

## *Reflection from Kirsten Anker, participant*

We've all been brought into the room by Janet's paper and extensive networking. She has presented to us a vision of a new method of informing policy, trusted both by those who govern and by the people. Drawing on the work of Julia Grace Wales and the 1915 International Congress of Women, she proposes the formation of a Wisdom Council which will create a safe space, free from blame, in which to develop a way forward for the debate on climate policy and other pressing social issues.

My sense of the meeting was that the room was full of women with concern for the current situation, much to offer and hope (sometimes desperate) for action that can steer us towards a better future. As is appropriate for such an early meeting, there were clear introductory materials and many, disparate ideas as we sought a way forward to bring to reality these seminal ideas.

I was inspired to look in more detail at Julia Grace Wales' principles, which Janet has incorporated into her piece. JGW's moral clarity appealed to me: I would love to begin there to build a set of foundation principles, which may perhaps reveal answers to some of the questions raised on Monday.

I'm interested to test the premise that honesty, openness and no blame will cut through the weasel words our politicians have become so practised in. Perhaps there are results from the Harvard Negotiating Project, which proceeds on that premise in the context of negotiation? Primatologist Frans de Waart would suggest balancing that with some Machiavelli. In any case, I wonder how our words will be received and how they might potentially be manipulated, while we still remain committed to the ideals of truth, transparency and future focus.

These are some of JGW's principles that spoke to me:

- o bring the moral forces of the world to bear;
- o imagine that the belligerents woke one morning able to understand the motives that drive the other to war;
- o imagine if the belligerents recognised the futility of revenge etc and the advantages of co-operation;
- o imagine a solution that:
  - § is future focused, contains no judgement on the past and requires no compromise;
  - § focuses the thought of the world on the right thing to do and gives expression to the passion of idealists;
  - § harnesses fear with the promise of a secure future rather than the dangers of defeat.

Can we speak of notions of morality and rectitude at a time of moral relativism and individualism? What other language can communicate a clear and urgent vision?