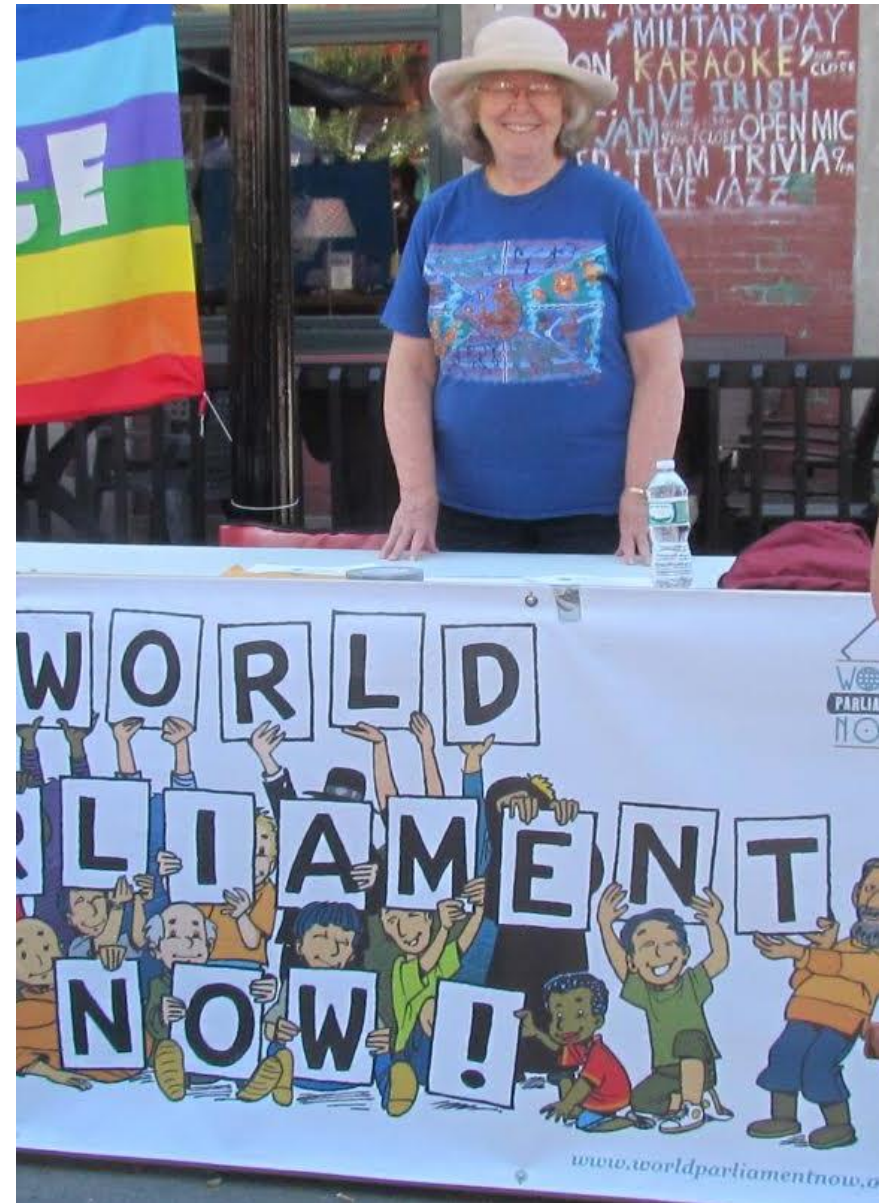
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Legitimacy?



Another legitimacy problem – lack of global democracy



But a world
parliament will
not on its own
solve the
narrow
perspective in
time and space
that dominates
in domestic
parliaments

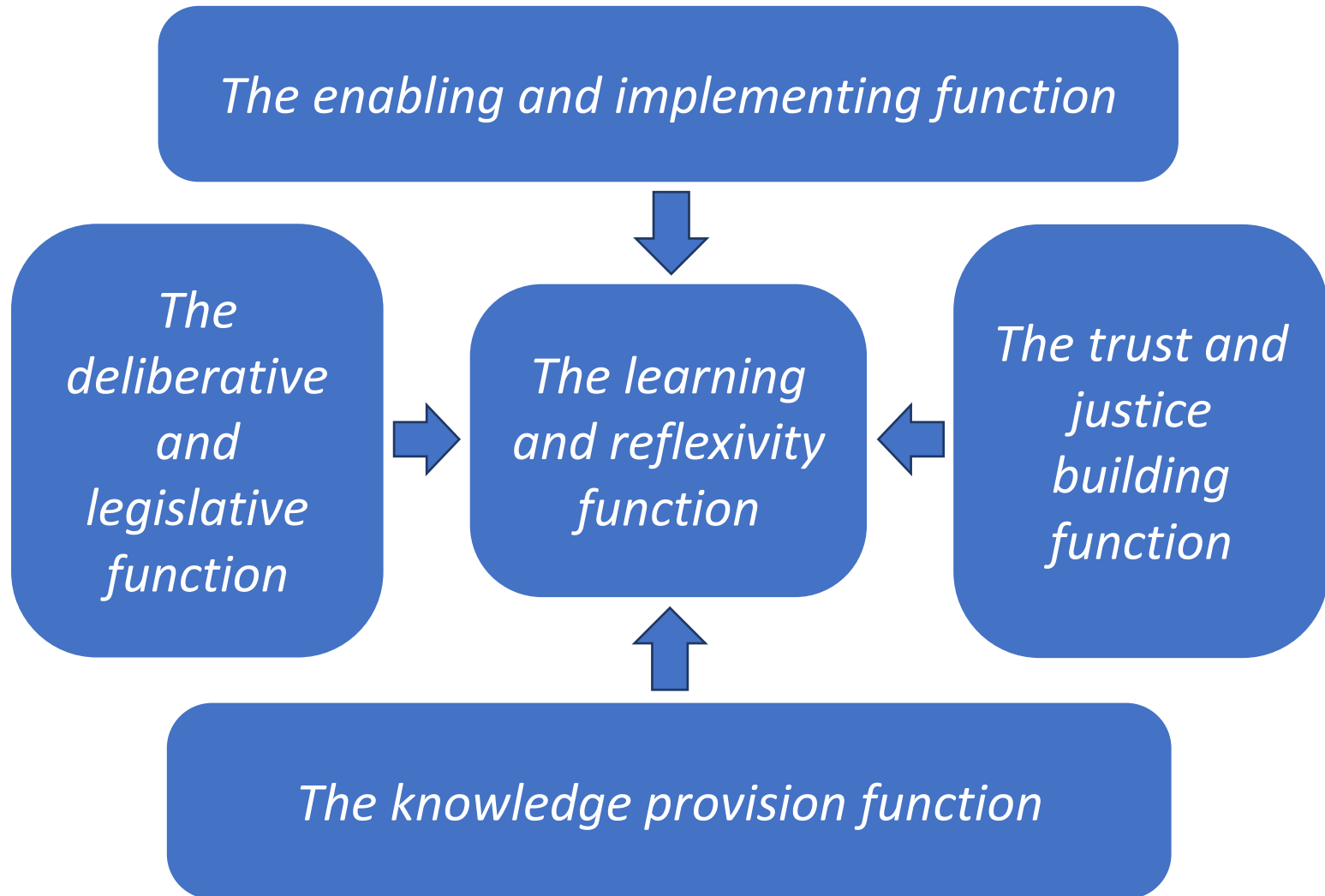


2. Directions for strengthening global public governance (albeit unplausible)

- core functions
- allocating responsibility based on principles
- strengthening accountability



Strengthening core functions



Allocating responsibility to the global level



Allocating responsibility based on *principles*

- Principles are called for (by scholars at least) when there is too much AND when there is too little global governance
- Principles implies more transparent (and consistent) justification



Potential principles

Substantive subsidiarity	Decision-making as near as possible to the citizens
Procedural subsidiarity	Governance at higher levels when lower levels <i>do not have capacity</i> to act or <i>are not willing</i> to act
Fit	Matching the scale of the ecological system and the governance system
Culpability	Actors who are culpable for a problem should take on responsibility to address it
Capacity	Actors with the capacity to do something in an effective or efficient way should take action
Concern	Action taken based on concern for or empathy with those who suffer
Consent (Consensus)	States are sovereign over their territory

Subsidiarity (substantive+procedural) a winner?

Allocating governance to the higher (such as the global) level when it is considered:

- the most effective level to take action
- when it is necessary to achieve the objectives
- at the same time bringing as much agency and influence to lower levels & grassroots as possible



Strengthen accountability mechanisms for global goals



Strengthening multi-level accountability

**Global
collective**

**Global
individual**

Prescribing
and/or
requiring
reflexive
capacity

**National
self-
account-
ability**

- Each state determines the 'degree' of 'compliance'
- Required to re-consider this degree regularly
- Any 'real' compliance requires deep societal change

Example: The Paris Agreement

“The outcome of the global stocktake shall inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner, their actions and support in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Agreement, as well as in enhancing international cooperation for climate action” (article 14.3)



United Nations
Climate Change



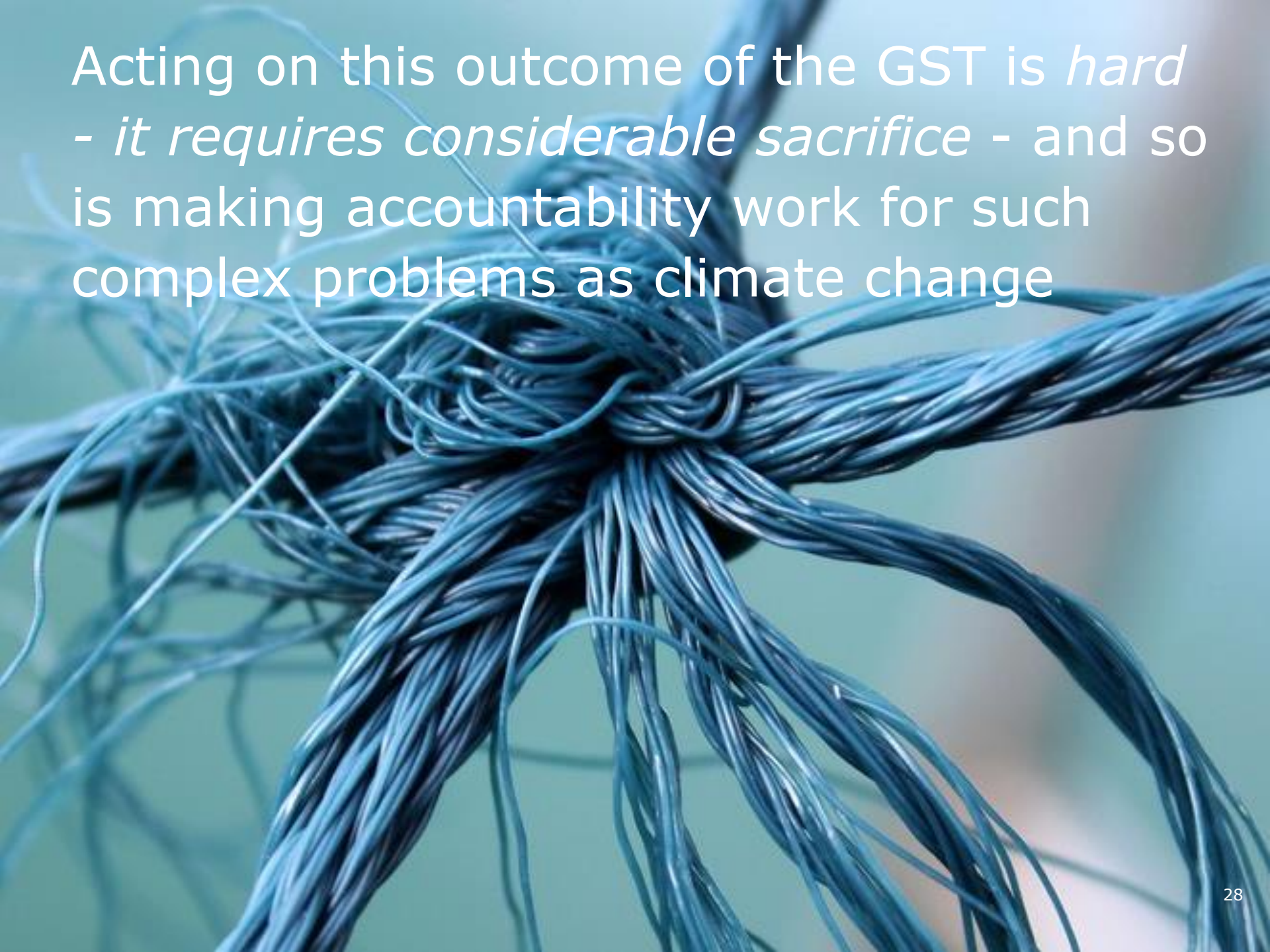
COP28UAE

DUBAI 2023

Celebrating the adoption of the Global Stocktake

Examples of GST conclusions for states to reflect on

- **Urgent need** to address mitigation gap (ambition + implementation gap)
- Global emissions have to **peak latest 2025** to be in line with 1.5°C
- Need for *deep, rapid and sustained reductions* in greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5 °C pathways
- Need to *transition away* from fossil fuels in energy systems
- Importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards...**halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation** etc.



Acting on this outcome of the GST is *hard*
- *it requires considerable sacrifice* - and so
is making accountability work for such
complex problems as climate change

Making accountability mechanisms fit complex problems – three possibilities



Shared



Broad



Dynamic

Shared accountability

- moral responsibility beyond the law

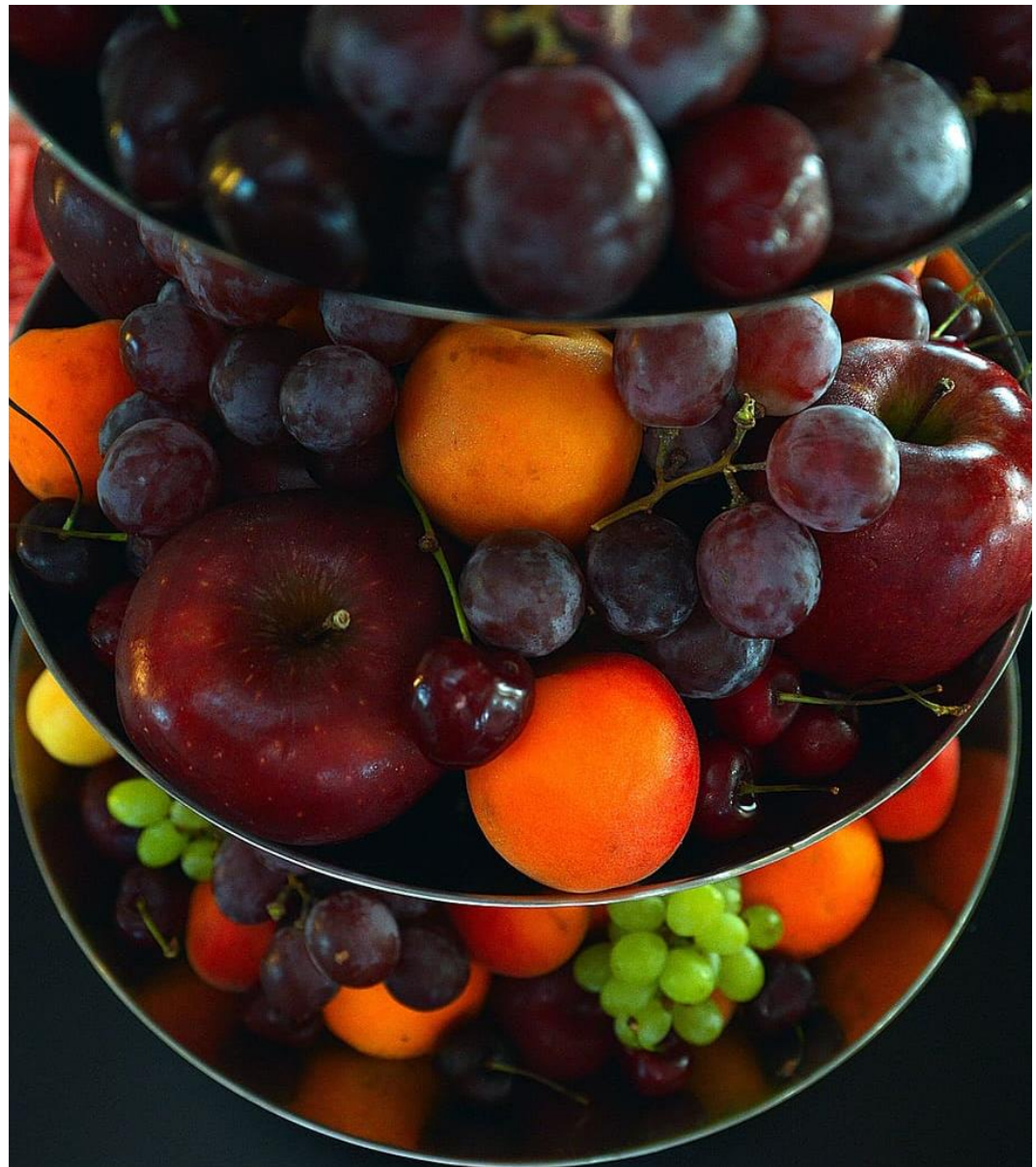


Build the story on moral responsibility
(rather than only legal)



Broad accountability

- Focused on inputs, processes and outcomes
- No cherry picking by accountholders!



Focus accountability also on the quality of the decision-making process (inclusion, evidence base etc)



Dynamic accountability

- Focused on learning



Enable learning, such as peer to peer learning among countries in regions



Link accountability mechanisms to tangible tailormade support



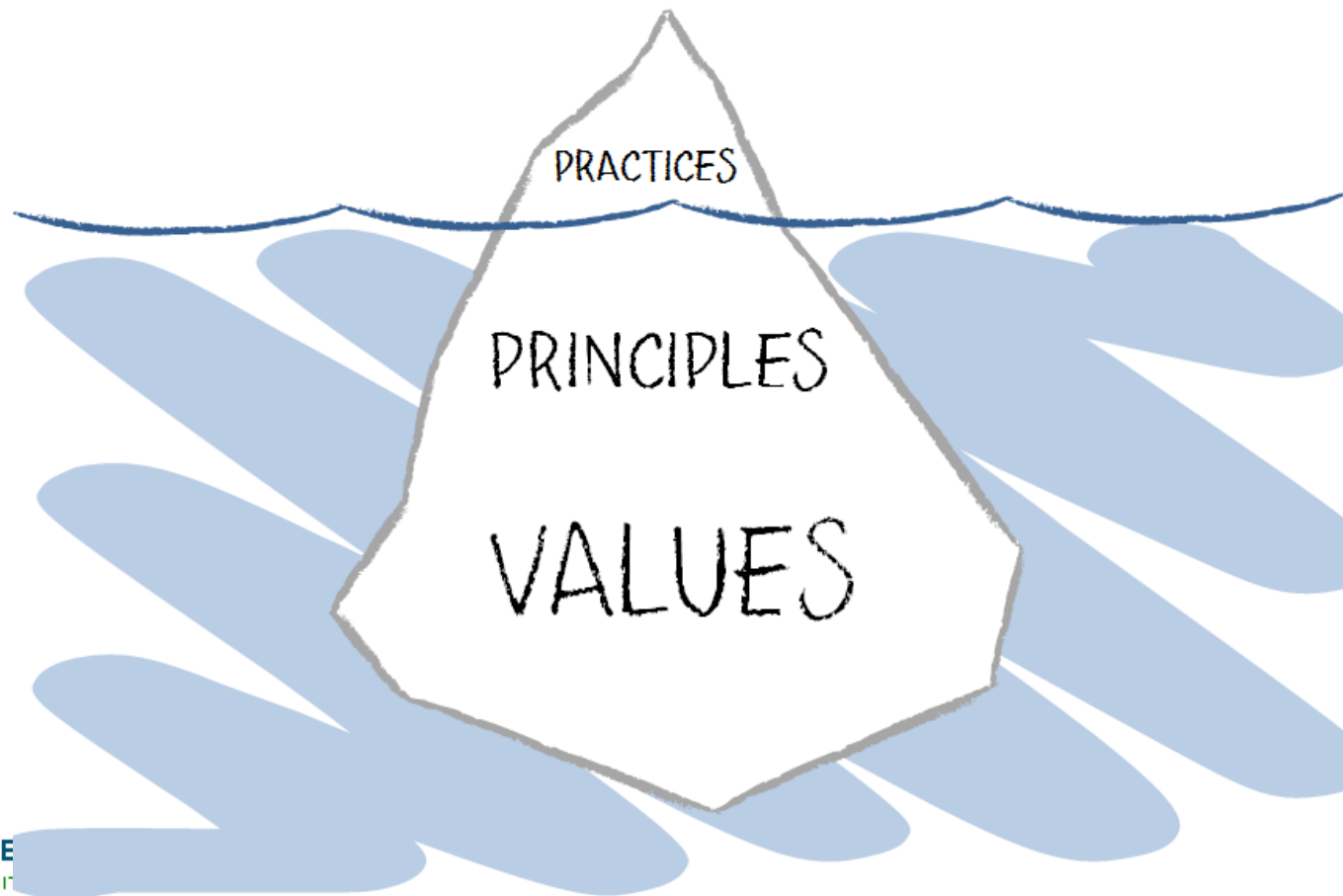


Globally prescribed national self-accountability – can states reflect on their own responsibility for the climate system, humanity and all life?

- ### 3. What remains for us to do?
- identify our own responsibility
 - learn to be reflexive
 - hold ourselves to account



Identify our own responsibility – based on three possible (complimentary?) principles



Whose fault is it? (The culpability principle)



Who can do something about it? (The capacity principle)



Who cares enough to do something? (The concern principle)

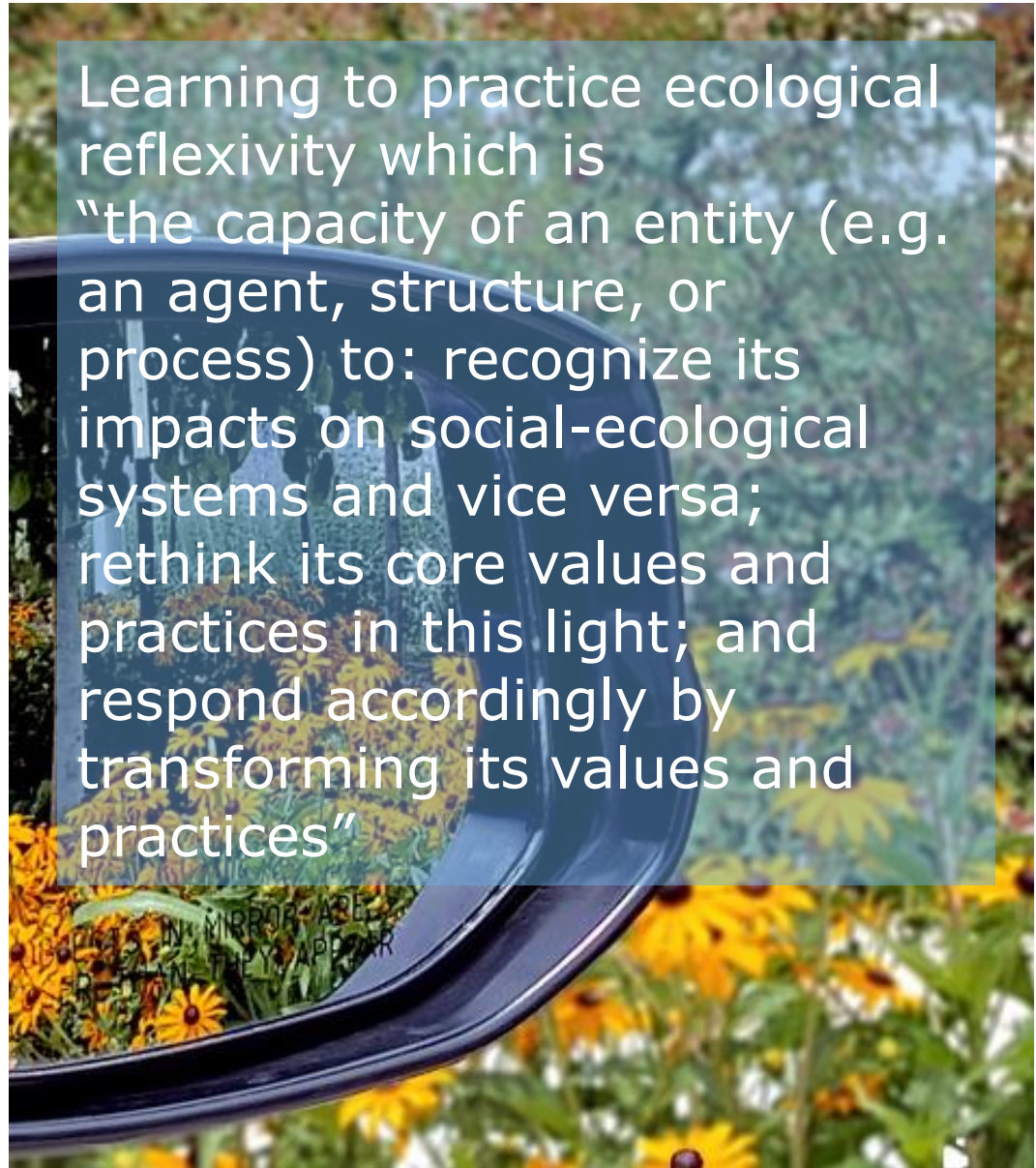


Learn to be reflexive



Recognition Rethinking Response

Learning to practice ecological reflexivity which is “the capacity of an entity (e.g. an agent, structure, or process) to: recognize its impacts on social-ecological systems and vice versa; rethink its core values and practices in this light; and respond accordingly by transforming its values and practices”



Hold ourselves to account....

- as individuals, neighborhoods, communities, companies... on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly...basis?



Against what standards do we hold ourselves to account? In search for convergence



A process for change?

Study

Reflect

Consult

Act



Thank you for listening!

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References:

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