

## A Love Letter from the Invisibles to World Leaders

Esteemed Leaders of the World,

**WE,** the invisible billions on Planet Earth, write to request an urgent correction to your vision. Our plea comes from a deep well of concern for the present and future of our shared home.

### Who are the invisible ones?

We represent two sets of the invisible. **One consists of humans who, despite being perfectly discernible, are condemned to invisibility by the actions and attitudes of the rich and powerful.** These are the ones whom you deliberately ignore - the workers, farmers, women, the urban poor, rural laborers, indigenous people of the world - who make the sustenance of human societies possible on our planet. We are the backbone of your economies, the hands that feed you, the voices that are seldom heard in the corridors of power.



### Why are we invisible?

Our invisibility is not a natural state but a constructed one, built by systems of inequality and oppression that you have allowed to persist and flourish. We witness first-hand the erosion of our communities and the destruction of our environments. Our health services are non-existent, our access to schools and basic transport shrink by the hour, prices go up, fuel and energy costs soar. **The fruits of our labour disappear into the pockets of fewer and fewer people who grow wealthier and wealthier.**

The policies you pursue now are fuelling the conditions for misery, despair, and hopelessness in a world that increasingly knows how to respond only with violence. You speak of progress and development, but from where we stand, we see only the widening of gaps between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, and humanity and nature.



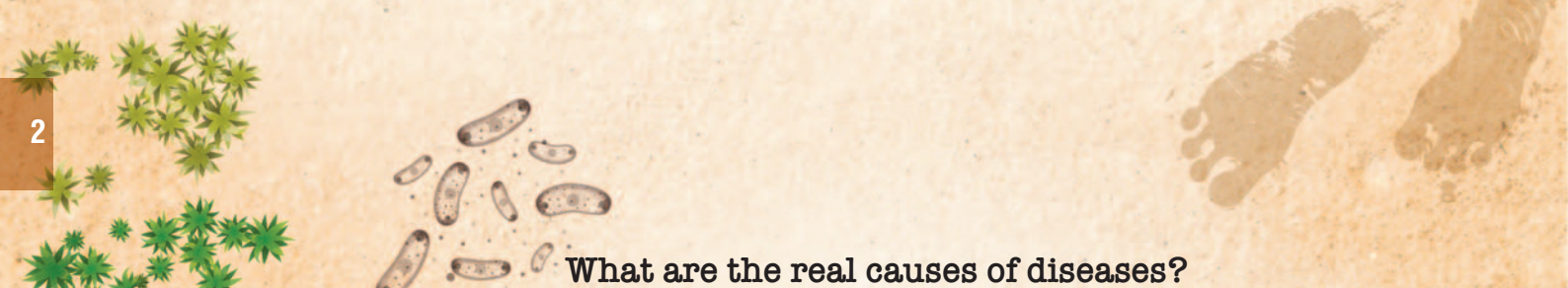


## Who are the other invisibles?

The other invisibles we represent in this letter are those living organisms that escape the human eye because of their microscopic size - the diverse, tiny, invisible creatures that flourish within, beneath, and above all our soil, air, and water. **The bacteria, viruses, fungi, which are the oldest living organisms and arguably the preservers of all life on Earth.**

They have been here long before humans walked the planet, and will likely be here long after. Their existence is intrinsically tied to the health of the Earth, and by extension, to the survival of the human species itself.

As **René Dubos said in 1970, “You need to be aware of what is not seen, instead of being satisfied with what is seen”.** Your myopic focus on what is immediately visible and quantifiable has led you to overlook the fundamental processes that keep our world in balance.



## What are the real causes of diseases?

Yes, we understand that infection by some microbial families causes deadly diseases too and that is the reason humans fear them deeply.

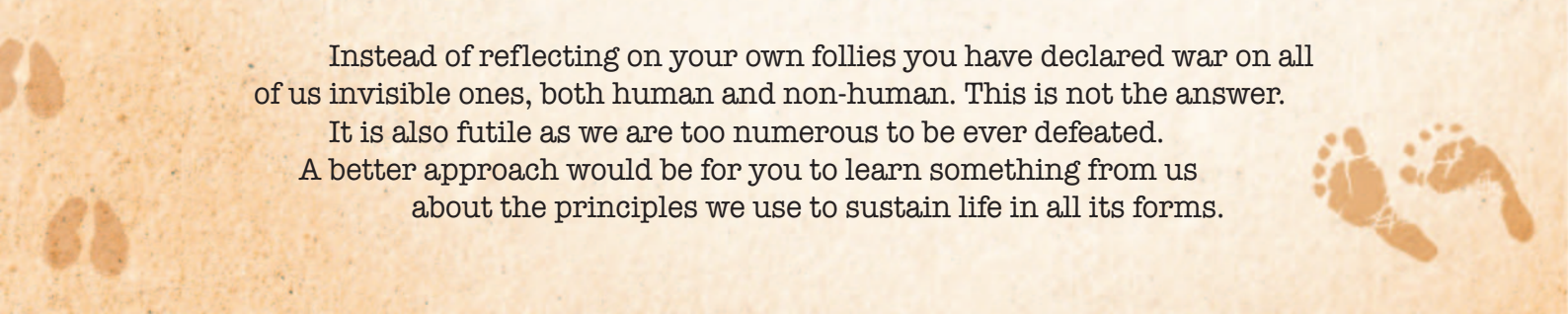
However, the vast majority of bacteria are critical to the flourishing of all forms of life on our planet. Also, **infectious diseases don't occur by themselves but in the context of human and environmental conditions.**

Is it not true that the conditions you have created on the planet only favour newer and newer patterns of sickness?

The way your policies have pushed large numbers into urban ghettos, the endless pollution you cause, the toxic wastes you spread so freely, and above all, the callous disregard for millions of people who live in dire poverty, accompanied by malnutrition -- these are the real culprits when disease caused by microbes strikes.

Indeed, it is not them but selfish humans who are killing members of their own species through greed and lust for power and foisting the blame on microbes. And just like you scapegoat them we, the invisible humans, are also held responsible for all the problems of the planet -- from poverty and crime to environmental destruction and dwindling resources.

Is that fair in any way?



## What do we need to sustain life?

Instead of reflecting on your own follies you have declared war on all of us invisible ones, both human and non-human. This is not the answer.

It is also futile as we are too numerous to be ever defeated.

A better approach would be for you to learn something from us about the principles we use to sustain life in all its forms.



The first among these is **Conserving Diversity**, whether genetic or cultural or political. Like the microbes, we the human poor too come in all shapes, sizes, colours and customs. It is the great variety we represent that gives us the strength to survive all calamities.

We also know much about **Adapting to Change**. We, from the invisible human communities, have survived against all odds and resisting the assaults on our lives and livelihoods by the global or national elites. And our friends, the bacteria, have been around for roughly 4 billion years and have not only survived the harshest temperature, weather, toxicity but have time and again contributed to mitigating these factors for the resurrection of life.

Another key principle for us is the ability to **Work Collectively** -- as communities, unions, organizations of the oppressed. And, as any good microbiologist can tell you, the same is true of microbes, which eat, pray, sleep together in unison by the billions.

We, the invisibles, are also a model of **Balanced Consumption**. Yes, we do take from Nature around us for our survival but -- unlike the super-rich of the world -- never take more than we can return to Mother Earth. Though it is we who suffer its dire consequences, the crisis of global warming the world faces today is not our doing but entirely due to your greed and thoughtless actions alone.

Lastly, we the invisibles, know how to **Move with Mother Earth**, in step with the great cycles of ecology that have shaped life on our planet for millennia. It is time for you to learn from the farmers, who understand the rhythms of the land, from the workers who keep the facilities of production buzzing and from women who manage every ebb and rise of human life.

### What are our requests?

**We also implore you to listen to the wisdom of indigenous peoples who have lived in harmony with nature for millennia.** Their knowledge, often dismissed as primitive or outdated, holds the key to sustainable living that your modern societies have forgotten.

We, the invisibles, offer you our partnership. We offer you the wisdom of billions of years of evolution, the strength of countless hands working in unison, the resilience of life that persists against all odds. **All we ask in return is your recognition, your respect, and your commitment to creating a world that values all life, visible and invisible.**

Remember, leaders of the world, that your power is transient, but the consequences of your actions will echo through generations. **The choices you make today will shape the world that our children and grandchildren will inherit.** Will it be a world of harmony and abundance, or one of endless conflict and scarcity?

The next time you sit in your plush offices, making decisions that shape our world, we ask you to pause and listen. Listen to the whisper of the wind, the rustle of leaves, the hum of the soil beneath your feet. For in that silence, **you might just hear our voices, the voices of the invisible billions who hold the key to our shared future.**

With hope, love, and a sprinkling of microbial magic,

**The Invisibles**