

## Finance

### Ann Pettifor

Ann Pettifor has changed the world once; now she wants to do it again. The driving force behind the Jubilee 2000 campaign, last year she was also a key player in the launch of the Green New Deal, a defiant public challenge to government to restructure the failing world of finance to save the environment. Early drafts of the document were written in Pettifor's London flat, and it was at her insistence that its demands were as much economical as environmental. Does that make her a pragmatist? No, Pettifor replies. She is an idealist. After all, she was born in apartheid South Africa; she knows the world can change.

Pettifor grew up 'in the shadow of a gold mine', and saw how the price of gold governed all life around her. Gold had a power, she says, sending 'very large numbers of black people burrowing down to the depths of the earth'. Later, she learned that South African gold was taken to build up the reserves Britain used to establish itself as the world's banker. Gold backed the loans Britain made to other countries to build their factories, railways and ships. This, too, was a power, she understood. This is where economics as a lever for change comes in. 'You have to be prepared to look at the world as it really is in order to change it,' she says.

This clarity of vision makes her very persuasive. In December, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for a 'Green New Deal'. In January, South Korean prime minister Han Seung-soo announced a 'Green New Deal job-creation plan'. In February, Japanese prime minister Taro Aso told his ministries to draft a 'Green New Deal' to deal with climate change and economic recession.

Pettifor's first job after moving to London in the 1960s was as a cleaner, before stints in local and national government, then the charity sector. The Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the \$100 billion of debt owed by the world's poorest governments grew from only a few people working in a draughty shed into a movement across 100 countries, backed by a petition with 24 million signatures and courted by Bill Clinton, the Dalai Lama and Mohammed Ali. Its success, Pettifor says, was down to two things. First, a deadline. 'That meant we had to pack all our energy into the time we had, but it was also a pressure on the creditors to do it by 2000'. Second, a huge movement of Christians, inspired by the biblical idea of jubilee – a time for universal pardon. Faith was another powerful way to make things move.

The campaign became a model for others, but Pettifor herself kept working on debt – she predicted the credit crunch back in 2003. Today, she is advising British churches on their climate change campaign, Operation Noah.



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'People of faith think of green issues as belonging to environmentalists and not to them,' she says. 'This is about convincing the churches to lead, to say this is a spiritual cause as well as an environmental cause,' she says. Ultimately, this is about values, about asking people 'How do you value the Earth?' If you value something, you have a reason to act. Which brings us back to economics.

**Green New Deal** [www.greennewdealgroup.org](http://www.greennewdealgroup.org)  
**New Economics Foundation**  
[www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)  
**Ann Pettifor blogs at** [www.debtonation.org](http://www.debtonation.org)  
**Advocacy International**  
[www.advocacyinternational.co.uk](http://www.advocacyinternational.co.uk)  
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