



*One united humanity.  
One shared ecosystem.  
Stronger together.*

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**Jamie Metzl Opening Remarks**

**RISE OR FALL TOGETHER: The OneShared.World Interdependence Summit**

September 17, 2020

Welcome to Rise or Fall Together: The OneShared.World Interdependence Summit. I'm Jamie Metzl.

If it feels like our world is coming apart amidst the deadliest pandemic in a century, the worst climate change induced disasters in millennia, and hundreds of millions of the world's most vulnerable people falling back into abject poverty, we can't sink into despair - because there is hope.

That hope is you. It's all of us from around the world here together and the millions more who will join us.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus did not alone break our world, it merely capitalized on what was already broken, a world where billions lived in fear they would not be able to support, feed, or educate their families, where we drove our global ecosystem to the verge of collapse, and where systemic injustice remained unaddressed. When the virus exploited these collective failures, we were all harmed as a result.

The pandemic is a wake up call. The question for all of us is whether we will wake up.

Our world faced a moment very similar to this a little over a hundred years ago in 1918. A period of intense globalization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had been followed by the devastating first world war. After the armistice, two visions competed for the future. One was a path of inclusion and coming together in a league of peoples and nations. The other was a path of vilification, extreme nationalism, and wall building. The second group eventually emerged victorious – which brought us another world war and another 85 million deaths.

Similarly, today, we have two different paths before us, a path of inclusion or a path of exclusion, a path of coming together or a path of continuing to fall apart. We are here today to fight for the better option, the future we want to build.

Because if our experience of the pandemic has shown us anything, it's that we are all part of an interconnected world where both our strengths and our vulnerabilities are shared. If the virus spreads and mutates among the most vulnerable populations, we are all weaker as a result. We rise or fall together.

That was our essential realization in the early days of the pandemic. If we solved COVID-19 without addressing the broader challenge of pandemics, our victory would be pyrrhic. If we found a way to address pandemics without solving climate change, ecosystem destruction, systemic poverty, racism, and inequality, and other global threats, we would be jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire. While we must address each of these challenges individually, we must also build a global system making it possible for all of them to be addressed collectively.

The terrible mismatch we see today between the global nature of our greatest challenges and the predominantly national way we have organized ourselves to address them is an essential problem we must together overcome. In so many areas, the narrow interests of our specific nations or groups overpower our collective needs as members of one species sharing the same planet.

We meet today just as the UN General Assembly is opening to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> year. There is so much to celebrate about the UN but we must also recognize that the United Nations ideal as envisioned by its founders has not been realized.

Our national political leaders have failed to protect us not because they haven't done their jobs but because they have precisely done the job we hired them to do. We cannot, and should not, seek to replace the countries we love or essential institutions like the United Nations, but we must push and inspire them to do things differently, to address our greatest common challenges.

Because the core problem we face is systemic, our response must also be systemic.

In very short order, we humans have gone from being disparate bands of roving nomads to becoming a global species with the awesome power to remake most every aspect of life on earth. But we have yet to develop a global consciousness or politics to match.

To safeguard our future, we now need to upgrade our global operating system. We need to build a new framework for how we work together to solve our greatest common challenges based on the mutual responsibilities of our interdependence.

That is what OneShared.World and this summit are all about. We seek to build an empowered and fully inclusive global interdependence movement of people all around the world demanding a relevant seat at the table of power and decision making for our common humanity.

In the 1940s, we had leaders like Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Mahatma Gandhi to guide and inspire us. Today, regular people like you and me must divide up among ourselves the job of building a better future -- or face the consequences of our inaction.

In our action summit today, you will hear from some of the world's most inspiring people ranging from political and spiritual leaders to students fighting to save our world and refugees seeing light where so many others see darkness. You will experience performances from some of the world's greatest artists.

But just like you cannot hear His Holiness the Dalai Lama teach or Renee Fleming sing, as you soon will, without those experiences touching your soul, we hope you cannot join this conversation about what is so broken in our world and how we all must come together to fix it without feeling a deep call to action. We don't just need you to spread the word on social media and sign up for our campaigns, we need you to roll up your sleeves and work with us and others to make sure that every one of our countries, companies, faith communities, and other organizations and institutions affirmatively recognize the mutual responsibilities of our interdependence as the foundation of a new global operating system. We must connect our actions on an individual level with our aspiration to transform massive global systems.

The idea is audacious, but is even more necessary.

No one, unfortunately, is coming to save us and our world.

But using these new tools of global connectivity, by joining with open hearts, open minds, and the courage of our convictions, we can finally and together build our one shared world for the benefit of each and all of us.